Redefining Leadership in a Higher Education Context: Views from the Front Line

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Abbreviations

HE   **Higher Education**

HEI   **Higher Education Institution**

MBA   **Master of Business Administration**

SFC   **Scottish Funding Council**

SGL   **Subject Group Leader**

UKVI   **United Kingdom Visa and Immigration**

KPI   **Key Performance Indicator**

Declaration

No proportion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of another application for another degree or qualification of this or any other University of institution of learning.

Signed

Abstract

The study aim was to investigate the perceptions of senior leaders within the sector to determine their views of the key challenges in contemporary academic leadership and to inform practice for the future.

Academic leadership is a key component of the success or otherwise of an academic institution. There is significant literature around the issue of academic leadership the emphasis of which is based around the perceptions of academic staff and how they would wish to be led.

The work was undertaken from an interpretivist perspective using a phenomenological research design to elicit an understanding of the views of senior managers through conducting semi-structured interviews and a focus group with senior university leaders. The interview process afforded the respondents the opportunity to recount their own experiences in their own terms with their own emphasis on what was important to them within the broad structure of the four core categories drawn from the literature: definitions of leadership; leadership in an HEI; academic leadership and leadership development.

The findings from this study provides a contribution through considering senior leaders perceptions on how best to lead the academic staff to maximise their contribution to the institution and ultimately to better serve the needs of students.

Practice implications include the forwarding of a framework for the consideration of the development of academic leaders within the Higher Education context.

Dedication

To Jim,

The love of my life.

Acknowledgements

My thanks must go to my family, friends and colleagues.

To Ross & Kerry and Chris who put up with me throughout this process and all of the challenges of it. To my Mum and Dad for always being there for me, to Anne, David & Gillian and to Heather for listening endlessly and providing practical help. I could not have done this without all of you.

I would also like to thank the respondents who so willingly and enthusiastically gave me their time and their views, it was a pleasure to work with you on this project.

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1. Chapter 1: Introduction, Context and Aim of the Study

1.1 Introduction

Over the past two decades public service reform in the UK has become a constant feature of our governing structures. The introduction of New Public Management (NPM) following from the Thatcher governing years placed pressure on public services to act more in line with leadership and management principles based on private sector experience (Hood, 1991). As both a driver in and response to the reform agenda a strengthening of leadership in the public sector was identified as a critical factor. (PIU, 2001).

The reform agenda began to raise questions not only about the nature of leadership but also about the best way to develop leaders within an environment which is turbulent and subject to constant change. Higher Education is a prime example of such an operating environment given the changes in the governing structures of universities, funding issues and the emphasis on quality assurance and enhancement. It could be argued that all the issues of leadership and management brought about through public reform have been writ large for higher Education (PIU, 2001).

Whilst a number of studies have been conducted related to leadership in universities most have focussed on the views and perceptions of the academic cadre in leading the academic cadre, (Bolden *et al.,* 2012; Burgoyne, 2006). However, the hierarchical nature of higher education institutions requires that consideration is also given to the views of senior leaders so that effective leadership of academic staff can be enhanced.

Leadership has many conceptions and definitions and these will be addressed in the Literature Review (Chapter 2). It is clear that leadership is a contested area of study however the necessity for leadership in organisations is clear, 'Excellent organisations have leaders who shape the future and make it happen, acting as role models for its values and ethics and inspiring trust at all times. They are flexible, enabling the organisation to anticipate and react in a timely manner to ensure the on-going success of the organisation.' (EFQM, 2013: p.10).

Leadership has become an important issue for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as they change from wholly educational institutions to a combination of educational and commercial organisations which play a central role in the life of the country.

1.2　Context of Higher Education in Scotland

Higher Education is an area of responsibility which is devolved to the Scottish Government, since its inception in 1999 there has been a divergence in policy between Westminster and Holyrood in relation to aspects around the public funding of institutions for example, the introduction of student fees in the other constituent nations of the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland and Wales).

There are 19 HEI's in Scotland ranging in size from the largest Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities to the smallest Glasgow School of Art. The public money which HEI's receive is distributed to them by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) which acts on behalf of the Scottish Government in distributing public monies but also in ensuring that all of the conditions attached to the award are adhered to. This funding makes up a proportion of the total income of institutions with some of the smaller institutions receiving the majority of their income from the public purse to some of the larger ones receiving significantly less than half of their income from this source. Institutions can generate external income from their research, international students, international campuses and other commercial sources.

The Robbins Report, which was a UK wide report commissioned by the then Prime Minister and published in 1963 outlined the four aims of Higher Education as: the instruction of skills; the promotion of the 'powers of the mind'; the advancement of learning; and the transmission of a common culture and common standards of citizenship.

Given the changing nature of education (mostly due to funding pressures) the purpose of Higher Education (HE) too is a contested area and it is not clear whether the aims above would still resonate wholly within the sector. This is primarily because there is no mention of research or commercial work both of which are now activities of institutions although the fundamental educational aims remain central. This Robbins Report also encouraged the growth in the sector in the UK, which had been stagnant for many years, with the establishment of the Universities of Stirling, Strathclyde and Heriot-Watt in Scotland.

The Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 enabled the extension of the number of institutions holding university title and Privy Council charter. These 'post 1992' universities are Napier, Caledonian, Paisley, Robert Gordon and Abertay. The Act also facilitated an extension of formal accountability that universities had for their use of public money through the rigorous measurement of outcomes and emphasis on private sector styles of management thus reflecting the doctrinal components of new public management as identified by Hood (1991).

University governance is an ongoing issue for the Scottish Government beginning with the publication in 2012 of the Review of Higher Education Governance in Scotland chaired by Professor Ferdinand von Prondzynski. The Review panel asserted the importance of autonomy for HEIs in Scotland but also reinforced the *'legitimate public interest'* (p4) in the activities of institutions where they are spending public monies.

In 2010 Universities Scotland, in response to an invitation from the Cabinet Secretary for Education, justified the public funding of institutions stating that 'Scotland's universities are a central economic, social and cultural asset and are crucial to our international profile. Successful and competitive universities are motors of sustainable economic growth; major export earners; the developers of graduate level skills on which the future economy will depend; the 'ladder of opportunity' for a wide diversity of Scottish learners; and a cornerstone of Scotland's international reputation'   (Universities Scotland, 2010).

Universities are clearly a significant asset to the country however the question of governance is further complicated as they do not sit wholly within the public or private sectors. It could be argued that this is a matter of choice for some institutions so some of the governance issues are self-making.   This unusual position however can have its advantages as institutions can be exempt from some of the government initiatives which may tie institutions in a way they would not wish to be.

Whilst today the purpose of universities can be debated most would accept that universities exist to educate students and carry out research. This education is carried out by academic staff however such staff tend to make up less than half of the total staffing within institutions. As academic staff tend to be in the minority there is a constant question around the levels of control they exert (Bolden *et al.,* 2012). The concept of academic freedom is very important especially as senior managers may themselves have been developed and promoted through the academic ranks. Arguably the tensions around academic freedom differentiate academic institutions from other types of organisation, impact the culture of institutions and therefore the leadership therein.

1.3 The Researcher

Having worked in the HE Sector since 1996 and previously worked in the NHS and in Local Authorities, my key interest is Human Resources and I have worked at Director Level for the last 25 years. Given the nature of the senior roles I have held for the majority of my career I consider issues from a managerial perspective and this clearly has an impact on my philosophical approach.

Before deciding on the area of study I considered my own background, experience and values. The DBA process exposed me to a whole new area of philosophical approaches to research, this was an area which had not been covered in my earlier MBA degree and therefore had an

immediate impact on how I viewed the world and how I wished to approach my research. I did not consider that my approach to research had changed since my MBA studies rather I was able to rationalise that approach and effectively put a label on it.

Having considered the range of philosophical approaches available I have approached this research from an interpretivist perspective. My professional background has taught me the advantage of a range of possible solutions which is then likely to offer a choice to the audience. I chose this area of research as it was of interest to me both personally but also professionally. In my roles within universities I have been responsible for the development of leaders within the institution and have witnessed some of the problems that can occur around providing individuals with strategic and explicit interventions that can benefit both the individual and the institution.

1.4   The Research Project and Institutional Context

From my practice experience there seemed often a gap between what the institution desired in leadership and what it was able to achieve. The issue seemed to be around drawing together the academic staff of the institution towards a set of agreed goals and providing development interventions to enhance the leadership of academic staff. A practice based hunch was that a clear understanding of academic leadership was required in order to inform development interventions for those leading academic members of staff.

The study institution's leadership context has an impact on its leadership agenda and its leadership structure, as is common with many HEIs the leadership structure was a hierarchical one.

The university was a post '92 institution in Scotland, operating with a range of academic provision and a reputation for the teaching of international students.

The institution was led by a Senior Management Team which encompassed:

- Principal & Vice Chancellor

- Two Vice Principals

- Three Deans of Faculty

- University Secretary

- Director of Finance

- Director of Human Resources

Each of the Deans led a Faculty which were made up of either 2 or 3 Schools each led by a Head of School, there were eight Schools in total, each Faculty and School had its own Management Team. There were six professional Services Directorates each led by a Director and each Directorate had its own Management Team.

On the academic side of governance all academic decisions were taken by Academic Board which was made up of elected representatives from the Faculties and Schools and other senior staff,

such as the Principal and Vice Principals, who were members by virtue of their role.

In managing the academic output of the HEI each academic programme required a Programme Leader who took responsibility for the overall shape of the programme, within the University regulations. All academic staff were split into Subject Groups and were managed by a Subject Group Leader (SGL). The challenge for Programme Leaders was that they often manage the programme without managing the staff associated with it, this task fell to the SGL who had to manage a number of staff who serviced a number of programmes. The SGL role is clearly a challenging one and an individual could be allocated to this role regardless of their grade.

On the professional services side there was a hierarchy of roles within the Directorates, the structure varied dependant on need but there were a number of senior leadership roles within each.

The institution had a well-defined Scheme of Delegation which outlined the varying levels at which decisions could be made, this was a formal University Court document and formed part of the Financial Regulations of the institution. Whilst this did not allow for any decisions to be taken at an inappropriate level it did encompass the desire to delegate and distribute leadership as far as possible within the organisation.

1.5 Research Aim and Objectives

In order to ensure that the study did not become unmanageable it was important to put in place boundaries which would define the study and focus it appropriately, these boundaries are in effect the research aim and objectives defined below.

The overall aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions of senior leaders within Higher Education to determine their views of the key challenges in contemporary academic leadership and to inform practice for the future.

The research has the following objectives:
- To consider key literatures and definitions of the concept of leadership in relation to Higher Education.
- To investigate the perceptions of senior leaders of the practice of leadership in Higher Education.
- To identify key challenges in leading academic staff from the perspective of senior leaders.
- To develop a conceptual framework of academic leadership to inform the practice of leadership development.

1.6   Structure of the Thesis

	Title of Chapter	Content of Chapter	Purpose of Chapter to Thesis Structure
1	Introduction, Context and Aim of the Study	The context of HE along with background information on the Researcher moving on to the research project and the institutional context in which the work was carried out leading to the identification of the research aim and objectives.	Draws together the important aspects of the content and aim/objectives of the study and highlights the content and journey of the thesis, presenting the problematized issue.
2	Literature Review	The literature covering the main themes of the thesis – context of HE, definition of Leadership, Leadership in HE, Academic Leadership, Motivations for Leadership roles, Succession Planning/Talent Management and finally Development of Leaders within HE.	This chapter presented the key literature topics and themes which allows the identification of the topics to be covered throughout the thesis. These themes impacted the primary data collection.

3	Research Methodology and Methods	Presentation of the research methodology - interprevist, phenomenological approach given the research questions, background to the study and the subject matter. The use of semi-structured interviews was the most appropriate data collection technique and the ethical issues surrounding the project were also addressed. The pilot project and the data analysis technique were also described.	The identification of the researcher's philosophical stance, ontology, epistemology, and axiology, the interprevitist stance and the phenomenological approach. This chapter also covered the 'technical' issues surrounding the research process.
4	Findings	Presentation of the findings identified key themes from the data analysis. From the findings presented around the meaning of academic leadership for senior staff in HE.	Selected raw data was presented in thematic format to inform the discussion and provide an audit trail.

5	Discussion	Key findings were discussed in relation to the literature and developed into the conceptual framework to present an understanding of academic leadership.	This Chapter provided the synthesis of key arguments drawn from the data and key literature to contextualise the conceptual framework.
6	Conclusions & Recommendations	Consideration of the extent to which the aim has been met and consideration of the limitations of this work to make recommendations for practice.	Presentation of conclusions and recommendations along with the contribution to knowledge and practice is particularly important.

2. Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore the current debates around leadership in the higher education (HE) context and to identify gaps in the existing body of knowledge. The intention is not to produce a comprehensive review of the literature per se, but rather, to consider the relevant practice context and debates around the meaning and application of leadership in an HE environment. The literature around leadership is vast and is drawn from many different approaches and subject bases. This demonstrates the contested nature of the concept and the differing understandings and perceptions of leadership in practice. Given the nature of the research question literature around leadership and education needed to be explored in order to establish current trends in thinking about the theory and practice of leadership.

2.2 Context of Higher Education

Context is important in any consideration of leadership practice. Johns (2006, p.388) argues that the impact of context is not sufficiently recognised nor understood. He defines context as 'situational opportunities and constraints that affect the occurrence and meaning of organisational behaviour as well as the functioning relationships between variables.' Context, he argues, has the capacity to shape meaning and underlying organisational behaviour.

There is significant literature on the context of Higher Education, which points to the unique nature of leadership (Chandler *et al.*, 2002; Lumby, 2012). Ameijde *et al.*, (2009) argue that universities have been under pressure for a significant period of time to move from their historical roots as collegiate bodies to more private sector business orientated institutions, a trend not confined to the UK. Universities have witnessed an increasing concern with levels of public funding and individual governments have approached funding reform in different ways. In the UK this is evidenced by universities now attracting less than of 50% of their total income from the public purse. Further, like other public sector bodies, there has also been an increased emphasis on value for money strategies to control public spending initiatives. University governance is complicated as universities are not wholly public sector bodies but also independent charities managed by a University Court and a robust governance structure. However the reliance on a level of public income makes them accountable to the whims of government policy and in the case of this study to the devolved Scottish Government.

The current government's drive towards universities moving to a more corporate business focussed structure can be seen in the proposals to change the structure of University Courts to include student and Trade Union members and to ensure that Court Chairs are elected to their roles as opposed to being appointed by the University Court itself. Such structural reform initiatives often run counter to the key features of university governance required by unique organisational characteristics (Chandler *et al.*, 2002; Lumby, 2012). The emphasis on

a collegiate approach to leadership in the sector has been in place for many centuries but is now under pressure due to the perceived advantage of the implementation of management principles derived from the private sector. This it is argued is problematic.

2.3   Definition of Leadership

Developing an understanding of leadership and the concepts which have driven its development over time is essential in understanding leadership in Higher Education. It is one of social sciences most examined phenomena. This is not surprising, argues Bass (2008) as it is a universal activity evident in humankind and in the animal kingdom. Bennis and Nanus (1985, p.21) argue that: 'Leadership is like the Abominable Snowman, whose footprints are everywhere but who is nowhere to be seen.'

The term leadership is a relatively recent addition to the English language having come into general usage in the 19th century. The words lead and leader have a longer history but apply only to the single person. The evolution of the word leadership recognises that it is a much more complex concept than a single leader.

There are clearly a number of perspectives on and definitions of leadership. Lawton & Paez (2015) identify that the act of leading is about not being bound by convention but is about being curious about the world around us, seeking new challenges and seeing where imagination will take us. The argument of not being bound by

convention is interesting as this is in contrast to more traditional views of leadership. Lawton and Paez (2015) present three ways of conceptualising leadership - leadership in, leadership of and leadership for.

They argue that leadership in is about being at the forefront of the creation of new knowledge; the exploration of new territories. Leadership in is therefore akin to the academic mind-set of being seen as a leader in a subject area by your peers. Such people are interested in being recognised for excellence and may not crave organisational followers per se but rather intellectual followers where there will be little or no line responsibility relationship. Indeed their academic excellence may attract followers naturally and beyond organisational boundaries.

Leadership of is about motivating others in pursuit of a set of goals. It involves close relationships with others and requires the leader to take responsibility for others as well as themselves. This conception sees leadership as being relational and therefore subject to negotiation between the leader and an individual follower or group of followers. Rost (1993) also defines leadership as a collective endeavour, thus rejecting the concept that leadership is focussed on one charismatic individual as advocated by Hunt (1993).

Leadership for involves leading for the achievement of an organisational or societal goal, this may also involve the creation of a vision of the future. The creation of a vision is central to the activities

of a leader as discussed by Bryman (2007) in relation to outputs from the leadership effort.

The conception of leadership by Lawton & Paez (2015) above provides a useful definitional umbrella when considering the various considerations of leadership (and subsidiary concepts) in the social science literature. It is interesting however that few conceptions will fit wholly within one of the categories in, of or for showing the complex nature of leadership and the challenges of how we make sense of definitions which are linked to human relationships and understandings of these relationships in practice.

Historically leadership was first conceptualised in the 1920's with the trait theories; the 'great man' theory as advocated by Bernard (1926). This was the fashion for many years and can still be seen in some of the writings of more recent experts where the emphasis is on one individual to deliver for the organisation as a whole, it may also be one of the issues of dysfunctional leadership which has been apparent in some of the recent corporate scandals which will be referred to later in this review.

These findings were based on organisational psychology and from a concern to understand the impact leaders have on the behaviour of groups within the organisation and how this relates to the outcomes from that group. This continues to be the fundamental driver for understanding leadership – to explore and understand the impact the concept of leadership has on individuals, groups and organisational

performance. Improvement in organisational performance is key to this agenda.

Much of this early work concentrated on the impact of leadership on small groups within the organisation rather than the impact on the organisation as a whole however the small group impact was often then extrapolated to the whole organisation.   This is potentially dangerous as the way small groups behave is not necessarily the way an entire organisation will work even though it is made up of many small groups.

Behavioural theories then became fashionable, these were very much task related but also relationship related and included style theory, this very much concentrated on a debate between autocratic and democratic styles of leadership and the impact this has on the organisation, this can be seen in the work of Blake & Moulton (1964). However, there was still an emphasis on finding a panacea to leadership problems through the development of an ideal type.

Around the same era came the situational and contingency theories as referred to by Fiedler (1967) and more recently by Yukl (2002). Writers still draw parallels between the type of organisation and the behaviour of the leader within that organisation which may be important for leadership in higher education if we accept that the skills needed in higher education are potentially from those needed in a commercial/private sector environment.

To date the theories have concentrated on the leader looking at individual traits, styles and behaviours in order to identify individuals who can best lead. Landy (1989, p. 526) refers to 'reciprocal' theories arguing that leadership does not exist in a vacuum but is the interaction between the leader and those he seeks to lead. Indeed, it may be a possible gap in our understanding of leadership that we do not concentrate on good followership and how this may be developed.

Building on the view that followers are an important aspect of the leadership discussion Greenleaf (2002) argues that a great leader should be seen as a servant first. A leader must want to serve and then the leadership aspect comes later, if an individual does not want to serve their followers then they will never become a leader. This may be a more prevalent attitude in the public sector as serving is fundamental to the whole underlying ethos of the sector. He argues that servant leadership is the whole essence of leadership – going ahead to show the way to others to enable them to see the way. The servant's power of persuasion and empathy are ideal leadership qualities, it moves away from the whole perception of the leaders as ego driven.

Inherent in understandings of followership is the notion of the psychological contract. This is not the written contract between employer and employee but is the unwritten understanding of how the employment relationship will work. The CIPD (2008) describes the psychological contract as being built on three pillars; fairness, trust

and the delivery of the formal contract. It is essential to a good employment relationship that both parties seek to maintain their contribution to the psychological contract. Followers are more likely to follow where they perceive that the organisation and leader are upholding their side of the contract.

Moving on to 'New Leadership' theories as promoted by Bryman (1992) these became fashionable in the 1980's with the promotion of the concepts of transformational, charismatic, visionary and inspirational leadership. These theories moved away from the previous concept of small group leadership to organisational level leadership and they also introduced a conceptual difference between leadership and management. Bass (1998) with his concentration on management introduced the concepts of 'transactional' and 'transformational' leadership and management. The need to have a good manager managing the transactions of the organisation is not in dispute. Many of the commentators on this subject are dismissive of management but none of them argue that it is unnecessary, good leaders could not function without good managers. Managers and leaders are often the same person particularly within organisations following 'distributed leadership'.

Distributed leadership is a concept that is not unknown in the Higher Education context as defined by Senge 1993 as a form of leadership that is practiced by many. Distributed leadership it may be argued is at the heart of many of the structural reforms of individual institutions. This may indeed be because it works well for the setting

of HE but as importantly because of the vision it sets and the culture it helps to create. Bolden *et al.* (2012) present, in their work on the experience of academic leadership in the UK, a set of issues and principles that have implications for development within HEIs. They argue that leadership practice and development may be enhanced where senior staff lead academic staff through, for example: engaging hearts and minds; nurturing the next generation and taking a long term view of succession; creating space to thrive; stimulating a culture of debate and enquiry; creating structures that support the multiple identities that academic staff may have to play out; encouraging citizenship and providing opportunity for participation and engagement. Underpinning these practices are the principles of shared opportunity, control, mission and vision so central to understandings of distributed leadership.

Engaging with followers is of great importance in making distributed leadership work and we have seen the growth in the concept of employee engagement as linked to leadership. Khan (1990) first introduced the concept in this way through arguing that the previous concepts of job involvement, organisational commitment and intrinsic motivation were too far removed from the individual and their day to day experiences. He further argues that an individual who is personally engaged is physically involved, cognitively vigilant and emotionally connected. In comparison individuals who are personally disengaged are either physically, cognitively or emotionally withdrawn or defensive during work.

Khan (1990) argues that the reason that this is important is the impact it has on the organisation and the organisation's performance, as well as the individual level performance. Engaged employees simply work harder and better for the organisation. Buchanan & Huczynski (2010) define engagement slightly differently as the extent to which people enjoy and believe in what they do, and feel valued for doing it, this is particularly relevant for the broader leadership context in HE as it is important that all staff, particularly student facing staff, believe in what they do. Belief in the purpose of the sector is important to everyone working in the sector.

In improving levels of engagement MacLeod (2009) emphasises the need for authentic leadership, if the leaders does not believe the organisational rhetoric then why should the employees? The need to show, as a leader, a concern for your staff, a vision for the organisation and a set of values and behaviours which you want your staff to live is essential. Authenticity is vital to engage with a range of employees. Authenticity means the ability to say the right things and to act in a consistent and positive manner, anything less will devalue the individual leader and therefore the organisation.

Lawson & Paez (2015, P.642) describe authentic leadership as a "pattern of leader behaviour that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalised moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on

the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development."

Closely related to authentic leadership is the concept of ethical leadership, integrity is seen as fundamental to both (Brown *et al*. 2005, Baracco & Ellsworth, 2015). It is argued that the core values of honesty and justice are central to ethical leadership and that followers rightly expect their leaders to demonstrate consistency and coherence between their beliefs and their actions. Leaders must demonstrate their integrity through their daily actions, they cannot say one thing and act out another or they will have no credibility with their followers. Integrity is effectively being '*true to oneself'* Lawton & Paez (2015, p. 642). An engaged workforce led by an authentic leader who demonstrates a positive ethical pattern of behaviour will ensure that the building blocks for success are in place.

Having now looked at various theories and Storey (2004) argues that these theories should not be considered in a linear fashion but should be seen as an evolving set of theories which build on each other picking up the more successful aspects of previous theories and developing them and dismissing the negative aspects. This brings us to a position where we now have the foundations of the leadership theories which will help to place and define leadership generally and will now move on to look at leadership within the HE Sector.

In summary Southwell & Morgan (2010) define the extensive classification of leadership in the following table. This shows that different writers have focussed on different aspects of leadership and that leadership theory has moved from the leader-centred, individualistic and hierarchical conceptions (focussing on universal characteristics and emphasising the power of the leader over the followers) towards the more process-centred, collective, context bound conceptions (focussing on the non-hierarchical, mutual power and influence).

Even with this literature spread there is still a concentration on the more collective concepts of leadership, Bolden (2012) argues that current theory still concentrates on the role, capabilities and experiences of people with formal managerial responsibilities.

An Overview of Conceptions of Leadership (Southwell & Morgan 2010)

Theory	Conception of leadership	Forms	Proponents
Trait theories	Leadership is found in the 'traits' or 'personal qualities' of an individual.	Charismatic theory	Stogdill, 1948 Méndez-Morse, 1992 Conger &Kanungo, 1998
Behaviour Theories	Leadership is found in the 'behaviour' or 'style' of an individual.	Autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire approaches to leadership	Stogdill& Coons, 1957 Blake & Mouton, 1964; 1978 McGregor, 1960 Ramsden, 1998
Power and influence theories	Leadership is determined by the use of power by an individual to lead or influence others.	Legitimate power Reward power Coercive power Expert power Referent power	Weber, 1945 Heifetz,1994 Yukl, 1999 French & Raven, 1959
Contingency Theories	Leadership is determined by the interaction between the individual's behaviour and the context within which they lead.	Situational leadership	Fiedler, 1967 Vroom &Yetton, 1973 Hersey & Blanchard, 1988
Cognitive theory	Leadership is socially constructed. Cognitive processes influence the perception of leaders and leadership by both leader and follower.		Fiedler, 1986 Fiedler & Garcia, 1987

Cultural/ symbolic theory	Leadership is a continuous process of meaning-making for and with organisational members.		Bolman& Deal, 2003
Social exchange Theories	Leadership is determined by the individual's ability to fulfil the expectations of the followers.	Path–goal theory Transactional leadership Transformat-ional leadership Servant leadership LMX theory	House &Dessler, 1974 Manz& Sims, 1980 Kouzes& Posner, 1987 Greenleaf, 1996; 2003 Graen&Uhl-Bien, 1998 Ackoff, 1998
Complexity and chaos theory	Leadership is laden with values and has a moral dimension. Leadership is shared. Leadership is determined by the individual's emotional intelligence, ability to be collaborative, and ability to link entrepreneurialism, accountability and globalisation to educational leadership.	Emotional intelligence Moral purpose Community building	Wilcox & Ebbs, 1992 Brown-Wright, 1996 Astin&Astin, 2000 Kezar, 2002 Ferren& Stanton, 2004 Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006 Goleman, 2004 Scott, 2007

Given the main developments in the theoretical conceptions of leadership represented above there are several important points that impact on the study in terms of presenting a generalised definition and in developing themes for investigation.

Certainly the collective and relational aspects of leadership practice seem dominant in recent conceptions. The overall purpose of leadership also appears to be strongly based on helping the individual to achieve their best in order that the organisation may flourish. Thus the following conception is one that will be taken to represent a synthesised representation of leaders for this study.

`Leaders… shape the future and make it happen, acting as role models for [the organisation's] values and ethics and inspiring trust at all times. They are flexible, enabling the organisation to anticipate and react in a timely manner to ensure the on-going success of the organisation' (EFQM, 2013 p.10).

Having considered the various conceptions of leadership it is important to move on to the theoretical perspectives which have been highlighted as most relevant to Higher Education sector practice.

2.4 Leadership in Higher Education

"Academics like to lead but they don't like to be led".

"You cannot in our sort of organisation order people about". Garrett & Davies (2010, p. 4).

At one level it could be argued that Universities are just large corporate organisations and therefore their leadership requirements would be no different to any other large corporate organisation. This is certainly one view which is expressed by some commentators however others identify the particular nature of Higher Education as requiring a different leadership style to other organisations.

Lumby (2012) argues that the factors which are noted as being distinctive such as financial viability whilst delivering public policy goals, changes in public policy, leading highly expert, creative and driven independent members of staff may also be faced by some aspects of the commercial sector particularly those at the cutting edge of technology. Senior leaders in universities now find themselves spending significant amounts of time involved in high level policy debates out with their own institutions at local, national and international levels. Bolden *et al.* (2008) argue that this means that leaders at less senior levels within the organisation take on more responsibility for the day to day leadership and management of the institution just as in the corporate world.

Lumbly (2012) argues that despite the similarities with leadership in the corporate world there is one distinctive factor that is not replicated – this is concerning the nature of academics and academic work. This he argues is a key difference and one which has a profound effect on the leadership of the sector.

One, not wholly, distinctive characteristic is the longevity of the sector. Universities can trace their roots back many centuries, they have proved that whatever they have been doing for this time has been successful as they have weathered many storms during their existence. Burgoyne (2009) argues that whatever has happened over the centuries has left a sector which is not dysfunctional but is in fact very successful.

Higher Education finds itself at the vanguard of the movement for better leadership in the UK both through the expressed need to improve its own leadership but also to improve leadership development for the country as a whole through education argues Bolden *et al*. (2008).

Defining the leadership positions in the sector is interesting; there are a number of roles in each institution which are clearly leadership roles e.g. Vice Chancellor, Vice Principal, Heads of Schools and Directors of professional services. The structures in each institution are different but this does not impact on the existence of defined leadership roles in each institution. Individuals in these roles will see themselves in leadership positions if only because leadership activities are defined

in the job description, Bryman (2007). Others within the institution may not consider the role holders in these positions to be exercising leadership. Bolden *et al*. (2012) found in their study of staff across a variety of institutions that formal leadership roles inhibit their work rather than facilitate it. Academics were found not to see the connection between the leadership activities of these individuals and the work they are doing on a day to day basis.

This disconnect between the individual academic and institutional leadership is also described by Bolden *et al.* (2012) as representing 'self-leadership'. The idea that academics, as highly intelligent individuals, need to be led is challenged in this research which looks at the intensity of the autonomy which academics desire as being more extreme than other professionals in different contexts. He argues that the intensity of that autonomy negates any meaningful leadership by and from others. Bryman (2007) further argues that where individuals have a professional orientation and a need for autonomy then the impact of leader behaviour will be neutralised. Jones *et al*. (2012) argue that HE needs a less hierarchical approach which will take account of the specialised and professional nature of academic staff, in common with Bolden *et al*. (2012) they emphasise the depth and breadth of the autonomy which they argue is not common in other professions.

This, of course, is not to suggest that if institutions decided to have no management or leadership positions at all that they would be successful. There is an inherent need for something which will allow individuals to provide the support to enable the academic to function within a shell that is the University. Thus Powell & Clark (2012) propose that academics produce the required outputs i.e. teaching, research etc. without institutional leadership but require institutional management to provide them with the environment in which to function. In stark contrast to this Bolden *et al.* (2012) found that most academics are looking for visionary leadership. It is difficult to reconcile these two opposing views and the seeming conflict will provide a focus for this study.

It is further argued that there are tensions within the sector and that there are specific 'difficulties in maintaining a balance between top-down, bottom-up and lateral processes of communication and influence` Bolden *et al.* (2008, p. 364). They identified a tension between the need for collegiality and managerialism, individual autonomy and collective engagement, leadership of the discipline and the institution, academic versus administrative authority, informality and formality, inclusivity and professionalization, and stability and change.' (ibid). A fundamental issue of leadership within an academic environment, there is a need to strike a balance in all of these areas to foster a values driven positive culture within the institution. Bolden *et al.* (2008) observed a combined or 'hybrid' model of leadership within the institutions he studied which comprised a mix of the elements of top down, bottom up horizontal and emergent influence,

power and authority that led to a type of leadership which could be seen throughout the institution and was in some ways similar to conceptions of distributed leadership.

Central to such a `hybrid` leadership form is the issue of trust. Rowley & Sherman (2003) and Garrett & Davies (2004) argue trust cannot be commanded but rather it must always be earned and this can be done by being honest, trustworthy, by distributing resources in an open and transparent way and by maintaining a positive relationship with peers and subordinates. The benefits of being a trusted leader are immeasurable Dyer (1977) argues. The old adage of treating others as you would be treated yourself is the key to being trusted in an academic environment. All staff within the institution deserve respect from all of the leaders but in particular the leader at the top. Academics deserve respect because they have earned it through their academic contribution but that does not mean they should be treated any differently from others in the institution argues Rowley & Sherman (2003).

Considering transformational leadership in the Higher Education sector Rao (2014) emphasised the need to ensure that the end goal is clear but that the means of achieving that goal is where the transformational 'bit' becomes clear, it is about the 'how' of achieving the goals. Transformational leadership enriches and reinforces the values and ethics of an academic institution. Transformational leaders, he argues, demonstrate trust and confidence in their team

members and set extremely high moral and ethical standards in all of their work.

There is an obvious tension in academic institutions between administration and academic colleagues (Rowley & Sherman, 2003), at its best administration facilitates the teaching and research processes by delivering the resources, facilities and technologies required by the academic staff for them to deliver their agreed outputs. At the other end of the spectrum administration can become the bane of the academics life by placing unnecessary obstacles in the way of the academic community. Many academics, they argue, do not wish to take on leadership roles because they perceive that they will have to deal with the more negative connotations of administrative life which they have seen stereotyped for many years. In missing this opportunity they miss the very real opportunities to impact policy and change scenarios to bring about a positive improvement for their colleagues.

In terms of the functions and behaviours of leaders within an academic environment there is a difference in views amongst researchers however Bryman (2007) proposed the following list as the essentials of leadership within Higher Education: an individual who is trusted and who has personal integrity; an individual who is supportive of their staff; a style which is inclusive and involves others in decision making; a style which is value driven and which involves others extensively in the creation of these values; a sense of direction, a vision; protection of staff.

Within this is an assumption that this is the key requirements for all leaders within the institution not just the individual or individuals at the top. Peters & Ryan (2015) add to the above list from the LHFE Leadership and Management Survey 2015 which identified assertiveness, competence, relatedness and morality as being essential for the success of leaders within Higher Education. They also emphasised the need to have a considered style which encompasses collaboration and equality rather than a top down managerialist style.

Managerialist approaches augment the vertical differentiation in organisations and Bolden *et al.* (2008) identify the potential for horizontal differentiation within universities through silo working. In order to overcome such differentiation they identify the need for managers and leaders across the institution, both academic and professional services to have a shared 'social identity' with other managers to ensure that the institution functions across the board, they recommend the way of ensuring this is to offer informal networking opportunities which will foster a sense of belonging to the management cadre and will enable individuals to work together more effectively across perceived boundaries.

The need for a more integrated leadership is akin to understandings of distributed leadership and this is often spoken about in the sector and in other aspects of education. The call for distributed leadership has been promoted in secondary schools for many years primarily by Spillane (2004) who views it as a conceptual framework through which to understand how multiple players construct leadership in relation to

the physical and social context. This implies that leadership is intentional, intuitive and emergent and is actually an organisational resource because it is invested in many, not in the few as Bryman (2007) describes through the identification of clear leadership roles.

In further conceptions of distributed leadership Cohen (2001) views leadership as a spectrum with the great man theories at one end of the spectrum and institutional anarchy at the other with distributed leadership as the middle ground. He acknowledges the requirement for leadership for the benefit of the individual and the organisation and sees distributed leadership as the way of delivering it for the sector. Lumby (2012) argues from his research and review of other LFHE research that individuals from across the institution should have the opportunity to contribute to the leadership of the institution and that distributed leadership should be the preferred model for the sector. Jones *et al.* (2012) refers to this distributed leadership as 'collective collaboration' rather than as about individual power and control. Talk of distributed leadership is likely to be suspect unless there is an obvious devolution of managerial responsibility.

On a conceptual level Ameijd *et al.* (2009) argues that the notion of distributed leadership is well aligned to the ideas of collegiality and professional autonomy which have been prevalent in the sector. Distributed leadership, they argue, is also valid in the environment of continuous change which the sector finds itself where, in practice, many issues are dealt with through project teams where local leadership is required. In such circumstances Pearce (2004) recognises

that no one individual is capable of holding all of the expertise required to deliver the project therefore distributed leadership is appropriate.

The related concept of shared leadership is also widely called for as a solution to leadership problems in the sector. Wassener (2012, p.364) defines shared leadership as follows "a dynamic, interactive, influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organisational goals."

Shared leadership exists where individuals move the leadership responsibility to one another as needed by the environment, group or circumstances. This is very different from a fixed hierarchy. Wassener (2012) argues that leadership exists not in one person's hands but in the groups' arms as they move towards common goals. Pearce (2004) also argues that distributed or shared leadership can complement the more traditional vertical leadership which is more apparent in the sector as the two styles can work well together in different circumstances. He also emphasises that distributed leadership arises from interactions of diverse individuals in a setting where expertise is a dispersed quality, HE is one such scenario as expertise is liberally dispersed throughout the institution. Bolden *et al* (2008) discusses the idea that distributed leadership moves away from the more traditional leader-centric perspectives and moves to putting leadership practice centre stage rather than the leader in centre stage. Pearce (2012) suggests that scholarly communities have taken on the notion that leadership is actually a process that can be taught, shared,

distributed and collectively enacted. They have begun to popularise the view that leadership can be a shared influence process and that leaders do not necessarily have to come from the recognised hierarchy, this in keeping with Wassener's (2012) view.

Empirical studies have shown that individuals show greater satisfaction from shared leadership rather than from hierarchical leadership, group satisfaction also increased as Pearce (2012) demonstrates. Maeda (2011) also emphasised an academics need for acknowledgement of them as individuals and as academics particularly in relation to research, this impacts on how academics wish to be led.

Both Pearce and Wassener (2012) effectively express the view that two or more heads are better than one and that better decisions are made when decisions are made in a collective manner. Shared working, dispersed leadership, community and collegiate working are all concepts discussed in the literature above and Debowski (2012) adds to this by proposing that all academic leaders should operate with a collegial focus where they engage the academic community effectively and respectfully and involve them in all decisions that impact on their students, their work and their environment. This is clearly a tall order with a diverse group of academics who actually want to be engaged in a different way dependant on their specific needs at the time. To further complicate the issue academics are often rewarded for their own personal contribution not for their collegiate working, this could be perceived to be an institution sending mixed

messages about the behaviour it wishes to reward. Wilson (2013) and Bryman (2007) argue that the fundamental mistake that institutions make is treating their academic staff, their professionals, as employees not as professionals.

The key features of distributed or shared leadership within the sector as promoted in the literature include the perceived individual and collective identities of academics. It is expected that the perceived identity of academics will be a factor in this study both in how leadership is approached and in how it is practiced.

At the opposite end of the spectrum from collegial working is a managerialist approach and this is a current topic within the sector with the view that managerialism is becoming too common a style to the detriment of the academic experience. Bryman (2007) sees managerialism as involving not consulting academics, not respecting their values and subject expertise, undermining individual autonomy and allowing the institution to drift. He asserts that managerialism is becoming more common because the collegial involvement of staff is deemed to be too slow and cumbersome in today's environment.

Managerialism is essentially about control and Blau & Scott (1970) highlighted that tension has always existed between the desire for personal freedom and the desire for organisational control. This tension has been deemed to have increased by what Pollitt (1993) and others have termed managerialism over the past 25 years. He defines managerialism in simple terms as a belief in administrative, managerial and technocratic routine. He also argues that belief in this relatively simple, no-nonsense way of working could lead to an excessive amount of control and regulation. This is exactly what Bryman (2007) is highlighting and he goes further by damming this as wholly inappropriate in an academic context.

Managerialism is a traditional way of leading an organisation, a very top-down way and Bryman (2007) argues that there is evidence which suggests that traditional leadership could be damaging within the sector. This is more likely where the leadership behaviours displayed are overt and perceived to interfere with academic autonomy. This implies that what is important is what leaders don't do in the sector that leaders in other contexts would actually do. This could mean that leaders should utilise a 'minimalist' style in the sector. Maeda (2011) argues that academics require constructive conflict to reach the best conclusion in any scenario and this impacts on the leadership style applied within the institution. Mintzberg (1998) suggests that most professional workers do not require much direct supervision but that they require a covert manner of leadership which offers them the support they need within the environment they function in. This suggests that academics do not need the traditional form of

leadership and if this is forced on them then they will show resistance to it. It also shows that leadership is contextual i.e. the style of leadership required is dependent on the organisational type.

Academic freedom is central to the context and culture of Higher Education and is defined as follows 'The freedom of teachers and students to teach, study or pursue knowledge and research without unreasonable interference or restrictions from law, institutional regulations or public pressure. Its basic elements include the freedom of teachers to inquire into any subject that evokes their intellectual concern; to present their findings to their students, colleagues and others; to publish their data and conclusions without control or censorship and to teach in the manner they consider professionally appropriate.'

When looking at leadership in academia any discussion has to include followers in the same way as we considered followers in the earlier discussion on general leadership. Debowski (2012) describes the crucial nature of followers describing them on a spectrum from '*isolates*' to '*diehards*' with '*bystanders*' and '*activists*' in the middle, these behaviours are driven by the concept of academic freedom. This describes the nature of the academic community from the isolated individual who concentrates on his own area of teaching/research not engaging with the rest of the community, with bystanders standing back for the institution watching what is going on. At the other end of the spectrum there are activists who are very engaged with their peers

and the rest of the community and take part in all opportunities to influence the direction of their own areas and also the direction and workings of the University, the diehards will fight to have their place and opinions recognised within the institution and can be disruptive both to their colleagues and to the institution. There can be disruptive follower behaviour exhibited in universities due to the nature of the academic community. The very deep rooted sense of professionalism and of expertise can breed some undesirable behaviour. The reality, however is that the leader will have to lead all of the constituent parts of the institution to achieve the ultimate goals and encouraging the growth and development of each individual.

2.5 Academic Leadership

Having looked at the literature surrounding the context and culture of Higher Education and having identified the one distinctive factor within the sector is the academic staff and their need and desire to be led in a particular way it is important to explore the nature of academic staff and the impact of this on the culture of institutions. Academic leadership is defined by Gmelch (1993) as the act of building a community of scholars to set direction and achieve common purposes through the empowerment of faculty and staff. Bolden (2012) adds to this by defining it as a process by which academic values and identities are constructed, communicated and enacted and that this shapes and informs a sense of purpose for individual academics which are operationalized by individuals who do this through self-leadership which is a characteristic of academic staff.

Davidson (2013) highlights the constrained culture within which academic leaders have to operate, she argues that academic leadership requires an unusual amount of creativity and ingenuity within an unusual amount of constraint. Ramsden (1998) argues that academic leaders have a good knowledge of teaching and research and must provide the means by which their colleagues can perform well. Garrett & Davies (2010) argue that the role of an academic leader is to inspire individuals as this empowers them to achieve their personal and the organisations goals.

In summary the literature consistently points to Bryman's (2007) view that academic leadership is the ability to lead a collegial team in a collaborative and empowering way. In terms of understanding academic leadership it is important to bear in mind what motivates academic staff within their roles and Peters & Ryan (2015) argue that the motivating factors are, challenging/interesting work, opportunities for learning/growth and autonomy. This desire for autonomy particularly impacts on how leadership is carried out in Higher Education and drives the need for leaders to behave in a certain way.

The essential reason for defining and discussing academic leadership is to improve the effectiveness of the organisation argues Siddique *et al.* (2011). The definition of organisational effectiveness is open to interpretation as it could encompass many things from student success to organisational sustainability both are equally valid but

Siddique *et al.* (2011) emphasise the student/research success from an academic perspective as being important.

Having defined academic leadership it is helpful to look at the responsibilities that academic leaders have and Ramsden (1998) suggests that there are four central responsibilities. Firstly vision, strategic action, planning and managing resources both human and financial. Secondly they have responsibility for enabling, inspiring and motivating academic staff. Thirdly they are responsible for recognising, developing and assessing performance of their own academic staff and lastly they are responsible for learning to lead in their own area and to improve the overall leadership of the institution.

Individual academics, McFarlane (2007) argues have to serve five distinct 'masters' with their students being perceived as the most important, but also their colleagues, their institutions, their profession/discipline and the wider public. This variety of masters leads to confusion as to where, beyond students their priorities lie. He also refers to academics as '*citizens*' and this implies that they are part of a collective, part of a community of scholars who serve their different communities and that this is a difficult task as priorities change over time and are different from each of the masters.

Middle managers in academic areas such as Deans/Heads of School occupy a very difficult and complex role argue Clegg & McAuley (2005). There is a tension between the needs of the institution through their management functions and the more traditional collegiate way of working which is expected of them by the academic community. Smith (2002) found that the main roles of middle managers are leader, academic manager, and scholar and staff developer. He also found that the activities which took up most of the available time were personnel management, resource management, department governance, departmental representation, and quality assurance and student issues. In his research Smith (2002) found that the most important attributes for Heads was interpersonal skills, vision and communications skills. This activity and responsibility, he argues, is alongside the individual's own academic work of teaching, researching and academic supervision. Although as has been argued this academic work is critical if the individual is to maintain their own academic credibility. This view of academic credibility as being essential is echoed by Bolden *et al* (2008) who emphasised from his research that academics will only follow leaders who they consider are credible and that credibility is academic credibility.

Petrov *et al.* (2007) noted when exploring different pathways to academic leadership that many academics initially resist taking on a leadership role but in time enjoyed the challenges and influence that it offered and many of them chose to remain in academic leadership rather than returning to their pure academic role. Individuals found that over time their contribution to 'academic work' reduced and they

moved from teaching and research to facilitation of teaching and research. This shift indicated the move from an 'academic' to a 'leader' and could be used to reframe the shift from academic to leader in a way which is not frightening and does not undermine the individual's identity as an academic.

The psychological contract for academic staff is different argues Watson (2009) from that discussed previously; he considers that the concept of '*membership*' is central to the relationship. He describes this as having a range of dimensions from status through legitimate expectations to inescapable obligations and responsibilities all of which the academic expects the leader to deliver. Being part of the academic community is a significant source of satisfaction for an academic. Ameijde *et al.* (2009) point to a perception that academic staff in institutions perceive an on-going struggle between the traditional pluralist culture, academic freedom and the increase in top-down management and leadership practices.

Academics have been found to value 'collegiality' defined as involvement in decision making, support for new/young academics, peer support for all academics in the department and a feeling of being part of a community of scholars. Olsen (1993) argues that this aspect of academic life has declined in recent years but where it exists it is one of the most attractive aspects of academic life and actually contributed to the retention of academics in the profession. Kossuth (2015) argues that the use of compassionate leadership models would be appropriate in academic life, these models focus on moving from

'*I*' the leader to '*we*' and take into account the social and emotional wellbeing of all actors in academic life, she argues that this makes for better employees and therefore for better organisations.

There is an on-going tension within the sector between Universities as employers and their role in providing individual academics with the space and facilities to pursue their own scholarly and disciplinary interests. McInnes (2010, p.153) describes this relationship as "the in-principle freedom to research and teach as they choose means in effect that academic faculty have traditionally defined and owned their work….To translate this ownership into everyday terms, when they are asked about their working week it is not unusual for them to respond that they have been very busy but have not had time to do their 'own work''.

This points to the disconnect between professional independence and the personal economic dependence of academic staff. Commentators have repeatedly pointed to academic life as being hugely satisfying and at the same time very frustrating. In spite of all of the issues academic staff have, academia continues to be a very attractive environment to work in. This is the challenge for leaders within the sector to lead an organisation where there are such opposing views and feelings and where there is little staff turnover because of the attractive nature of the profession. Bolden *et al.* (2012) found that, in general, academics did not value leadership roles; they perceived them to be low status roles which did not contribute to the '*real*' academic work. In some instances they perceived leadership to be

counterproductive. Maeda (2011) found that leaders are generally respectfully disrespected by academics. In contrast Siddique (2011) argues that there are three types of academic leadership, research leadership, educational leadership and administrative leadership, it is difficult to imagine that academics would not value research and educational leadership as they are the core activities of an academic and to undertake leadership in these areas is core to their role.

Conversely, those in his study who perceived themselves to be in leadership roles spoke eloquently of their contribution to the success of the institution. However Lumby (2012) could not see any concrete evidence of the positive impact leadership has on the core business of any institution i.e. teaching and research. Bolden *et al.* (2012) also found that academics spoke of the need for vision and it is difficult to know where this vision would actually come from if it does not come from leaders. Lumby (2012) discusses the paradox of academics displaying hostility to top down leadership but also wanting/needing top down leadership to set the vision and values for the organisation as a whole.

Followers will always view their leader from a technical perspective and this is particularly the case in academia, academic credibility is central to respect for any individual in a leadership position however they will also view them from an emotional perspective as engagement is key to success. This is the balance between respecting the intelligence of the individual and feeling emotionally that they are

a good person and should therefore be trusted, argues Ramsden (1998).

Gmelch & Miskin (2011) argue strongly that leaders must be capable of critical self-reflection to be able to assess and improve their own practice.

As has been highlighted there are those in institutions who are in formal leadership roles but that there are individuals who 'hold' informal leadership roles where other individuals look to them for leadership even though they hold no place in the leadership hierarchy Bolden *et al.* (2012) argues that these individuals are very important and influential in the institution and that they are respected for their personal qualities which include energising, competent, warm, ethical an advocate for the group and scholarly. This obviously overlaps with the requirements for formal leaders but stresses that staff value these traits to such an extent that the bestow leadership roles on those who do not formally hold them.

Characteristics of an effective academic leader are difficult to define but it might be easier to discuss what outcomes from effective leadership may look like. In private sector organisations there are fairly standard measures of success such as the profit. In academia there are less clear measures as profit is not an acceptable concept. Institutions are expressly and publically ranked for some of the work they do such as their research through the REF (Research Excellence

Framework) and for their teaching through the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) ratings.

One of the most influential measures of success is the various league tables published largely by the media such as the Guardian, the Sunday times and the Times Higher. These league tables along with the National Student Survey have a very profound effect on an institution particularly when the results do not reflect the institution's perception of itself in relation to its peers.

But do institutions ever actually fail? Failure is observed by Burgoyne *et al.* (2009) as a largely political imperative regardless of the success or failure of the Vice Chancellor measured by whatever combination of results the Funding Councils would want to use. Ultimately the impact may be the removal of the Vice Chancellor and some other members of the senior management team but there is no history of institutions 'going to the wall' in the way private sector organisations may be impacted as a result of bad leadership. This could, of course, change as a result of changing political imperatives.

In summary there is a distinction between the requirements academics have for formal leadership and what they require from informal leadership and this is summarised in Figure 2: Hanna & Kirilova (2013).

Figure 2 below raises some important points for the study around the conceptions of academic leadership and of the breadth of academic

roles that may impact academic identity producing for individual leaders complexities in leading individuals with multiple and varying identities.
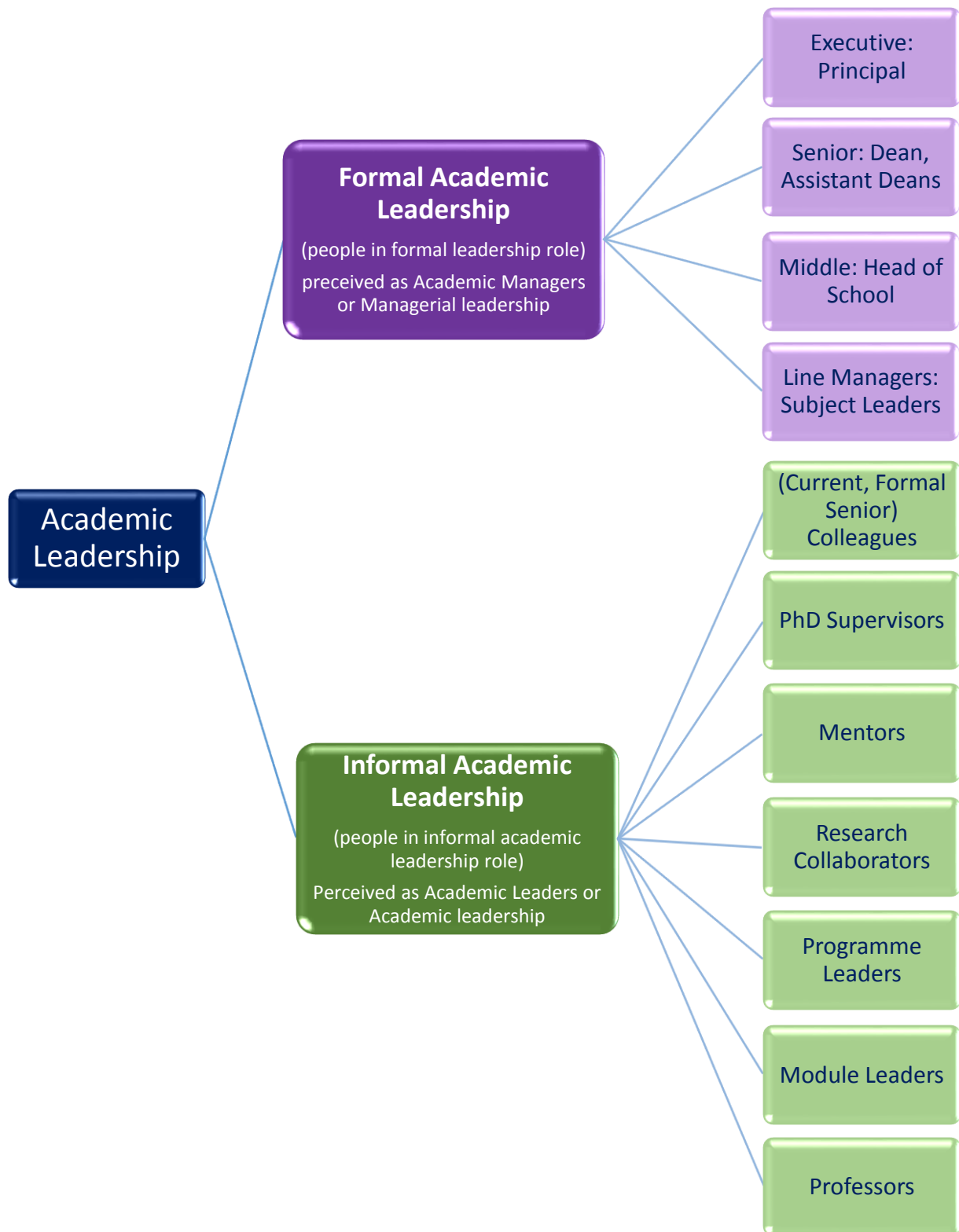
Figure 2: Hanna & Kirilova (2013)

2.6 Motivations for taking up a Leadership Role in Higher Education

Having considered the context of the institution and the nature of the academic community it is now helpful to consider why individual academics would wish to take up a leadership position so that institutions may have a good cadre of current and potential leaders to draw from.

The academic leadership role is complex and demanding and it has within it significant stress which leads to high burnout rates and high turnover in these roles. Murphy (2003) therefore questions why anyone would want to take on such a role where formal leadership roles are usually undertaken voluntarily. In a study of leadership motivations Deem (2007) identified three main reasons why individuals may move into a leadership role: career route, reluctant manager and good citizen.

Career route individuals are those who emphasise leadership and management early in their career as the way they wish their career to go and they then make informed choices about the roles they take on and the development that they do. Such individuals are usually keen to accept new challenges in this area to extend their skill set to enable advancement.

Reluctant managers are those who are usually persuaded to take on a leadership role and then find to their surprise that they enjoy the work and the challenge that it presents and therefore they make a deliberate choice to focus on this area of work and then make choices based on that in the same way as the career route individual. This is more the case with individuals taking on the Head of Department role in a pre-1992 institution where these roles are usually set or a defined period of time.

Good citizens are often successful academics, again in pre-1992 institutions, who take on a more senior role such as a Vice Principal as a way of 'giving something back' to their institution where they may well have spent a significant part of their career. Deem (2007) argues that the good citizen route is diminishing as the nature of these leadership roles changes over time and institutions populate these roles from career route individuals who are more motivated than perhaps good citizens were previously. Deem (2007) also argues that a sense of obligation that individuals may previously have felt is decreasing as the nature of institutions changes.

Identifying leadership as a distinct career route leads Murphy (2003) to question why an individual would want to change from one career route, usually teaching and research, to another one of leadership. One reason for this, she asserts is the concept of organisational commitment, which may not be too far from Deem's (2007) 'good citizen' route. Murphy argues that an individual may become psychologically or emotionally attached to the institution and may see

taking on a leadership as a good way to give back to the institution. Garrett & Davies (2010) both of whom are previous Chief Executives and Principals are clear that their motivation for taking up a leadership role was to do it better than they had seen it done in the past, this may appear an unusual motivation but may be the reason that many people take on their initial leadership role. Deem (2007) argues that the whole concept of leadership and management has changed and therefore it has become a much more attractive proposition to academics than previously. Line managing and budget holding Deans have reported that they find these aspects of the job very challenging but ultimately very rewarding probably because of the power and responsibility now afforded to that level of post in the majority of institutions, they are no longer the *'gifted amateurs'* that they would previously have been. They report having a positive influence at a strategic level within the organisation and having a seat at the *'top table'* which would have been denied them a few years ago. The introduction of professional Faculty Managers in many institutions has enabled Deans particularly to concentrate on the strategic value added activities rather than the day to day management activities. This is one of the main differences between a strategic leader and a manager.

One of the main barriers to taking on this type of role is the time it takes and the extent to which that prevents an academic from doing much, if any, teaching and research. Deem (2007) considers that this could be a barrier to some academics who would not wish to see their career limited in this way although the reality is in many circumstances

this is a more financially lucrative route than a straight academic route. O'Reilly & Caldwell (1980) found that there are both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards to be gained from academic leadership roles. The extrinsic rewards include higher salaries, higher professional status, greater career mobility and advancement and greater institutional authority. The intrinsic rewards are more about personal satisfaction and Maslow's (1970) self-actualisation. There are positive psychological rewards to be gained from such higher level achievements, the Freudian ego ideal may be reached through a highly competent and highly motivated individual affirming his/her competency. Further if the individual receives the rewards of recognition, appreciation and personal advancement this is a strong motivation for taking on academic leadership argues Murphy (2003).

So far we have looked at definitions of leadership, the impact of leadership on the Higher Education sector and also the motivations for taking on such a role in an organisation, all of these issues beg the question of how do you become a leader and how should an organisation identify individuals for such roles and then develop them. Succession planning is a skill set that all organisations require and they also require to manage the talent that they have available to them.

2.7 Succession Planning and Talent Management in Higher Education

Succession planning is defined by Munro (2005) as the specific plan to determine who will take on the *'baton'* of corporate leadership in the future. This has traditionally concentrated on the top job but in recent times there has been growing consideration of all key roles within the organisation to ensure that the business can continue when specific role holders move on from their current roles. Munro (2005) also argues that succession planning requires two very specific things, firstly an understanding of the future needs of the organisation as this will inform the process of identifying individuals who can move into these revised roles and, secondly the organisation needs to accept that the future will be different from the present so that it should be equipping individuals with the perceived skills for tomorrow not for today. Both of these requirements are challenging in themselves but necessary.

Before an organisation is willing to invest in the succession planning process it must be persuaded that there is a positive outcome from their investment, Rothwell (2005) argues that the benefits of having a clearly articulated succession plan allows the organisation to accelerate the development and improve the retention of talented individuals, to identify on-going needs for replacement and design appropriate development activities/opportunities and to increase the pool of talented individuals to fill key positions. Hood & Jones (2005) identify three models of succession planning:

- Succession planning by position, where all leaders identify a successor for themselves, this is a simplistic model which is open to the idea of a leader effectively selecting a clone of themselves as a successor, it is also open to selection on the basis of the current role not of the future as identified Munro (2005).

- Creating succession planning pools, this is a more structured approach where individuals are formally identified, through a formal process, and then given opportunities for development over a period of time. This is a more credible process as it does not rely on one individual making a decision, it allows for the use of common competencies to identify the individuals for the pool.

- Top down/bottom up succession planning, this is the most progressive model which is based on current and future needs. It involves a two way communication process in which management publish the skills/competencies/behaviours required to fill senior roles in line with the strategy. Individuals can then consider whether they wish to be part of the succession pool and then put themselves forward for that opportunity. This empowers individuals to take control of their own careers in a more effective way.

Talent management is referred to as the single most important task for an organisation by Hochman (2005) as the future success of the organisation is dependent on having the right people in senior roles. They argue that good organisations recognise the need to develop talent at every level both from current employees but also by becoming a magnet for individuals from out with the organisation.

Bentley (2005) identifies the best practice in talent management as ensuring the balance is right between internal development and external recruitment. Central to the future success of the organisation is the development of future leaders.

Interestingly, Peters & Ryan (2015) in their feedback from the Higher Education Leadership and Management Survey report that half of the respondents identified formal mechanisms within their institutions for succession planning and talent management although clearly half of the respondents could not identify either talent management or succession planning possibly leading to the conclusion that this is an area where the sector could improve. The survey also identified the need for such initiatives to be open, transparent and fair.

2.8   Development in Higher Education

The next logical area to look at is how we should develop those in leadership positions or those who aspire to such positions. We need to "Recognise that leadership is a life journey: every one of us continues to reshape our persona and roles through the experiences we encounter. Feedback from others, monitoring of impact and reading about leadership can be important forms of learning that will guide your on-going reflection and increase effectiveness as an academic leader. We have the capacity to make a significant difference to the communities we serve, hopefully as constructive, reflective leaders" Debrowski (2012, p. 185).

The above quote alludes to the need to ensure that leadership development is as effective as possible. Burgoyne (2006) asserts that leadership development works best where it is seen as contributing to improved organisational performance and where a range of activities are in place. Garrett & Davies (2010) argue that leadership development is essential for the future success of the organisation and consider that substantially more resource/effort must be put in to ensure that the development of leaders is successful, good leadership development is the only sustainable legacy of a University Principal. Peters & Ryan (2015) found that 35% of respondents to their survey felt that institutions did not invest sufficiently in leadership development, although interestingly 88% of respondents said that they had taken part in some leadership development activity in the last year.

Burgoyne (2006) defines the key activities required as including, acquiring new talent from out with the organisation to bring in 'new blood' to challenge the existing order, using the internal processes to improve leadership through performance review, career management and reward systems and also developing the existing leaders to be better leaders. This development can be either formal or informal but we will initially concentrate on the formal leadership development route.

Defining formal leadership development as 'intentionally constructed learning activities that are generally considered to come within the domain of Human Resource Development' Garavan *et al.* (2002) considered them essential. Eruat (2000) considers that development encompasses more and needs to include a prescribed learning framework, organised learning events, the awarding of professional or academic credit that has external specification of the outcomes. Finally Gold *et al.* (2010, p.19) defined development as "a planned, deliberate process to help leaders and managers become more effective."

The whole structured and planned nature of formal definitions sets it apart from the informal learning, or on the job learning, which is prevalent in this arena. It can also be differentiated because formal development is usually planned and organised by the training or development specialist where informal learning happens by virtue of the activities an individual is taking part in and cannot help but learn from. It is, of course, difficult to totally separate the two as they inform one another and an individual cannot switch off from one form of experience from the other as they collectively make up the whole learning experience.

Leadership development is one of the least academically explored aspects of leadership and its evaluation is extremely scarce (Tourish, 2012). This particularly relates to the medium and long term impact of development interventions. He argues that only between 10 and 20% of HEI's seek to assess the impact of their significant investment

in leadership development on the overall outcomes for the institution. This in turn then means that there are no credible measures to show a link between management and leadership development and overall performance of the institution. Zuber-Skerritt (2010) argues that the majority of development interventions lack sustainability and that whilst individual participants may see immediate benefits there is no guarantee of long term benefits for the institution. He argues that individuals often stop using their newly acquired knowledge and skills in favour of returning to their previous ways of working, pulled backwards often by the rigidities of organisational culture. He also argues that participants in development events do not often cascade their learning throughout their teams or the wider organisation therefore limiting the usefulness of the development activity.

Holman (2010) identifies four separate approaches to leadership and management development:

- Academic liberalism which he defines as the learning of principles and theories which should then be applied in a rational and scientific manner to practice. In this he includes seminars, reading and formal qualifications such as MBA's.
- Experiential liberalism which uses experience as the source of learning rather than relying on any theoretical paradigm. The key skill needed for this to be a success is reflection, the leaders must develop the ability to reflect on the experience and identify the learning points from it, and this needs to be a well thought out and deliberate process.

- Experiential vocationalism which requires the organisation to identify its leadership needs in the form of competencies both practical and behavioural. Development is then tailored to the identified competencies and behaviours.

- Experiential critical, this is the most sophisticated skill development with the need to become critically reflective to be able to challenge key assumptions to move the organisation forward. This does not allow the organisation to stand still and ensures that the acceptance of the status quo is not allowed to prevail.

These approaches have given rise to a number of models and conceptions of leadership and therefore the assessment and development of leaders. Gold *et al.* (2010) argue that all leadership and management interventions are based on the presumption that development interventions develop good leaders which in turn leads to the successful performance of those leaders thereby facilitating successful organisations (regardless of the type of organisation). The ultimate outcome is a contribution to national economic success and therefore everyone benefits from such development interventions.

 While we may argue that such an ultimate outcome is aspirational it is clear that a focus on understanding the complexity and many dimensions of the academic leadership role should be at the heart of leadership development programmes (Gmelch & Miskin, 2011). Such development programmes should be taught in a cohesive way rather than focussing on individual components one at a time.

Smith (2002) has argued that academics are inadequately prepared for leadership roles and sees this as a major long term challenge for them and for the sector more generally. Academic leaders require development in strategic decision making and interpersonal skills (emotional intelligence) which emphasises both the personal and social competencies required for a leadership role. Gmelch & Miskin (2012) have added to this with a conceptual understanding of the multiple dimensions and functions of the role: skill development encompassing both on-the-job training and study training, and the practice of critical self-reflection. Kossuth (2015) adds to this by emphasising the need to equip leaders with the ability to critically challenge others but also to critically reflect on their own practice.

One of the fundamental questions for leadership development is who do you develop and when do you develop them. Charan *et al.* (1972) refers to a 'leadership pipeline' within an organisation and identifies six times in a career where there is a transition from one level to another where an individual would benefit from development opportunities to make that transition more effective. These six transitions as specified by Charan are as follows, the additional Higher Education equivalents have been added to emphasise the transferability of this model to Higher Education:

- Managing self to managing others – this is the move from autonomous professional to first line supervisor/manager with responsibility for a team usually of staff within the same or similar professional area. In HE terms this would be the move from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer.

- Managing others to managing the managers – this is the next promotion to managing a bigger group of professionals including a number of different areas and the managers within them. In the HE context this would be the move from Senior Lecturer to Subject Group Leader.

- Move to become a functional manager such as the move from Subject Group Leader to Head of School.

- Move to become a business manager looking after a range of professions and activities such as the move into a Dean role where he manages a range of Schools encompassing many different subject areas but still within the same academic area such as Business, Engineering etc.

- Moving from that role to a group manager such as a Vice Principal with responsibility for a number of faculties and professional service areas.

- Move to become the enterprise manager in the academic environment the Vice Chancellor with responsibility for the institution as a whole and for many aspects of the institutions work with which you are as an individual not professionally competent. In this instance one of the key requirements is to have credibility in that role without the professional competence and the obvious ability to delegate and motivate others to become followers.

These transition points clearly hint at the need for development although whether that development takes place in advance of the move from one level to the other i.e. in preparation for that move or whether it takes place after the move is also a matter for

consideration dependant on the organisation, its type and its position in relation to succession planning and talent management.

Charan *et al.* (1972) provides a good basis for defining what the transitions in academia are and uses these to point to the need for development at this time, there needs to be a decision made about what the development activities actually are that would enable individuals to make the transition appropriately and to perform in their new role.

In selecting individuals for development Tourish (2012) highlights 'positive psychology' suggesting that it is better to focus on leveraging people's strengths rather than focussing on their gaps in performance and attempting to overcome them. Individuals should therefore be selected for leadership development based on their identified ability to demonstrate the leadership behaviours that the organisation has previously agreed. This of course will discount individuals who are deemed, by whatever process of selection or deselection, not to meet the criteria the institution has set bringing its own issues with the development of future leaders (where organisational strategy may be rapidly changing) and for those not deemed appropriate for such leadership development possible demotivating mind set.

Ameijde *et al.* (2009) argue that a move to distributed leadership is a desirable outcome of leadership development within Higher Education and may overcome alienating outcomes for individuals. Further they contend that for distributed leadership to work effectively there should be a focus on the conditions conducive for the emergence of successful distributed leadership and the formation of informal networks of expertise. In practice this would involve the development of staff across the institution in leadership skills to enable them to enact the distributed leadership required. This would require a deliberate decision on the part of the institution to go down this road as to develop staff then not to enable them to undertake these roles would cause significant frustration.

There is considerable debate around what skills should be required to be developed in leadership development interventions in Higher Education. Perren & Burgoyne (2002) usefully identify the key components of leadership and management within the sector there are a number of skill sets/activities/competencies that require to be developed in leaders and managers:

Figure 3: Key Components of Leadership and Management

If we accept the above as a representation of the key requirements then there is a suite of potential interventions which would allow the success outlined above to be facilitated (Gold *et al.,* 2010).

The suite contains:

Education and Accredited Programmes. These interventions tend to be expensive both in terms of their monetary cost but also in terms of time and the commitment required from individuals involved. The MBA programmes promoted by every Business School are prime examples of the type of qualification which is seen to be relevant to

leaders. Roe (2014) argues that with MBA fees in the region of £13 - £60k then organisations must be convinced that this is the correct way to develop their leaders and he questions whether this is always the case. MBA's however are not the only type of relevant accredited programme and organisations can develop their own bespoke programmes and have them accredited by an appropriate external agency such as a university or college.

Coaching is one of the most popular leadership development approaches at present, it has its roots in sport where coaching has been prevalent for many years. Gallwey (2000, p.177) uses the following definition "the art of creating an environment, through conversation and a way of being, that facilitates the process by which a person can move toward desired goals in a fulfilling manner". This is added to by Whitmore (2009, p.213) who suggests that "coaching is unlocking a person's potential to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them…. The relationship between the coach and the person being coached must be one of partnership in the endeavour of trust, of safety and of minimal pressure. The cheque, the key and the axe have no place here."

The role of the coach is to facilitate the discussion with the individual to help them to make appropriate changes to move them to the place they need to be. It involves the coach focussing solely on one individual and this can be an unnerving situation as it is very rare to have one individual's attention focussed on you with a view to helping you to improve. Hunt & Weintraub (2007) argue that coaching

involves holding a mirror up to the individual to help them see clearly what it shows and then using their own skills facilitated by the coach to make the changes necessary to enable the change to happen. They argue strongly that this is different from giving an individual feedback and hoping that it will be sufficient for them to make the appropriate changes without the support they need.

Coaching is a cultural shift for most organisations. We, as individuals have spent our lives being told what to do and how to do it, this happened at School, at home with our parents and within the organisational setting when we went to work. Bivens (1996) argues that by telling people what to do and how to do it we rob them of the opportunity of learning and developing and therefore of becoming more independent. Where individuals are always told the answer they have no ownership of the solution. Coaching is actually about motivation, it is about motivating an individual to have their own ideas to have their own solutions and therefore to recognise the contribution they can make to the organisation. The organisation in turn develops into a better place to work. Fritz (1989) says that 'people support what they help to create'. This is effectively allowing individuals to truly contribute to their organisation to feel that they are responsible for creating part of that organisation and therefore they have ownership of it.

Mentoring, coaching and mentoring are often spoken about in one breath as if they were one activity but this is not the case. Mentoring has been defined as "Offline help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking' *Megginson* & Clutterbuck (2010, p.13).

The key factors in mentoring are that the mentor is a person with significant experience, the mentee has less experience and both have the willingness to develop a mutually beneficial relationship. Gold *et al.* (2010) argue that there is significant benefit to the mentor from the process as well as benefit to the mentee. They suggest that it should not be a line management relationship as this casts a different perspective on the relationship which is not beneficial to either party. Clutterbuck (2004) points to the benefits of mentoring being an increase in knowledge, skills, management of career goals, building a network of influence and growing confidence. Veale & Gold (1998) found that mentoring was particularly useful to women leaders as they found that being mentored by a senior manager gave women the confidence to aim higher in their career by significantly increasing their confidence. Peters & Ryan (2015) found that one third of leaders within the sector have had experience of being mentored and that 88% of them found the experience to be beneficial.

Networking is defined by Opren (2010, p.245) as "building up and maintaining a set of informal co-operative relationships with persons other than the manager's immediate superior and subordinates in the expectation that such relationships will assist the manager to perform his/her job better".

This is again a cost effective way of providing development opportunities for individuals as the cost is time but the benefits can be immeasurable. The Higher Education sector is very good at providing such networking opportunities as conference attendance, sector wide working groups, inter-institution collaboration, professional groupings etc. Zuber-Skerritt (2010) also identified that development events in themselves are networking opportunities and argued that individuals often assess this aspect of the development to be the most useful to them. He expressed the view that ensuring that the networking is continued is also important as relationship building requires constant work. He also highlighted that development events can and often do increase the confidence of individuals and this is a useful by-product of the event where this is not often the core outcome.

Professional Activities through membership of professional bodies. Many of the professions within HE have membership of an appropriate body and individuals are expected, in some instances to be members, in other circumstances they are encouraged to be members and involvement in the wider organisation is also encouraged.

Volunteering has become a new area where employers now recognise that individuals can develop a wide range of skills. Gold *et al.* (2010) seek to encourage employers to maximise their benefit from encouraging this type of activity.

Emerging Themes

This chapter ends by identifying broad themes from the literature that are relevant to the overall aim and objectives of the study, these themes are as follows:

- Definitions of leadership – the historic literature on leadership helps to inform the current literature and therefore questionably the current practice of leadership in organisations. Also the reason for or impact of leadership within an organisation is important.

- Leadership in an HEI – the context of HE is often argued, as can be seen in the literature, to impact on the practice of leadership in the sector. This is contested throughout the literature review and requires to be assessed to discover whether HE is different as some commentators argue that it is.

- Academic leadership – having looked at the context of HE and discussed its impact on leadership within the sector it is important to consider the academic context. Leading academics is argued to be different to leading other professional groupings and is an area of discussion.

- Leadership development – selecting and developing leaders for the challenges identified above is important and issues of development are central to the long term impact of leadership within the sector.

The literature considering leadership in HEIs is vast and comes from many perspectives. Understandings of leadership are often based on the comparison of general understandings compared to the practice situation in Higher Education Institutions. There is little research dealing with the particular case of academic leadership from the view of those having to lead. To address the aim and objectives of the study it is therefore important to consider how senior leaders perceive leading academics, the practice of leading academics and the challenges therein to inform leadership development through the identification of a framework for conceptualising the processes and practises influencing the leadership of academics within a Higher Education environment. The questions for the research project are detailed in Appendices 2 and 3.

Review of the literature identified four key themes. Figure 4 below, depicts the funnelling relationship from broader definitions of leadership through consideration of the implications for HE, then focussing on the concept of academic leadership, followed by the identification and development of academic leaders.
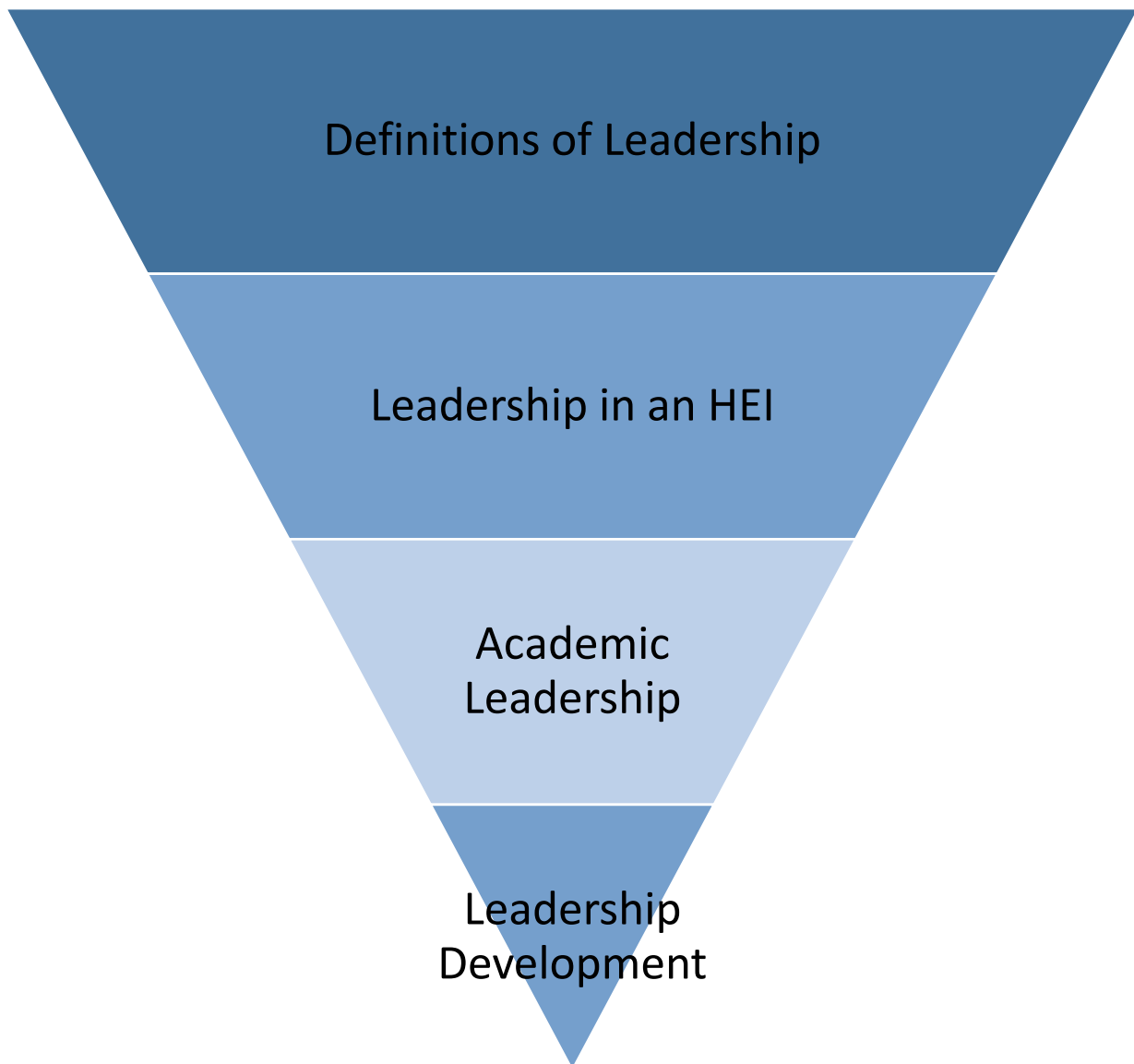
Figure 4: preliminary key themes from literature

3. Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Methods

3.1   Introduction

Arthur *et al.* (2012) suggest research is a disciplined, balanced enquiry conducted in a critical spirit. The key words in this definition are balanced and critical, therefore, research is not just an accumulation of facts or opinions but seeks to balance the views and opinions sought with the critical analysis of that information. Wainwright (1997) takes this further by emphasising the importance of distinguishing method from methodology suggesting Methodology involves a philosophical analysis of research strategies, whereas method refers to the techniques used to gather and analyse data. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of some of the research philosophies, paradigms, methodologies and methods available to researchers, and to offer a justification of the choices made in this research. The chapter is broadly divided into a discussion of the theoretical (philosophical) considerations, and a description of the actual research process. The chapter also provides the rationale for using an interpretivist stance and explains the data collection and analysis techniques employed in the study.

3.2 Philosophical perspective

Burrell and Morgan (1979) recommend that in developing a philosophical perspective it is important to make several assumptions in relation to the nature of society and the nature of science. There are two principal philosophical approaches to research: subjective and objective and with each there exists a number of accepted paradigms. Irrespective of the paradigm adopted, it is argued that the researcher should stipulate their assumptions on the nature of reality, if their understanding of that reality is to be tested (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Scientific research is underpinned by streams of thought which reflect particular values and beliefs. Ontology is the study of nature and structure and is concerned with how people makes sense of the world and their position within it. It refers to our assumptions about what constitutes reality, how this is expressed through language, and the way in which ideas are represented (Wellington, 2010). Ontology is interrelated to epistemology (the study of knowledge) and refers to our assumptions about what counts as knowledge and the methods through which this can be generated (Pryor, 2010).

3.3 Ontology

Wainwright (1997) argues that ontology and epistemology are fundamental to the construction of knowledge , while Creswell (2007) considered ontology as the theory related to the question 'What is the nature of reality?' Gill & Johnson (2010) phrased the question slightly differently, asking whether an independent external social reality exists; and Burrell and Morgan (1979, p.1) considered 'whether the 'reality' to be investigated is external to the individual'. Overall, all these questions are incorporated into Walter's definition of ontology as: 'the understanding of reality and the nature of being that inform our view of the world' asserts Walter (2009, p.14). Grix (2004) maintains that an individual researcher's ontology is the starting point of all research. He defines ontology as the theory of being itself i.e. the nature of the 'real' world and what we can know about it. He claims it defines what we believe social reality actually is, it is therefore a very personal choice but one which will have a profound impact on the research an individual does.

In line with other philosophical assumptions, ontological paradigms are traditionally based on dualisms. While several authors have used the terms 'subjective' and 'objective' (Burrell & Morgan, 1979), others have preferred 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' to categorise these assumptions (Bryman, 2004). This research uses the terms subjective and objective. Objectivism regards reality as existing externally (e.g. Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2008), context-free (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) and believes that the truth is out there to be

revealed (Denzin, 2009). The subjective standpoint, sometimes also referred to as relativism, regards truth as something that "depends on who establishes it" (Easterby-Smith *et al*., 2008, p.62); and holds that there is no 'one' reality, and that everything is socially constructed. As Lincoln, *et al.* (2011, p.102) summarised, "[r]ealities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them".

The rationale for adopting a subjective stance is in line with the view of Saunders *et al.* (2007) and also that of Denzin & Lincoln (2001). Saunders *et al.* (2007, p.108) described the subjective stance as a view whereby "social phenomena are created from the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors", while Denzin & Lincoln (2001, p.19) argued that individuals choosing to use "this paradigm are oriented to the search for socially-constructed meanings and meaning-making, sense-making activities, rituals, and enactments as well as the production of reconstructed understandings of the social world". These statements are consistent with the overall aim and the objectives of the present research: Gaining an in depth understanding of academic leadership in an HE environment from the perspective of senior leaders. The research aims to identify the perceptions that leaders have about these, and the meanings they ultimately give to them. Consequently, a subjective ontology is regarded as a good fit for the purposes of this research.

3.4   Epistemology

According to Creswell (2007, p.17) epistemology questions: 'What is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched?' equally, it is also said to enquire 'what is knowledge' or, as Saunders *et al* (2007, p.102) phrased it, it is about 'what constitutes acceptable knowledge'. Moreover, epistemology concerns how this knowledge is being obtained, and what can be regarded as 'true' or 'false' (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). In general, epistemology is regarded as the "theory of knowledge concerned with understanding how knowledge is defined, valued, and prioritised" Walter (2009, p.12).

As with ontology, this research assumes a subjective epistemological perspective.   The subjective view, places its emphasis on 'social actors'. Saunders *et al.* (2007) used the example of an actor to explain what is meant by 'social actors', but also some underlying assumptions of the interpretivist stance. Saunders *et al.* (2007) put forward the metaphor of a theatrical actor who interprets their role in a certain way, based on their views and those of the director. However, when a person in the audience sees the play, s/he also interprets what they see on stage, based on their own values and beliefs. Thus, the person interprets an already-interpreted role. Furthermore, by interacting with these actors, here representing the 'social actors', the person initiates a reflexive process which may lead to modified personal views and/or meanings.

Another key element within an interpretivist epistemology are the assumptions made regarding facts. Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2008) suggested thinking in terms of how one sees facts, positing that, while positivism assumes that facts "are concrete, but cannot be accessed directly", the social constructivist sees facts as 'all human creations'. Consequently, as an interpretivist, it is assumed that norms are socially constructed and that they "influence the production of knowledge and valid knowers" (Walter, 2009, p.12).

The relevance of the interpretivist view to this research is twofold. Knowledge in this research context is not measurable, but is something that requires identification via exploratory approaches. This research is about how these social actors (senior leaders) assign a certain meaning to leadership and secondly, understanding the perspectives of current leaders of the practice of leading academics in a HE environment.

3.5   Axiology

Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) highlight the need for researchers to acknowledge the role they play in qualitative research particularly in relation to data collection, they suggest that the researcher should make their thoughts and biases explicit so that the data collection process is as bias free as possible. The researcher's values are key in this process and clarity over the impact of them is central to the process, this reflexivity is important for the final outcomes of the research process. Both Creswell (2007) and Bryman (2004) support the view that axiology concerns the role of values. Bryman (2004, p.21) stated that 'values reflect either the personal beliefs or the feelings of a researcher'; and in Walter's words, axiology is the 'theory of values that inform how we see the world and the value judgements we make within our research' (Walter, 2009, p.13).

While positivism assumes that 'only phenomena that you can observe will lead to the production of credible data', and that research is 'value-free' (Saunders *et al.*, 2007, p.103) interpretivism, the perspective adopted in this research, assumes the opposite, that research is not value-free or independent, and that the researcher plays a key role in the research process. In fact, this philosophical stance assumes that it is the researcher's values that are likely to create a bias and thus may be reflected in the research output. However, with the influence of those values also comes the need for reflexivity, i.e. the need for the researcher to be aware of their own values and responses to interactions with others, such as the research

participants. Or, as Lincoln *et al.* (2011, p.109) put it, values are "personally relative and need to be understood [and] they are inseparable from the inquiry and outcomes".

3.6   Research paradigms

Within social research traditions there are numerous designs and methods for investigating phenomena and the choice of an appropriate approach becomes largely dependent on the research purpose and questions that are being asked. Selecting an approach and method that resonates with these is essential to the navigation of a clear path towards new knowledge. Two central theoretical domains for exploring and understanding social reality are contended, the quantitative and qualitative paradigms which represent two fundamental ontological and epistemological extremes regarding the nature of being, its interpretation and expression.

From a quantitative perspective theory is constructed as a reasonable explanation that seeks to illuminate and clarify a phenomenon, confirming this through the gathering and testing of empirical evidence argues Gulson & Parkes (2010). Bryman (2008) argue that quantitative researchers formulate hypotheses about a particular phenomenon or domain on the basis of existing knowledge and seek to test the validity of their propositions through objective, and typically, quantitative or deductive measurement. This approach takes an epistemological position that supports the use of the natural scientific method which is associated with positivism with a

theoretical premise that is based on the belief that there is an objective world which can be verified through empirical fact gathering. Positivism is rooted in empiricism which is concerned with the study of reality through the production of meticulous, precise and generalisable data (May, 1997). From this perspective it is declared that the social world contains information that can be gathered, rigorously tested and analysed independently from its social actors. Thus, social phenomena and their meanings present as external facts that can be objectively studied (Bryman, 2008).

Alternatively, the qualitative approach sits at the subjective end of this continuum and is concerned with understanding, or 'Verstehen', in accord with the German tradition of hermeneutics (Bryman, 2008). Ambiguities and degrees of difference exist within each paradigm, particularly within qualitative research, but clear distinctions can be made between the two paradigmatic poles. The questions guiding this investigation sought to investigate the perceptions of academic leadership from the perspective of senior leaders and therefore required a design and data collection techniques that supported enquiry into implicit or lived aspects of this. This oriented the research towards the qualitative, as opposed to the quantitative, research paradigm.

3.7   Qualitative research

Variations arise between qualitative methodologies in relation to the purpose of their inquiry, the areas to which the research will be applied, the aim of the research, the nature of the data, and the role of the researcher. Each design is based on its own philosophical orientation, which in turn influences purpose, sampling, data collection and analysis suggests Brink (1989). Three potential qualitative research designs were explored- ethnography, grounded theory and phenomenology.

Early on in the study it was evident that an ethnographic design would not be appropriate. This was because the aim of ethnography is to understand people, their ways of living, and the ways that people use cultural meanings to organize and interpret their experience (Leininger, 1985; Clifford, 1997). The focus on culture is the essence of ethnographic research and distinguishes it from other qualitative designs. The researcher takes on the role of a participant observer who enters the culture or sub-culture to study the rules and the changes that occur over time (Burns & Grove, 1993; Clifford, 1997). This design was considered unsuitable for two main reasons. Firstly, I was a manager involved in the overall running of the research site and would have found it difficult to be accepted or blend in to such a role. Secondly, my primary interest was not the culture of mangers as distinctive groups.

Grounded theory was developed by Glaser & Strauss (1967) to produce research which would enable them to develop theory which fitted reality. The main purpose was to produce research which generated explanatory models of human behavior which were grounded in the data collected. The researcher, using this method, seeks to identify patterns within the data and then to explain the relationships between these patterns. This design was not considered appropriate given that there was no intention to create theories to explain leadership behavior nor to create explanatory models

Phenomenology is regarded as both a philosophy and an umbrella term for an array of research practices that are primarily concerned with understanding people's lived experience of the world (Langridge, 2007). Phenomenology comes from the Greek words, *phainomenon* - the appearance of things as they manifest to consciousness (as distinguished from what these are in themselves) and *logos*, the active principle of living in and determining the world (Schwarz *et al.,* 1988). Phenomenology probes human experience and behaviour through the direct observation of experiential phenomena as situated within a specific context (DeMarrais & Tisdale, 2002).

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) the founding father of phenomenology, believed that the world of inner experience could be scientifically and systematically explored and devoted his life to the development of phenomenology as a science of consciousness (Langridge, 2007). The phenomenologist is concerned with getting to the truth or essence of an issue, to describe phenomena as they appear to the person who

experiences it consciously (Moran, 2000). There are multiple ways of conducting phenomenological research but these converge in the desire to gain knowledge and insight about a particular phenomenon. There are three different approaches which stem from three major philosophical phases: The preparatory phase and descriptive phenomenology (Husserl, 1859-1938); The German phase Heideggarian Hermeneutics (Heidegger, 1889- 1976); (Gadamer, 1900-2002); and The French phase and Existentialism (Merlau-Ponty, 1908-1961; Sartre, 1905-1980); (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). However, debate continues about the distinctions and overlaps between these different strands.

Martin Heidegger then developed his thought of *being* in the form of hermeneutic theory. Hermeneutics comes from the Greek word of hermeneuein, which means 'to interpret or translate' (Liamputtong, 2009, p.8). As the word suggests, hermeneutics offers a theoretical framework for interpretive understanding with special attention to context and original purpose. This requires researchers to search the meaning of the lived experience by developing the power to immerse themselves in that world rather than reformulating another's experience in analysable form (Johnson, 2000). It means in order to understand the human world as it impinges upon the actions and consciousness of participants, the researcher must not only investigate the relationships and events in which participants are involved, but also establish and deepen that understanding by relating the experiences of participants to her own. He also asserted that all beings are inseparable from the world in which they live and so it is

not feasible to bracket off one's pre-suppositions and directly identify the true essence of a phenomenon (Moran, 2000). He believed that human action must be studied within its historical and cultural context and stressed the importance of acknowledging investigator pre knowledge and understanding that are present as a result of the shared background meanings given through culture and language (Leonard, 1994).

Heidegger made an important distinction between ontology and what he termed the ontic. The former refers to the nature of being which he reasoned could not be researched empirically but can only be made known through conjecture, whilst the latter refers to observable facts about people in existence or their mode of being in the world. These, in contrast to ontological enquiry are open to empirical investigation and it is this ontic concept that forms the basis for much of contemporary phenomenological research in the fields of health and psychology (Language, 2007) and this stance underpins the present study.

3.8 The Phenomenological attitude to bracketing

It is in the pursuit of the purity of apprehension referred to by Koch, (1999) of essential meaning that Husserl's concept of bracketing i.e. of laying aside all but the fundamental invariants of any phenomenon is the most pertinent and most useful to the researcher. In the act of bracketing the researcher must be alert both to the danger of pre-supposition and also to the potential presence of essential Phenomenological significance in the evidence gathered and in the interpretation of it. Bracketing is also important in underlining the researcher's attitude to theory, helping to examine how preconceived intellectual interpretation may gloss or obscure the experiential reality upon which it must ultimately be based. There are divergent views amongst Phenomenologists about bracketing and the degree to which this can be achieved but overall agreement exists that the investigator maintains an empathic and open attitude towards both the research participant and the topic area (Finlay, 2009). In practice this technique demands considerable researcher skill and the extent to which this can be realised in practice represents one of the principal differences between descriptive and Hermeneutic Phenomenology (Moran, 2000). In light of this I have chosen not to attempt bracketing and adopt a more hermeneutic approach.

3.9 Research Stance

Janesick, (2003) also asserts that qualitative research is inherently value-laden and ideologically configured thus any researcher predispositions need to be acknowledged and identified at the outset alongside an awareness that these may change as the research project unfolds. Together the above assumptions influenced my mode of thinking, choice of questions and the manner in which I conducted the research. In line with qualitative enquiry it was perceived that by recognising and recording these I could be more objective, comprehensive and faithful to the phenomenon under study (Hycner, 1985). Maintaining a reflective diary throughout the study supported this stance and additional work in developing a Continuing Professional Development Portfolio also aided the process.

My relationship to the topic was also shaped by insider knowledge of leadership as taught within both traditional and secular contexts. My role as a leader over 25 years gave a degree of experiential understanding about how leadership works and, to actively investigate participant experience of leadership training and education, A key epistemological facet is the need to continually question and critically examine from one's own experience, and, to apply the same principles to all adopted knowledge so that understanding arises from empirical experience and sound reasoning rather than supposition (Coreso, 2012). The introspective quality of my own epistemological stance continued to signposted interpretivism where knowledge is perceived as a fluid process that is

subject to constant change and which, methodologically speaking, allows for evolution of understanding as a process of interaction and interpretation between the researcher and research participants.

Prior knowledge of leadership and sustaining a nearness to the people involved, their experiences and evolving events were perceived as fundamental to conducting a successful investigation here. It was acknowledged that the closer my relationship to research participants, the greater the potential for exerting influence on the nature of knowledge produced. The aim was to adopt a disciplined approach but to recognise that this did not represent neutrality nor would outcomes be devoid of researcher influence. Clarification of my ontological and epistemological position at the outset was an integral aspect of the reflexive process and was given ongoing close attention throughout the investigation helping to uphold the crucial principles of rigour, trustworthiness, credibility and authenticity in qualitative research.

3.10 Researcher Role

Mathews and Ross, (2010) explain it that knowledge is seen to be derived from everyday concepts and meanings – the social researcher enters the social world in order to grasp the socially constructed meanings and then reconstructs them in socially scientific language. At one level these latter accounts are regarded as re-descriptions of everyday accounts, at another level they are developed into theories.

Fundamental to this is the need to be prepared to become an integral part of the scenario that they are researching, for them to see the world from the other's perspectives and to be able to interpret this within the context of what is happening. Interpretivism claims that, since researcher and object both have the same capacity for coherent thought, and people usually act in a way which makes sense, the researcher has the capacity to understand the object's actions. To do so the researcher must recognise the object's context, their motivation and assignment of meaning to the world around them and the researcher must assume that the object is acting in a coherent and intelligible manner. Reed, (2008) argues that to do this the researcher must immerse themselves in the object's world to enable them to understand, interpret and explain it. Benton & Craib, (2001) argue that a shared culture is important for interpretivist understanding, all of the actors in any scenario must recognise shared values although they do not have to ascribe to these values. Johns (2006) in his argument for context to have a significant influence over the research process states that well conducted qualitative research has great potential to

illuminate the contextual effects, this is particularly relevant to this qualitative research as one of the fundamental questions is whether the context of HE has an impact on the definition and development of leadership within the sector. He argues that the researcher should be alert to the full range of contextual levers that might affect behaviour, given the researchers knowledge of the sector this should be possible.

The main reason for looking at context in any research project as well as reporting it is that it assists the researcher in better conveying the outcomes of the research and crucially the applications of the research (Johns, 2006) This view is supported by Rousseau & Fried, (2001) who argue that by linking observations to a set of relevant facts, events or points of view make research and theory which forms part of the bigger whole possible. They consider contextualisation to be central to the reporting of research as it 'places' the research in the correct arena for the audience. The data collection took place in two stages, stage 1 individual semi-structured interviews and stage 2 a single focus group with a small number of the original sample.

3.10 Data Collection

The data were collected using two separate methods. The initial data collection used semi-structured interviews. However, when analysing the data it became obvious that there was data that I had expected to come out of the interviews which was not there/or that there were areas of discussion which, on reflection, were incomplete. This data covered a number of areas as can be seen in the Question Grid in Appendix 3. Firstly the issue of the purpose of good leadership and its impact on the success of an organisation was explored and secondly the question was asked as to whether academics exercise 'self-leadership' or if they need to be led to function within their roles. The issue of distributed leadership, whilst mentioned was not forthcoming in the interview process and it became apparent that this emerging theme needed further exploration. Lastly further detail was needed on the views of the respondents on the content of a leadership development programme.

Given my need to explore these areas further I decided to go back to the respondents and chose to explore these areas in the form of a Focus Group as this allowed for the issues to be discussed in a collective manner.

3.11 Data Collection – Semi-structured Interviews

The previous section addressed the research philosophy concept, explored its paradigms, and explained why the paradigm of interpretivism was chosen for this research as the most appropriate for the investigation at hand. This section addresses the choice of methodology and its reasoning.

The collection of data is central to the process, Lancaster, (2005) defines data as the raw, untreated facts and information which has been collected, interpreted and communicated in an appropriate form. The collection of the primary data, which Arthur *et al*. (2012) identifies as that which is produced by the researcher for the purposes of their research. In this instance the primary data is that which is collected through the interview process. Academics such as Morse (1994), Denzin (1994) and Strauss & Corbin (1994) have argued that in-depth interviews, focus groups and observations are a suitable approach in qualitative research. An interview, according to Creswell (2014, p.191), "allows [the] researcher control over the line of questioning", [but is also] "useful when participants cannot be directly observed". In addition, interviews allow the participants to "provide historical information". Interviews, especially in-depth interviews, generally allow questions to be asked and information to be captured that relates to changes over time, which other forms of data collection do not allow to the same degree, if at all. Moreover, one-to-one interviews can gather in-depth information on the individual's perspective on chosen matters. As interviews can be held with one

individual at a time, it is also more likely that interviewees will be willing to provide personal information relevant to the research. Last, but not least, interviews also allow the researcher to directly follow up on perspectives that are mentioned by the interviewee, but which may not necessarily have been previously considered by the researcher. The general disadvantages of interviews as a research method are the influence of the interviewer on the interviewee in terms of presence and the risk of unintentionally asking leading or biased questions.

One-on-one interviews comprise one of the most frequently used methods of data generation in the social sciences (Gubrium &Holstein, 2002). There are a range of approaches to interviewing from highly structured to completely unstructured and the format can differ extensively, especially between different research paradigms. Interviews can be conducted via the telephone, internet, e-mail, in addition to the traditional face to face approach. Within the positivist tradition interviews are frequently used in survey designs and in exploratory and descriptive studies (Fox, 2009). In these contexts the goal is to create a 'pure' interview, where the respondent provides answers to standardised questions and the researcher seeks to refrain from engagement, hoping to avoid contamination of the data and attain a mirror reflection of the reality that exists in the social world of the participant (Miller & Glassner, 2004).

The suggested strength of this data collection method is that it offers the opportunity to collect and systematically examine narrative

accounts of people's experience. Individual interviewing is however, time and skill intensive both in respect of planning and conducting the interviews and in their analysis (Mason, 2002).

3.12 Data Collection - Focus Group

Focus groups are now a common method of enquiry in qualitative research and can provide rich and informative data about perceptions, feelings, thoughts, and group member experience from their perspective (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999). The format usually involves a relaxed group discussion on a topic with the researcher acting as a moderator to pose questions, keep dialogue flowing, obtain clarification, and, to observe and manage proceedings without exercising undue influence over the group dynamic. Focus group research follows the usual stages of the research process and, in accord with all forms of qualitative inquiry, it is advisable to carry out pilot work to test the questions and approach to ensure that these work well (Janesick, 2003). The selection and recruitment of participants is a critical component that is necessarily guided by relevance to the research question. Focus Groups require to be carefully composed and skilfully led to accord with the purpose of an investigation.

The use of Focus Groups as the principal mode of data collection in phenomenology has been contested by some. Webb & Kevern, (2000) state that this method is not compatible with phenomenological investigation inferring that data gathering in phenomenology needs to be based on a 1:1 relationship to maintain purity of description. However, Bradbury-Jones *et al.* (2009) offer an alternative perspective. Drawing on phenomenological studies they produce a compelling argument for their inclusion based primarily on benefits to be gained through cross-checking and clarification, and enrichment of data through a form of reflective validation. Bradbury-Jones and colleagues conclude that there is a legitimate practice to use in this context on the proviso that the decision taken to incorporate the method is rooted in a critical understanding of phenomenological philosophy and research logic.

3.13 Sampling Technique- Purposive Sample

Any research project requires serious consideration of the type of sampling technique best suited to answering the research questions in order to provide good quality data. Bryman & Bell (2007) highlight the need for the sample to be of an appropriate size and one which could be justified in terms of the outputs of the research process. Saunders *et al.* (2009) discuss purposive judgemental selection where the researcher uses their judgement to select the sample taking into account the data they require to collect. It has been acknowledged that the researcher was conducting the study from an insider perspective and given the privileged access available by virtue of

position within the University access to an elite group of individuals at the highest level was possible. Added to this group of senior staff were the two individuals who had direct responsibility for leadership development.

There are clearly issues with working with such a group of individuals who have within their remits leadership of the institution at the highest level. Ten individuals were identified as potential interviewees. All agreed to be interviewed when approached by e-mail, all of the interviewees understood the research process with six of them holding a PhD and the remainder having undertaken research to Masters Level.

I was conscious in the interview process to probe sufficiently to try to ensure that the interviewees were responding openly. However, it was also important to ensure that the participants recognised that the interviews were as part of a research study and that the interviewer was conducting the interviews in that spirit. All of the participants responded in a genuine manner to the questions asked of them and the discussions which came from the questions, in the view of the researcher.

3.14 Ethical Considerations and Access to the Sample Group

Any form of research will have ethical considerations. Punch, (1994, p.88) established, the "view that science is intrinsically neutral and essentially beneficial disappeared with the revelations at the Nuremburg trials". While ethical issues undoubtedly vary between research studies and topics, and may only emerge over time (Ryen, 2011), some basic rules exist which must be applied. In Scotland and the UK in general, ethical approval must be obtained from the relevant academic authority as a starting point before any data collection can proceed. Although this ethical approval procedure is designed to cover all the relevant and necessary ethical aspects, some key points are briefly summarised here.

According to Creswell (2014, pp.93-94) ethical issues may occur during different stages of the research project: prior to conducting the study; at the beginning of the study; during data collection; during data analysis; and when writing up findings. He emphasised that ethical issues may arise in terms of gaining the required permits from the relevant stakeholders (e.g. ethics approval, access permits, authorship permits), ensuring that there is no conflict of interest, and that interviewees and other stakeholders are aware of the purpose of the research, willing to participate, and receiving consent from the research's participants (preferably in writing, and certainly in advance).

In addition, during the data collection and analysis period, Creswell, (2014) recommends that attention is paid to participants' needs and requirements that they are all treated the same, but also that privacy and anonymity issues are addressed, and guarantees made are adhered to. Punch (1994, p.89; see also Christians, 2011: code of conduct; or Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2008, p.134 on ten key principles) have similarly argued that issues concerning 'harm, consent, deception, privacy, and confidentially of data' were crucial, whereas Ryen (2011, p.418) narrowed these down to 'codes and consent; confidentiality; and trust', somewhat similarly to Silverman, (2010). Punch also highlighted the issue of personal values impacting on views of ethical issues. It is therefore useful and necessary to have a third party check for any ethical issues in any research (see also Ryen, 2011); in this research, this was achieved via the university's ethical approval procedure and relevant experienced academics, including supervisors.

The study was given ethical approval by the Edinburgh Napier University Research Ethics Committee. Both Bryman & Bell, (2007) and Saunders *et al.*, (2009) highlight the need for individuals being asked to take part in research projects giving 'informed consent' to their involvement in the process, they must understand the nature of their involvement and what is expected of them in the process. They must understand that their involvement is voluntary and that they can withdraw from the process at any time. And crucially they must understand that their comments/quotes will be anonymous in the final thesis. This last aspect is challenging in this piece of work given

the nature of the individuals involved. In this study an information letter and consent form (Appendix 1) were sent to the participants prior to the interviews and focus group to ensure their understanding of the context and content of the interviews and to reassure confidentiality of the content of the interviews.   Whilst every effort will be made to ensure anonymity it may be possible for some quotes to be identified to their originator either because the views they have expressed which are ones that they have previously publically stated or because the phrasing they have used is easily identifiable as their own personal style. Every effort was made to avoid either potential pitfall. This is also the reason why the original transcripts are not included as appendices to this research project as it would be easy to identify individuals.

3.15 Issues of trustworthiness

Altheide & Johnson (2011, p.582) argued that qualitative research contends with issues of 'truth, validity, verisimilitude, credibility, trustworthiness, dependability, confirmability, and so on'.   In Silverman's (2010, p.275) view, 'validity' is another word for truth', and for Lincoln *et al.,* (2011) the key issue is the validity of data, as considered in two dimensions: its rigor, and its rigorousness. Other academics have used the terms validity and reliability instead to ensure a clear language distinction to positivism. In their opinion, 'validity considers the appropriateness of the measure', and 'reliability represents the consistency of the measurement' (Hammond &

Wellington, 2013, p.150). The latter perspective is used in this research.

In its broadest terms, validity means that 'the data and the method are 'right'. In terms of research data, the notion of validity hinges around whether or not the data reflect the truth, reflect reality and cover the crucial matters' (Denscombe, 1998, p.241). According to Creswell, (2014) one strategy for data validation is triangulation, where more than one type of data source is used; for example, observations are used in addition to interviews. In the current studies the focus group were used to further explore some of the emerging issues. Creswell further recommends that the researcher invite at least some interviewees to check the report. . However, he also emphasises the need for reflexivity and the awareness of the possibility of the researcher's biases influencing the research. These points are in line with Denscombe, (1998) and others who have who raised similar issues (Huberman & Miles, 1994). Denscombe, (1998) further suggests establishing whether other explanations have been considered and whether the findings match the complexity of the research aim. As a consequence, the above points require consideration both before and during data collection and analysis.

3.16 Sample

In determining the sample to be used for the research project I drew on the work of Saunders *et al.* (2009) purposive judgemental selection allowing me to select the appropriate individuals to interview being mindful of the data that was required to address the study aim and objectives. This was why the two Heads of Service were added to the list of respondents as they had responsibility for the development of leaders across the institution and whilst they were not members of the Senior Management Team they could contribute to the research from the practical perspective of their experience.

I did not include any of the Heads of School in the sample as I felt that the inclusion of the two Deans covered the academic perspective when considered with the Principal and the Vice Principals all of whom came from an academic background.

The Management Team of the institution consisted of a range of academic and professional services staff and the potential sample is described in Appendix 6; under the headings: role, number of roles, gender, age range, tenure in role, other HE management experience, private sector experience and highest academic qualification.

3.17 Pilot Study

Mason, (2006) outlines the reasons for undertaking a pilot exercise before conducting the main research study. The reasons suggested include the need to firm up the research question, to test the practicalities of the intended method, to gain experience of the research process, experiment with data generation and analysis and to ensure that the questions being asked actually generate the type of responses which can then be used to generate primary data.

Two pilot interviews were conducted to check the accuracy of the interview agenda. In addition to testing the analysis process the Interviewees were asked to provide feedback on the process and to comment on the clarity of the questions asked. An area of concern from one of the participants was a lack of follow on questions and probing. This was helpful feedback which enabled the interview agenda to be adapted for the main study. One of the key questions raised by the piloting process was the use of this data in the main study. In this instance a few minor amendments to the questions were made and therefore it was considered appropriate to use the pilot data in the main study.

3.18 <mark>Process of Conducting Interviews</mark>

Interviews were carried out either in the respondent's office or in the researchers meeting room, the key was to ensure confidentiality and, where possible, no interruptions. Some of the respondents preferred to meet in the researcher's meeting room as this allowed them to be away from their own offices and any potential disruptions. Care was taken to ensure that they felt relaxed by offering coffee and allowing for some social chat in advance of the actual interview.

The interviews offered the opportunity to elicit the views of the respondents on the general issue of leadership within the University by means of open questions followed up by more in-depth discussion dependant on the initial responses, this was led by the researcher in the role of observer and participant (Saunders *et al.,* 2009). The questions asked were formulated to allow for open discussion rather than just yes/no responses. This style of questioning worked well with 8 out of 10 of the respondents, two found this style to be challenging and interestingly the two individuals who found this more challenging were the two most junior respondents.

The process began with some background discussion the research project and outlining the process being followed, there was also a discussion about consent and the recording, holding and transcription of the interviews. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and was recorded using an audio recording device which the respondents had agreed to, the researcher also took notes of the

interview. The note taking proved to be very useful when the audio recording device failed in one of the interviews but this was not obvious till the transcription was being done.

The audio recordings were stored in a University PC which was locked and protected by a specific log in code only known to the researcher. Following the interviews the interviews were transcribed verbatim. The transcriptions were then sent, by e-mail, to the respondent for their approval, (member checking) one respondent made minor amendments to their transcription but all of the others approved theirs. The interviewees all appeared comfortable in the interviews and were happy to give freely of their opinions and views of the topic.

3.19 Process of Conducting the Focus Group

The focus group comprised 3 individuals from the original sample. The focus group was conducted in a committee room and all of the participants were asked to confirm that they were happy to take part and signed the informed consent form to be part of the discussion and recording of the group. The recording was held securely on a personal encrypted PC and once again the transcript of the discussion was sent back to each of the participants. All of the participants appeared happy and relaxed in the focus group and engaged in some lively debate on the subjects under discussion.

3.20 Data Analysis

On a generic level, Denzin & Lincoln (2011, p.14) regard data analysis as the managerial and interpretive process linked with 'large amounts of qualitative materials'. Welsh, (2002) defines analysis of data as the way to make sense of the respondent's responses in order to interpret their meaning. Grbich, (2007) explains that data analysis is the practice in which raw data is ordered and organised so that useful information can be extracted from it. This process is key to understanding what the data does and does not contain. In qualitative studies the researcher is subject to the influence of their own experiences and the impact of this on their interpretation of the data. It is, therefore important to ensure that the conclusions drawn are only those which the data supports and not the 'pet theories' of the researcher.

According to Saunders *et al.* (2009), there is no standard way of analysing data from semi-structured interviews however they assert that there are three possible ways; summarising text into meanings, categorising meanings and structuring/organising meanings. All of this is based on an assessment of the meanings coming from the transcriptions. Bryman & Bell (2007) refer to this as content analysis but imply that the process is similar. Bryman, (2008) states that qualitative methods tend to generate large quantities of unstructured data and the researcher needs to decide on an appropriate method of analysing this data. Analytic induction is one way of doing this and involves the researcher in seeking universal explanations of

phenomena by analysing the data until there are no inconsistencies within the data.

Understanding how the data will be analysed is one of the most important aspects for qualitative research. Within phenomenology there are a number of different analysis strategies. For the purposes of this study three approaches were reviewed Giorgi, 1985; Van Kaam, 1966 and Colaizzi, 1978 and are outlined below.

Giorgi's style of Analysis

The method developed by Giorgi, 1989 focused on phenomena as a real object in time and space but the fundamental interest is in how such objects are perceived. He suggested that doing qualitative data analysis should follow these steps:

1. Read the entire transcription to get a whole picture and focus initially on the 'Gestalt'.

2. Break the entire transcription into parts with meaning units which are the language of everyday life.

3. Transform the original data, express the insight from transcription, highlight common themes, and illustrate quotes.

4. Integrate the transformed meaning units into a consistent statement about participants' experience, and use concrete a situation as an example to demonstrate.

Van Kaam's style of Analysis

Van Kaam's style of analysis is based on content analysis. He advocates the classification of data into categories. These categories should be the result of what the participants understand (Valle, 1998). The following steps involve

1. Listening and preliminary grouping, classifying the data into categories.

2. Reducing the concrete, vague and overlapping expressions of the subjects.

3. Checking and eliminating elements that are not relevant to the phenomenon under study

4. Writing a hypothetical identification and description of the phenomenon being studied.

5. Applying the hypothetical description to a randomly selected sample. If necessary the hypothetical description can be revised. The revised description must be re-tested.

6. Reviewing and revisiting previous steps until the final hypothetical description is identified.

Colaizzi's style of Analysis

The basic tenet of Colaizzi's, (1978) approach is that experience is always out in the world. He developed a form of analysis which addressed the objection that traditional science and experiment cannot answer questions. His intention was to embrace human experiences as they are lived. He was concerned to remind himself of the empirical object and of the fact that the phenomenon – the hidden meaning or essence, whose identification is the goal of analysis - derives from the empirical, lived object or experience. It involves the following steps:

1. Reading carefully in order to get a full picture of the phenomenon.
2. Coding and extracting significant statements.
3. Formulating meanings from the significant statements.
4. Summarizing the formulated meanings into clusters of themes.
5. Describing the investigated phenomenon.
6. Sharing the results with the participants.

3.21 Thematic Analysis

All three approach share similar characteristic but central to all frameworks is the need to identify themes. For example, Giorgi, (2008) suggests that researchers should find the themes generated by individuals, but the main focus should be on the overall structure of experiences rather than individuals' interests (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). Colaizzi, (1978) suggests that clusters of themes should be organised from formulated meanings which are spelt out from the meaning of each significant statement (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). Ritchie & Lewis (2003) argue that the process of qualitative data analysis is a route to generating themes. Furthermore, Patton, (2002) argues that the core meaning of dealing with qualitative data is to find themes and patterns. He also defines the process of searching themes as thematic analysis. Identifying the process of phenomenological analysis is a starting point for data analysis. The heart of phenomenological analysis is to identify themes and getting the bones (Patton, 2002, p.486) out from the participants' interview transcriptions.

The above process of qualitative data analysis is to group data which are similar; this is referred to as themes of structural meaning units of data by Streubert & Carpenter (1995, p.25). So most of the Phenomenological analysis frameworks concur that central to all analysis is the need to identify the themes, but most of them refer to the meaning units and what to do with them rather than defining clearly thematic analysis and the process of thematic analysis.

However, Liamputton & Ezzy, (2005) and Holloway & Wheeler, (2010) cross this concept with their own understanding. Holloway & Wheeler's view on thematic analysis is related to narrative analysis which requires data transcription and reduction (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). They argue that thematic analysis can also be called holistic analysis which requires the researcher's analyse as a narrative of the whole (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). The main aim of thematic analysis is thus to identify the main statement from the transcription, which is also called core experiences by Holloway & Wheeler. Researchers need to reduce the units of text in the transcription to a series of core sentences or ideas.

Liamputtong & Ezzy, (2005) argue that thematic analysis is somehow similar to Grounded Theory. The main difference between these two concepts is the Grounded Theory includes theoretical sampling whereas thematic analysis does not. They suggest that the centre of thematic theory is the process of coding. They then describe the thematic analysis coding process into three steps:

1. Open coding. Open coding is the first run of coding process. It aims to compare data by differences and similarity by breaking down events, statements, or sentences, and to apply conceptual labels to them (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). The reason for open coding is to look at the data in the new way and see new relationships between events or interactions. Miles & Huberman, (1994) agree that open coding is also a method of noting themes.

2. Axial coding. Once the researcher breaks down sentences and develop initial themes at the open coding stage, they should then put these data back together in new ways by making connections between themes. Axial coding is the putting back together process. This doesn't mean that researchers at this stage should build links between codes. Instead, they should scrutinise codes to ensure that all codes are elaborated and delineated (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). Miles & Huberman, (1994) further argue that axial coding should include partitioning variables and subsuming the particular into the general.

3. Selective coding. Selective coding is a higher level of generality of axial coding in which codes are compared and the core code is identified that provides a theoretical point of integration for the study (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). However, Liamputtong & Ezzy admit that some researchers disagree that there should be core codes for data analysis, and instead the codes can be complex.

Avoiding the criticism of whether core codes should be established when doing thematic analysis, Liamputtong & Ezzy's, (2005) work on thematic analysis process gives clear guidance for researchers who adopt Phenomenological research. However, the main understanding of their guidance is based on seeing thematic analysis is being similar to Ground Theory which requires data to be broken down with labels. This is the opposite of Holloway & Wheeler's (2010) argument which suggests that thematic analysis is a way of narrative analysis. They suggest that

researchers should interpret stories as a whole, rather than breaking them down into categorises. The core statement should be reduced from the whole transcriptions when analysing, but should not be broken down. There is not a standard definition to clarify if thematic analysis should be seen as a narrative analysis or Ground Theory. However looking back at the Phenomenological analysis framework as references, Giogi, (2008) suggests Phenomenology is holistic and the initial analysing should focus on Gestalt. Colaizzi, (1978) does not recommend breaking down sentences, instead he suggests extract significant statements, spelling out the statements into formulated meanings, and aggregate formulated meanings into themes. Patton, (2002) also agrees that the bracketing is a step of Phenomenological reduction which identifies the data uncontaminated by extraneous intrusions. The identified statements are then organised as meaningful clusters which make the invariant themes (Patton, 2002).

3.22 Process of Data Analysis

Based on above consideration of phenomenology research analysis and thematic analysis, the process of this research data analysis is shown as the following steps:

Reading carefully in order to get a full picture of the phenomenon

Breaking the entire transcription into parts with meaning units as the order of research objectives

Coding and extracting significant statements

Formulating meanings from significant statements

Summarise the formulated meanings into clusters of themes

Describing the investigated phenomenon

Figure 5: Process of Data Analysis in this Study

Reading carefully in order to get a full picture of the phenomenon

Phenomenology requires researchers to read and listen to the participants' narratives to acquire a feeling for them. All the interview recordings were listened to at least 6 times. Once I received the transcriptions back, I then read all transcriptions whilst listening to the tapes at least another 6 times. It helped me to understand the overall picture of participants' opinions on leadership, with the feel and taste of their perspectives. During this time, all thoughts, feelings and ideas were written in my research diary to assist with the reflection process.

Breaking the entire transcription into parts with meaning units as the order of research objectives

Once I had gained an understanding of the whole picture of their thought, feelings and ideas, within the transcriptions I then broke each transcription into parts in the order of the research themes. The list from the transcriptions is shown below.

- Interviewee's job and role (to start interview).
- Definition of leadership and identification of the most important aspects of it.
- General motivation to take on a leadership role followed by personal motivations.
- Definition of academic leadership and identification of differences in leading within an academic environment.
- Identification and development of future leaders.
- Positive leadership development experiences.
- Single word definitions of leadership.

All transcriptions were then broken into parts of the above themes. I understood that to be able to draw the whole picture of leadership, each part of the transcription cannot be studied as a sole individual theme. Transcriptions in which one theme appeared can also relate to one or several other themes.

In order to construct a clear picture and understanding of all research objectives, I used different colours of highlighters for the following coding step. Each colour represents one theme, and it was used to highlight statements, coding, and my thoughts. If statements were related to two or more themes, all the related colours were highlight in the spare space beside the main colour.

Coding and extracting significant statements

At this stage, I attempted to identify and highlight the interviewee's experience and knowledge of leadership in Higher Education. As Colaizzi's framework suggested, I used coding and extracting each transcription with significant sentences or phrases in order to draw more sense from the data. It was very important to me to identify the relationship between each sentence and the interviewee's story. In order to achieve this, I felt simply coding the sentence or phrase was not enough to identify the relationships. So beside each highlighted sentence or phrase, I wrote down what the sentences meant to me.

Formulating meanings from significant statements

In this step, I sought to understand the hidden and underlying meanings from those evidential statements and phrases. This presents a shift of emphasis in my response and interpretation, from what the interviewees said to what they meant. I intended to understand what participants wanted to express.

Summarise the formulated meanings into clusters of themes

Once meanings were formulated from statements, I was then in a position to arrange these meanings into clusters of themes. I referred these themes back to the data contained in the interview transcription. This enabled me to verify the accuracy of the extracted meanings and subsequent themes against the original data. It also guarded against the danger of overt improvisation of meanings and themes in the process of analysis.

Describing the investigated phenomenon

Holloway & Wheeler, (2010) suggested at this stage research should integrate the results of the analysis into an exhaustive description of the investigated phenomenon. This should include describing the processes which comprised previous steps of analysis and the meanings derived from them. Bryman & Bell, (2003) further added that describing phenomenon is different from discussing the research findings. It is a step prior to discussion, and it outlines the findings rather than presenting the results. The results of this research are presented in chapter 4. In order to present findings of this

phenomenological research, I used a rich amount of quotes from the transcriptions to draw the picture of the interviewees' experiences.

3.23 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to explain clearly to the reader the research process which was used in this piece of work. The chapter began with the research aim and questions followed by an outline of the two main research paradigms. Different research designs were considered before proceeding to provide a rationale for the phenomenology. Data collection methods, and pilot work were then described. The process of conducting and analysing the data were then presented. The next chapter presents the findings.

4. Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

"Leadership is bloody difficult!" Respondent 3

Having considered the literature relating to leadership then completed the piloting and data collection phases of the study along with explaining the analysis process the analysis of the data from the respondent's interviews is now presented. The findings will be considered in line with the broad themes as detailed on page 71 which were arrived at from the initial investigation of the existing literature.

These themes are as follows:

- Definitions of leadership
- Leadership in a Higher Education Institution
- Academic leadership
- Leadership development.

Quotations from the individual respondents and the focus group will be used to highlight significant areas within the emergent themes from the analysis process, ==this is presented as outcomes from the semi-structured interviews and then from the Focus Group.== Where appropriate, structural observations have been added in order to add contextual information to the experiences detailed by the respondents. This information includes observations and reflections

from the researcher's reflexive journal and research diary. Also within this chapter is the outline of the essence of the phenomenon derived from the study process. This essence reflects the "description of the experiences of the individuals studied and their common experiences of the phenomenon" Creswell *et al.* (2007).

4.2 Outputs from the Semi-Structured Interviews

4.3 Definitions of Leadership

Defining leadership is very difficult as can be seen from the literature considered in Chapter 2 of this study, there is no agreed definition and the respondents to the study had a variety of definitions and comments both generally and in relation to leadership within their own institution or institutions they may have worked in previously. This was the area where respondents had most vehement views. Everyone had an opinion of what leadership is in practice and the majority defined it from how they had experienced leadership, good and bad, throughout their own careers and from the leadership development experiences they have been exposed to.

4.4   The Nature of Leadership

"It's like an elephant, you know exactly what it is when you see it but it is almost impossible to describe." Respondent 10.

This quote clearly demonstrates the problem, when good leadership is visible then individuals can recognise it and can identify with it but actually defining it is very difficult. Breaking leadership down into its component parts from the various perspectives of the respondents may be one way of becoming clearer about what it actually is.

"It is fine to know the theory of leadership but the practice is very different." Respondent 3.

There is much written about leadership and there has been over many years however how any one individual practices the 'art' of leadership is very different. The personal display of leadership qualities and practices will differ with each individual and will depend on their personality, their profession, their background and every leader will approach an issue/organisation in a different manner. This does question the theoretical perspective of leadership particularly as something which can be taught when it is so individual.

"It is multi-faceted and requires vision, direction, team building/empowerment and nurturing."   *Respondent 8.*

"It is about direction, vision and modelling good behaviours. It is about setting the direction and helping others move in that direction." Respondent 6.

"Setting direction, collaborative process, bring people with you."
Respondent 4.

This moves us on to a position where we understand that leadership is not focussed on a single entity and that therefore it involves a range of activities. Vision for the institution is important; the ability to see the way ahead and to give direction to the institution is necessary and was mentioned by all of the respondents in various ways. The reference to team building is again important as it implies that it is not a solitary activity that there are other people involved in the process of leadership. These people should be empowered to do things on behalf of the institution or the leader but that these people need to be nurtured to ensure that they can give their best to the institution and its success.

"Staff have the same needs and desires to be well led regardless of their position." Respondent 5.

This indicates that much as there is a discussion to be had on the need for academic staff to be led, that there is a basic human need to be led regardless of what role you have within the institution. This does not need to be a formal line management relationship but goes back to the hierarchy of needs which identifies the need for belonging, leadership is one way of expressing that sense of belonging to staff within the institution. This is key to the nature of academic leadership and will be explored further when considering this topic.

"Each SMT member is a leader in their own area but also has a collective leadership responsibility." Respondent 6.

This is clearly at the other end of the spectrum where we are looking at collective responsibility for the good of the institution not of the individual or even an individual within their area of responsibility.
 Two of the respondents gave examples of where they had personal experience of decisions being taken for the benefit of individuals/small groups not for the benefit of the institute as a whole.

"I am too opinionated ……..that if one is playing a role, at SMT level, we have a duty, you know not to tune out of big chunks of the life of the institution and what makes it successful or not, so I have always felt that it isn't only a natural tendency to stick my oar in, its actually an obligation that I'm not closing down my contribution and, also more importantly, my sense of the things which I might have a residual responsibility, because if I am round the top table, as I sought to be at one time and intend to stay there for a long

time, well you can't really pick and choose, there is a collective responsibility about being in that position and if you are going to accept that collective responsibility, you have to accept whatever comes out of that and take responsibility, or at least have your say ...." Respondent 1.

An interesting question comes out of this quote, can a leader be 'too opinionated'? This respondent is basically saying that they are happy to take collective responsibility as part of the top team but that in doing so they have an obligation to contribute to the discussion, they also recognise that they must accept the decision which comes out of that process whatever that decision may be but they must have been part of that process. In these circumstances can you possibly be too opinionated? This respondent also goes on to say that.

"You have a duty to contribute whether you are asked to or not." Respondent 1.

Respondent 1 was very animated at this stage of the discussion, he felt very strongly that there is a right way of contributing and being a senior leader within the institution and that this motivates him to ensure that he is doing the right thing for the benefit of the organisation. He is a very senior member of professional services staff and clearly felt that his contribution in areas of academic business was not always welcomed by his academic colleagues but that he did have a valid contribution to make and also a responsibility to make it.

Duty is a very strong word to use, it implies more than just an obligation which was used in the first quote above, it says that it is a central part of the role you undertake in the University to make your voice heard regardless of the subject under discussion and to show that you are a strong part of the decision making process. Only having made your contribution can you then accept the collective decision, even if it is a decision you do not agree with. If everyone round the top table behaves in this way then good decisions can be made, if this is not the case then some decisions may be of questionable quality.

> *"If you are a leader at the top then you need to recognise that you will never be everything that everyone wants you to be but you have a responsibility to do the right things."* Respondent 9.

This echoes the previous discussion where the concept of duty to contribute was considered, doing the right things is an extension of this, you, as a leader, need to contribute to ensure that you personally do the right things but also that there is a collective need and desire to do the right things and those right things are for the overall benefit of the University not for the benefit of individuals.

This quote highlights the areas of authentic leadership and ethical leadership.

"The higher up the hierarchy you go the greater sphere of influence you have." Respondent 4.

This in some ways is obvious as those at the top of an organisation tend to have a greater power base therefore greater influence, however it could potentially conflict with the earlier view that everyone, regardless of their position in the organisation, is a leader in their own area. It is possible to manage that conflict by considering the true nature of the leadership role by differentiating between self/limited group leadership and organisation wide leadership. It is also important to recognise the difference between individuals who have an explicit leadership role within their job description e.g. the University Vice Chancellor and other individuals e.g. a Lecturer who does not, their leadership capacity comes from their subject knowledge and the ability that they have, as an individual to lead their colleagues for the benefit of the students.

4.5   Activities Leaders Engage In

Getting to grips with leadership is challenging, one way of thinking about it is to consider what leaders actually do on a day to day basis i.e. the activities that leaders actually carry out. This appears to be more difficult than at first thought from the research carried out.

The word vision is used throughout many of the quotes which relate to the other aspects under scrutiny, there are few which directly relate to vision and that is firstly a definition and its place as a function of leadership. Creating the vision is clearly a leadership function.

"The where and the why were clear." Respondent 4.

This respondent was very clear in their interview that this was the definition of leadership in relation to vision and was one that they had worked with for many years. The need not just to state the vision but to explain the 'why' was interesting as, in their view, it justified the vision and encouraged everyone to come on board to deliver the vision.

"Vision is about vision for the community." Respondent 1.

This reference was about the vision for the academic community and engaging with that community. This clearly relates to the explanation of the 'why' above.

One of the respondents warned of the dangers of a grand vision

"Not grand visions, as there is a danger that the grander they are, the more that they are yours personally, as opposed to a distillation of a lot of people's thinking and other people's understanding ….." Respondent 1.

The process of creating a vision was clearly important to this individual who emphasised the need to involve people in creating the vision. If you, as leader, create the vision it is likely to be very grand, very distant to the organisation and therefore unachievable. Ownership of the vision is very important and that ownership must lie with the organisation in its entirety not with the leader.

All of the respondents used the word vision in their interviews

"The focus is on creating an environment to deliver the vision/direction." Respondent 4.

"It is about motivating people to move in the direction of the university strategy." Respondent 6.

"We need to work collaboratively with staff to meet the organisations goals." Respondent 7.

This adds the new dimension of the environment in which the delivery of the vision and direction can be delivered. The need to create a conducive environment is important and again was referred to be the majority of respondents. What was missing from the respondents was what that environment actually looked like, what the component parts of it actually are; there was neither clarity nor agreement on this issue although there was recognition that the environment one individual felt was acceptable was unlikely to be the same as others.

"The leader was not taking sides, getting his hands too dirty, he was ensuring that the right sort of things happened, largely by pretty extreme delegation, I would say that there was a core stability around the place at the time, when in fact things were pretty unstable." Respondent 1

This quote comes from a context in which an institution is having extreme problems but the Principal (who the respondent is referring to) was clear about how he had to adapt his style to accommodate the issues and to ensure that the institution remained stable. This ability to have confidence in your team to be able to delegate shows a strength of leadership and an ability to remain publically neutral by not being seen to 'take sides' in any debates. The art of good delegation is to allow the individual to get on with delivering the outcome without undue interference.

This ability to recognise the style you have to adopt as leader in certain circumstances is essential but can be a difficult balancing act particularly in circumstances where you are forced to act in a manner which is contrary to your natural style.

"You need to know when to take a risk." Respondent 4

Leaders have to take risks when they are leading large organisations, these risks need to be assessed properly and not expose the organisation to any unnecessary consequences, staff need to have confidence in the leadership of the organisation to manage the risks properly.

"Its like running on the backs of alligators, it needs to be fast or it's not going to happen, and even though you know that every step might be a missed step, you might just come out the other end." Respondent 10.

This quote refers to the uncertainty of leaders, they do not always get it right. There needs to be a certainty to leadership based on the facts available at the time when a decision is made and a confidence that the outcome will be correct. Followers need to see that certainty as this will build their confidence in the leader, where things do not go to plan and a decision proves to be the wrong one they need that openness and honesty to say 'I/we got it wrong but the decision was made for the best of reasons and with the best information available at the time.'

One of the key activities of leaders is the leading of change which appears to be the one constant aspect of life in any organisation.

"Someone said about managing change, it is a contact sport and I think not necessarily persuading people to change, just helping to encourage people to keep on doing things, good things, the right things, better than they did the last time, helps a lot if you are perceived, somehow or another, to be in amongst it, not just turning up on the shop floor." Respondent 1.

Change has been highlighted as being one of the key aspects of leadership, if everything is to remain the same then do you actually need leadership? Two respondents felt that this is the pivotal role of leaders.

Leadership is the key to achieving change in any organisation but particularly in academia. The idea of change coming from the top down is unacceptable to academics who respond to a more collegiate approach to change, being part of the decision making process is key to making the changes acceptable and to stick. Democracy as opposed to autocracy is important to academics.

4.6   Responsibilities of Leaders

"Need a strategic approach and the ability to see round corners,
bringing motivation and creativity to bear on reality."
Respondent 3.

There are key words and meanings in this quote, the strategic approach which is linked to vision as is the 'ability to see round corners.' This ability to see what the future looks like, within reason, is crucial and the ability to scan the horizon is essential, it is not an exact science as regrettably none of us know what the future actually looks like but we can certainly take on board all of the signals from the wider environment and make assumptions on what the future may look like. The environment to be scanned looks at government policy and indications of future policy, economic forecasts, demographic information and issues such as UKVI and its impact on international recruitment. These are all external factors and married with the internal factors of student numbers, student progression, staff age profile, staff qualifications and turnover can begin to develop a rich picture of information which allows scenario planning to take place. The scenario planning allows the institution to rehearse how it would respond to the various factors influencing the future.

An example of this would be if the government indicated that in three years' time they would stop the flow of international students to the UK, this would have a detrimental impact on the institution and the ability to plan for this would be essential. Some issues will not be so obvious but horizon scanning and then planning for the various combinations of potential factors is very much a leadership task.

"Leadership is about getting people to do things but to believe that it was their idea in the first place." Respondent 9.

This is particularly important when we consider those individuals who do not have a specific leadership role but in effect lead by influencing the activities and actions of others. This is very clear in the actions of Lecturers as considered above.

"It is difficult to change the behaviour of academics which is ironic given that the whole purpose of academia is to change perceptions, knowledge and behaviour of individuals."   Respondent 3.

This is an interesting perception of academics given that it effectively indicates that the role of a leader and the style in which they deliver that leadership is to 'change the behaviour' of individuals. It would be interesting to investigate this further and discover if academics perceive the need to be changed by a leader, this is clearly not part of this study.

The figure below seeks to explain the aspects of the definition which have been identified as being important to the respondents, these are closely linked to the emergent themes identified through the literature review in Chapter 2. Defining leadership in its widest context is the first stage in responding to the research aim.

The Nature of Leadership

Followers

Organisational success

Theory/Practice

Vision

Collective Responsibility

Responsibilities of Leaders

Motivation of individuals

Strategy development

Activities Leaders Engage In

Delivery

Risk Management

Change Management

Characteristics of Leadership

Figure 6: Characteristics of Leadership

(Source – author)

4.7 Leadership in a Higher Education Institution

Context of Higher Education

The literature which has been considered earlier points to the issue of context – is leadership different dependant on the context in which you operate as a leader? All of the respondents referred to the HE context as part of the discussions and felt that HE is 'different' from other organisations although they were less clear what that difference actually was.

"There are a whole range of leaderships which might be hugely contingent on the culture of the organisation you are leading, but also in the context in which you find yourself." Respondent 1.

This quote points to two aspects of context, firstly the context and culture you are actually part of and secondly the everyday context within that organisation. The use of the word 'hugely' is interesting as this was emphasised in the actual interview itself, the respondent wanted to ensure that the impression which was conveyed was that this was important and was actually more important than many of the other observations that he made.

Having established that context is important then within HE there is a debate about the nature of leadership and many of the activities identified as leadership activities are actually basic management issues which need a certain skill set to deal with them.

"I think there is a dichotomy between leadership and management and the two things contribute to the same common purpose." Respondent 10.

"Universities would not be able to function if there was not any management of the activity." Respondent 5.

"There has to be an element of managerial competence, which does not really matter what context you work in, some basic things need to be done to function so there is a common base." Respondent 1.

"As a leader …… and have basic management skills." Respondent 6.

"Basic skills to competently manage staff." Respondent 7.

These views show a wide recognition of the need to have an organisation which is well managed i.e. that the basic issues are dealt with, this can be as simple as paying all staff the right amount at the right time to something much more complex such as ensuring that the right students are admitted to the right course where they have the greatest chance of success. These management tasks can be carried out by individuals who have no leadership role within the institution, they can also be carried out by individuals who have clearly defined leadership roles, and the reality is that they must be carried out.

"There is an assumption that leaders are better than managers, this is too black and white." Respondent 5.

This was implied in different ways in all of the interviews, management was deemed to be the boring easy bit but leadership was where the real skill was required and where the greatest rewards came from.

"Leadership in a university is not different to the rest of the world, what is different is the emphasis that adapts depending on the organisation." Respondent 3.

"The university is much more complex culturally, it has its own distinct views and beliefs you need to try to pull the views together to form some common ground. You need to lead the different strands and there has to be mutual respect. The leader needs to interact and support, there needs to be a collegiate way of working, there needs to be more consensus, influence and communication to make this type of organisation work effectively." Respondent 3.

This respondent firstly identifies that universities are not different to other organisations in a leadership sense however they then go on to enumerate where some differences lie particularly in relation to the whole area of collegiate working. This, they argue, is not a difference in leadership but a difference in the emphasis of the leadership style. This view is at odds with the majority of views expressed by other respondents however it was a view expressed by an individual who

holds the highest level leadership role and is therefore difficult to ignore.

Leadership Behaviour

"It is about setting the tone of how we operate, our ethos and our values." Respondent 7.

"How people do things is very important to me, it is often more important to concentrate on the how, not on the actual thing, that is what is important to me as a leader." Respondent 3.

These two quotes add to the picture by looking, not at what we do, but about how we do what we do. Fundamentally as an institution which is largely publically funded society has certain expectations about how it will behave at a corporate level, if it were seen to behave in an immoral manner that would impact on its reputation which then impacts on its ability to recruit and retain students and good members of staff. The University has a choice about how it wants to operate and this is again a central function of the top tier of staff but also all members of staff and the wider community have the right to input into this.

Ethics, discussed by three respondents, are important in this context, the expectation of the wider academic community, which includes students, is that the institution will behave in an ethical manner, this impacts on teaching materials, on student projects and on many other

aspects of the day to day business therefore at a corporate level it needs to be clear that the university will behave in an ethical way.

"I measure myself by the loyalty of my team." Respondent 3.

This goes back to the argument about followers, individuals will only follow leaders who they respect and who they feel have integrity, using loyalty as a measure of success is appropriate but in some cases difficult to measure.

"What individual leaders have to do is to make complicated things seem a lot simpler and to understand that it is not very complicated but being able to punctuate complicated moments with apparent clarity, it's that learning to be confident and positive, even if you feel inside that it may be a bit difficult to be confident and clear, because life is not usually like that." Respondent 1.

"You need to have a confident style but not be arrogant; people need to have confidence in you. Need to know when to be assertive/directive particularly in a crisis. Need to be able to take constructive criticism and less positive feedback." Respondent 2.

Confidence is clearly important, individuals are not going to follow a leader who has no confidence in themselves or in the position of the institution. This was particularly emphasised by one respondent who felt very strongly that confidence was essential to leadership. Arrogance however is not an acceptable trait in a leader.

Clarity and simplicity also inspire confidence in the followers as does a positive attitude to the situation. This does not mean that leaders should give a false position in relation to a situation but that confidence and clarity in that situation is essential.

"As long as you continue to behave with a strong degree of consistency, that at best is rooted in some sort of right and wrong and maybe some ramifications of the importance to the organisation you work for ………but I always try to think what is best for the collective." Respondent 1.

"You need to have respect for those working for you and respect for those who deliver and an ability to communicate that clearly. You need to be seen to act fairly and to inspire others to follow your lead." Respondent 3.

"Individuals need to be able to express opinions both good and bad. I believe that we should always treat others as we would wish to be treated ourselves." Respondent 9.

This demonstrates the need for consistent behaviour, not just for the sake of consistency but for that underpinning of moral authority which in this instance is referred to simply as right and wrong. Having a sound knowledge of right and wrong in the context in which you work is important as it allows for decisions to be made which are not selfish decisions but are in the best interests of 'the collective'. The need to demonstrate respect for colleagues is important, the need to have earned that respect from colleagues as your position in HE does not guarantee that you will be respected.

Fairness is key as everyone likes to be treated fairly and if a leader demonstrates this then they are more likely to be respected. The ability of people to be able to express their views regardless of what those views are is important, this must be done without fear of reprisals.

The seemingly old fashioned expression of treating others as you would wish to be treated yourself is central to positive leadership behaviour. These concepts of ethical and authentic leadership continue to come out from the research and the literature behind them has been covered earlier.

"I am not perfect but I am self-aware." Respondent 2.

"You need a thick skin to be a leader." Respondent 3.

"You need to put yourself in others position." Respondent 2.

"Self-awareness and emotional intelligence are important."
Respondent 7.

Leaders are human beings and have the same emotions and emotional intelligence as everyone else. The key to successful leadership is the ability to know yourself, to be able to understand others and not to be negatively impacted by others perception of you. This takes us back to the discussion on ethical and authentic leadership along with emotional intelligence, the literature points to all of the concepts above and argues that it allows leaders to utilise concepts which will improve their own leadership effectiveness. Three of the respondents discussed the emotional intelligence needed to be a leader, they did not always use the term 'emotional intelligence' but that was the concept behind the discussion.

"We need to have more empowering of individuals and role modelling from senior staff." Respondent 5.

The second part of this quote is more important as the first quote echoes what is said above, role modelling from senior staff sets the tone for the organisation, and is fundamentally about trust i.e. staff need to be able to trust senior staff to set the standard for the whole organisation. If senior staff are perceived to expect a certain type of behaviour from staff and then behave in a different manner then this will not enable a positive culture. Values and behaviours are key in this, one institution defined its values and behaviours through a

consultative process and all staff regardless of their position are expected to work towards these values and behaviours, this is most important for senior staff who must always model them. To do otherwise would show a contempt for staff and a lack of emotional intelligence in the leadership which would be detrimental to the institution.

"There is a greater congruence with the values from many first line managers than there is from some of the top level leaders." *Respondent 2.*

Whilst this is an unfortunate view although genuine it is clearly the view from staff within the institution, as it would be difficult to believe that this is an isolated view and is therefore something which needs to be addressed.

Moving on to the emergent theme of leadership in Higher Education is a logical step in funnelling the discussion from the widest context of leadership definition to looking at the specific issues relating to leadership within the sector. This begins to identify the differences which the respondents see in the HE context.
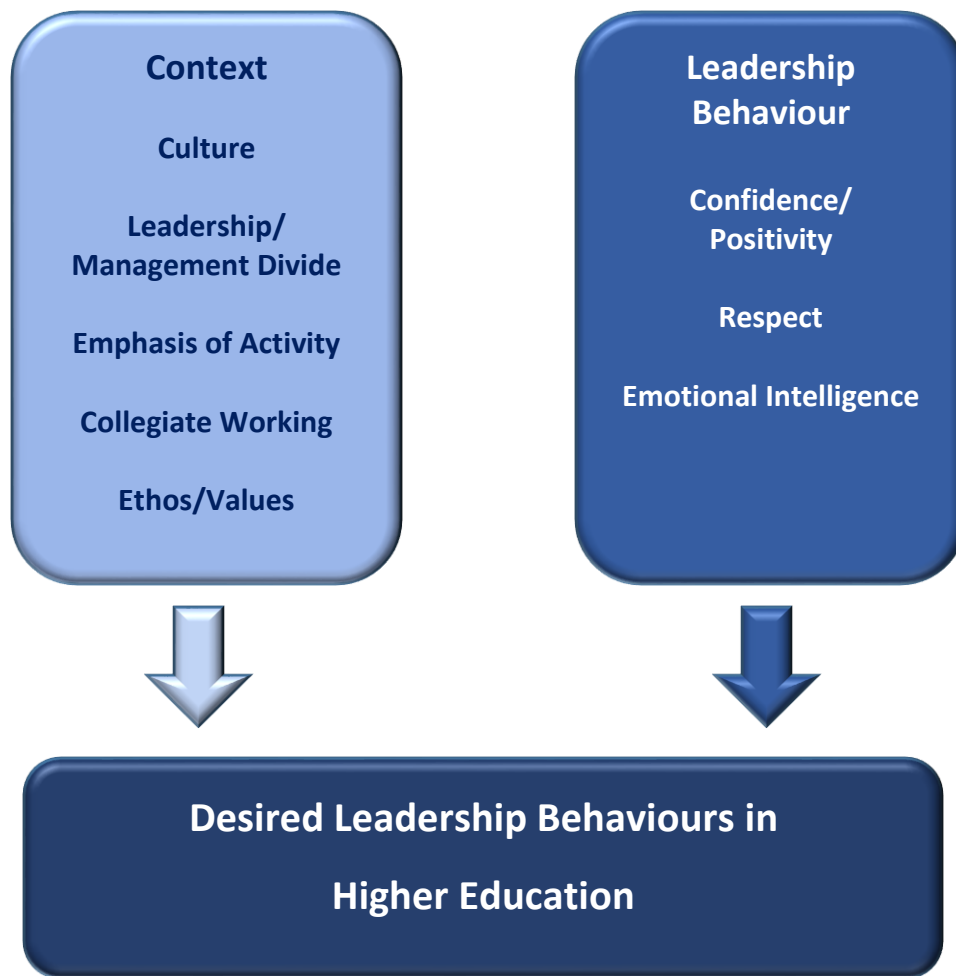
Figure 7: Desired Leadership Behaviours in Higher Education (Source – author)

4.8   Academic Leadership

Nature of Academics

"The role of leadership in academia is to harness that academic focus to deliver the strategic goals of the organisation." Respondent 9

"The leader needs to be able to understand the organisation and the sector." Respondent 3

"A need to believe in what the university is for, its purpose and beliefs/values." Respondent 3

This begins to focus the leadership context within Higher Education on the academic work of the institution rather than the managerial effort required to manage the institution, this engages with the earlier discussion on the difference between leadership and management and begins to suggest that the difference could be more pronounced in an academic institution than in an 'ordinary' organisation.

Academic staff tend to identify with their subject discipline rather than with the organisation they are employed by. Academics often consider their peers to be colleagues in their subject discipline at institutions round the world rather than at the institution they work in and individuals they engage with on a daily basis. However they

fundamentally require to engage with the purpose of education that being either research or teaching or both.

"Academics are happy to coalesce around people who are inspiring, or engaging or who they revere in terms of their academic or research background and not necessarily behind these people who are their leaders." Respondent 10

Again this builds on the difference between leading academic staff and leading other staff in different types of organisations. Academics feel that respect for the leader is essential before they will allow themselves to be followers of that individual, this can be the difference between the individuals who are formally the organisational leaders i.e. whose role says they are the leaders and those who individuals will follow because they respect them as academics and therefore see them as worthy of following i.e. informal leaders.

All of the respondents from an academic background highlighted this as an issue. It leads on to the next quote:

"The Principal needs to be an academic only because of the credibility that gives you in the sector." Respondent 10

There is an on-going debate within the sector on whether University Principals require to be academics and not all of them are however this respondent believes that the academic credibility gives greater leadership credibility and therefore can move the organisation forward more successfully. There are examples in the sector where institutions have been very successful with leaders who are not academics.

"The academic culture is very important, credibility in the academic subject is crucial; this is where individuals get their identity from and not from the institution but from their peers in their area."
Respondent 5

Culture is becoming more important and the academic culture is being seen more as the dominant culture and is recognised as what will allow the institution to develop. Credibility within that culture is where the impetus for leadership comes from, if you do not have that credibility then you will not be able to lead within an academic environment. There are, of course, different levels of leadership within the organisation and the grass roots leadership is what requires the academic credibility, overall institutional leadership requires that academic credibility but perhaps in a different way and with a different currency.

The Focus Group were very clear, in discussion, that whilst they could recognise the concept of 'self-leadership' within the academic community the need for leadership is as important to academics as it is to any other staff group. They did recognise that this leadership should not be hierarchical rather be based on academic credibility. They did recognise that this presented a certain type of challenge for institutional leadership to develop an acceptable leadership model for the academic community.

"Many organisations employ highly intelligent people however there is something about the academic mind-set, I can say this as I am an academic. Academics have a view on how things should be done. They are autonomously functioning individuals which is a good thing as that is what we need them to be. The role of leadership in academia is to harness that focus to deliver on the strategic goals of the organisation." Respondent 3

This respondent recognises that academics are different by referring to the 'academic mind-set', this they argue is different from just employing lots of highly intelligent individuals. Academic autonomy, which is different from academic freedom, is arguable the distinguishing factor in leading academics. The challenge, as they see it is harnessing that autonomy, freedom and mind-set and focussing it on the organisational goals, this has, he argues, a profound impact on the leadership style required in academic institutions.

The Focus Group again recognised this and emphasised the need for leadership to harness the academic activity and focus it in the direction of the University strategy. They acknowledged that you could not have a substantial number of academics all doing their own thing without regard to the institutional direction.

"You do not manage academics, you cajole/persuade as they are more likely to challenge anything, and you ultimately can't 'crack the whip'. They are different types of people and they have less of a shared agenda and purpose with the institution, they have a personal agenda." Respondent 4

This personal agenda within the shell of the organisation is potentially one of the key differences to leading within an academic institution in contrast to leading within any other type of organisation. It is difficult to see other organisations accepting the personal agendas of their staff in quite the way the an academic institution does, an academic institution needs its academic staff to have this personal agenda which will in effect move their subject discipline forward, that independence of though and action is crucial within the institution even though it can, at times, conflict with the leadership and management of the organisation

"Can't assume that things will happen just because you say so." Respondent 8

This is where leaders new to the sector tend to fail in assuming that if something is agreed and a direction is decided then the agreed activities will actually happen, this is not always the case in academic areas. Many academic staff do not feel the need to do as was agreed and therefore this can add conflict into the situation when certain activities are not done. Position within the organisation does not necessarily mean that the individual will have the power to require things to be done, there are often few consequences for individuals who do not do as they have agreed to do.

"Academics are like herding cats, academic freedom is very important, we recruit academics for their contradictory skills/views, they need to teach students but we recruit them for their publications. We give them admin roles such as quality. We give them academic management/leadership roles such as writing a programme handbook but they are not all good at these things."
Respondent 4

The reference in this quote to academic management/leadership being like herding cats is a common comment in academia, it serves to illustrate the particular nature of academics and their need/desire to be led in a way which is particular to their characteristics. Academic freedom is key within the sector. This freedom does indicate a need to allow academics a significant degree of freedom which may not be offered to other professional groups in working life but it also recognises the limitations on that freedom.

"Academic staff need to be persuaded that a certain course of action is the right one. They do not respond well to being told to do something, even if they can see that it is the right thing, they need to have the opportunity to debate and influence things much more than professional services areas. It's about respect for their professionalism and their collegiate way of working." Respondent 3.

The respondent is recognising that within an institution there are different groups of staff and the need to vary personal leadership style to accommodate this is important. It is not always possible to do this as working groups etc. often contain staff from across the institution which is positive but again requires the leader to adapt to an appropriate style to accommodate the needs of the various groups.

Academic Leadership Styles

"There is a tendency to use a collaborative and collegiate approach in academic areas." Respondent 2

"More patience is needed to lead in academic areas."   Respondent 9

"There is fundamentally a different academic ethos."   Respondent 7

"The leader needs to interact and support, there needs to be a collegiate way of working, there needs to be more consensus, influence and communication to make this type of organisation work effectively." Respondent 7

Again this is indicative of the need to lead academics in a different way, this was referred to in different ways by all of the respondents. ~~The Focus Group also concluded that academics need a less hierarchical leadership style and that the leadership activity should concentrate on supporting academics and ensuring their personal development.~~

This emphasis on collaboration and a collegiate approach indicates that a command and control style of leadership would be inappropriate. The need to reach consensus is important and this can only be done through effective communication.

There is also an indication from these quotes that differential leadership styles may be required for different groups within the university, the emphasis here is on academics but there is no reference to or acknowledgement of the professional services staff although there may be an implication that leading professional services staff is done in a 'normal' way with academic leadership being done differently.

"Academic style is more inclusive, discursive and seeks to influence to a much greater extent." Respondent 9.

The emphasis of this is on the difference, implied rather than explicitly stated, between leading academic staff and other staff. The emphasis here is on the need to treat academic staff in a particular manner.

"There is a tendency to use a collaborative and collegiate approach in academic areas too much, to the point of inertia, this is a real problem in the academic areas." Respondent 2

This full quote demonstrates that there is a feeling that whilst collaboration and a collegiate approach may be desirable in academic areas and this has been demonstrated throughout the literature, there is a danger that by using this style, which by its very nature, tends to be much slower than other styles resulting in issues not being progressed and progress not being made. This demonstrates the potential for conflict between leadership style and the progress required by the institution. It also highlights that using two different leadership styles for the two main types of staff may not be appropriate.

"Feeling that managerialism and that academic administration and academic management is pushing out the academic leadership which is leadership of the academic effort."   Respondent 10

This gives the first clear view of what academic leadership actually is
– **leadership of the academic effort.**

The Focus Group agreed that there core need for academic staff is to
harness the academic effort by ensuring that appropriate leadership
styles are utilised.

The concept of managerialism has become more apparent in
institutions over the last 5/10 years. It is a view that the whole
administration of the institution is taking over and that there is no or
significantly less time for real academic work i.e. teaching and
research. There is a conflict between what work of this nature needs
to be done by academic staff and what should be done by professional
services staff. This also echoes the earlier discussion on the difference
between leadership and management as some of these tasks could be
perceived as managerial tasks and therefore not appropriate for
certain staff to be involved in.

> *"Many attributes of leadership are the same, different styles may*
> *be needed at different times and with different groups."*
> *Respondent 4*

The ability to recognise time and place in leadership terms is being
highlighted in this quote. The respondent recognises that there is a
base competency but the actual practice of leadership requires a
subtlety of application.

"It is not about doing it by numbers, leadership isn't like that. The texts give the ingredients of leadership, however it is about the qualities of the individual and how you apply these in specific circumstances." Respondent 3

"Leadership is more than just a competency it is knowing when to use it and how to adapt your style to the situation." Respondent 6

This quote is in danger of drifting into the argument about whether leaders are born or can be developed. However the key and the reason it is used here is the reference to the qualities an individual brings to the leadership role and the manner in which the individual applies their skills to the situation. It is also about having the basic knowledge about how and when to adapt your own personal style to the situation. That is in essence that individual style of leadership and moves us on to the following -

"Leaders can classically range from Stalin to Mother Theresa." Respondent 1

Both of these individuals were undoubtedly leaders in their own areas/times but their style could not have been more different. It is possible to get good positive results from an organisation with differing styles but there is an argument from the academic context that a particular style is more productive.

"It is fine to know the theory of leadership but the practice is very different." Respondent 1

There is a vast amount of literature on leadership written across the years but the reality for each individual leader is to define their own style, taking guidance from the literature and the context in which they are operating, this is particularly important in academic areas where it is necessary for the leader to adapt their own personal style to meet the needs of the academic staff they are leading.

"Moral integrity is useful and important." Respondent 1

"Moral principles are very important around leadership. There needs to be an underpinning moral framework." Respondent 4

Moral and ethical leadership is important, individuals need to trust their leader therefore that moral and ethical behaviour is essential to build the trust that followers need. This needs to be continually demonstrated by all behaviours, there can be no instances where the individual leader's behaviour falls short of what is expected or their integrity is questioned and their leadership position becomes more difficult this is particularly important in academic areas as academic staff respond positively to moral and ethical leadership styles.

"I suppose it comes back to not trying to be a different person, formal in some ways, but trying underneath it to be the same person, not to be pretending too much." Respondent 1

Pretending to be something you are not is a very tiring experience and is not sustainable, being authentic is key to being a leader, you have to have the consistency referred to previously but you have to be real to the people you are leading, not in a pretend/friendly way but in a professional genuine manner. Being consistently 'the same' with all staff you engage with is the ideal as described by Shakespeare's Hamlet – *"to thine own self be true and it must follow, as the night the day. Thou cans't be false to any man".* Again authenticity is key to leadership. Academic staff, in the main, want to be led by leaders who display this authentic style of leadership, they are not easily fooled by an act of authenticity which is not genuine.

"I try to behave in the same way with everyone, which I think is important as it means there is a mix of integrity and engagement."
Respondent 1

The use of the word engagement in this is interesting, and not a word which was used as much in the interviews as may have been expected. An engaging style is important but that is often underpinned by integrity. A leader will not be perceived as engaging if the followers think that it is just an act for their benefit. Engagement is clearly a government agenda and there is significant work currently being done looking at how organisations can engage more with their workforce to ensure better results for the organisation.

Distributed Leadership

"Taking responsibility for yourself and for the organisation."
Respondent 3

"Everyone is a leader in their own role regardless of what that role actually is." Respondent 3

"It becomes more complex when you add in the duty of care, I as a leader have for the individuals I look after." Respondent 7

This is allied to the values and behaviours of the organisation. Each individual has a responsibility for themselves and for their own behaviour and is a leader in that context. Even the most mundane role within the university allows for some, greater or lesser, scope for leadership. Many roles, however, do have significant scope for self-management; there is little control over the daily activities of individuals. Academic staff will agree their teaching commitments and then have the freedom to manage their time within that framework, they also have the ability to manage their own output and what activities they actually undertake, and this brings in the concept of academic freedom which will be looked at in greater detail in the context section.

Staff in professional services roles have greater control placed on their roles although they still have a degree of freedom over how they actually deliver their activities. One Professional Services Director felt that the need to allow professional services staff to have the maximum amount of freedom in doing their jobs was very important given the context in which they were working where academic staff have that significant level of freedom and that this motivated staff by recognising their professionalism.

The concept of the leader having a duty of care for individuals was only referred to by one respondent however it is a concept which is discussed extensively in the literature and one that the individual respondent felt very strongly about.

"You can have a leadership role without the line management responsibility." Respondent 6

This is where discussion about the difference between leadership and management starts, the literature has extensive opinion on whether there is a difference and whether if there is it actually matters. This was an area of discussion with all of the academic colleagues interviewed and was clearly a significant issue in the academic community. This also applies in the area of context as discussed on pages 14/15.

Leadership without line management responsibility is very common in academia as many academic staff display academic leadership qualities amongst their colleagues without having any formal line relationship with them. This is particularly evident in subject areas where what is important is knowledge of the subject and the ability to motivate colleagues to deliver the best possible programme of study and student experience. Line management is not important here if there is professional respect which allows the leadership to take place, individuals wanting to follow the informal leader is very important in this context. The respondents emphasised that academic staff are more than willing to follow leaders who have academic credibility whether they hold formal leadership positions or not, this is informal leadership and is extensive within academic life.

"Individual leaders who do not have line management responsibility for a function need to show leadership in a different way and negotiate/persuade individuals to do certain things."   Respondent 6

"…. leads by subtle manipulation."   Respondent 4

The style needed when the leader does not have line management responsibility is different from a straightforward line relationship. This type of scenario is very common in HE where within academic areas staff on the same grade will have a leadership role without the line relationship, for example, a Module Leader may well be a Lecturer and needs to show leadership for the module and this will involve working with other Lecturers, Senior Lecturers and possibly Professors. This scenario requires the 'subtle manipulation' referred to by Respondent 4, it also needs the individual to have confidence in their ability to lead in this scenario and also for the followers to have respect for the individual leading them. This was previously discussed.

The Focus Group emphasises the need for academic staff to have strong leadership but not necessarily in the hierarchical sense. It is academic leadership that academic staff require.

"…we had a good VC who gave clear direction/vision, delegated well with clear expectations that you would deliver as an individual and a senior team." Respondent 4

"They were ambitious targets but we were well motivated and challenged to deliver them." Respondent 4

The need to delegate as a senior leader, particularly in the HE context as the Principal is essential, the reality is that no one individual can deliver everything themselves therefore the ability to delegate and to trust the team is central. This is the essence of distributed leadership, the need to ensure that decisions are made as low down the organisation as possible and at a level where the decision makers have all of the relevant facts which enable them to make rational decisions, there can be instances where when decisions are taken at too high a level then they are taken without full understanding of the facts. There is little direct mention in the literature of delegation, it is in some ways implied but is not discussed in any detail. This could be allied to the great man theories of leadership where everything lies with the one leader but has not been developed in the more advanced theories.

In this instance the VC was supportive of his team and they were assured of this support therefore making delivery more achievable. The opposite of that is demonstrated in the following:

"….can be ambiguous and less clear than is needed" Respondent 4

Tasks can be delegated but where there is a lack of clarity then the potential for delivery is severely hampered.

"..does not micromanage" Respondent 4

Micromanagement is as damaging, if not more so, than not providing clarity. The ideal position is to delegate clearly with clear delivery expectations and then allow the individuals the freedom to deliver, do not hamper their every move by managing the process for them.

Nature of Academics

Academic Focus

Informal Leadership

Self-Leadership

Academic Credibility

Academic Autonomy

Academic Freedom

Academic Leadership Styles

Academic Ethos

Leadership of the Academic Effort

Individual Qualities

Adaptive Style

Moral Integrity

Engagement

Distributed Leadership

Academic Credibility

Delegation

Line Management Responsibility

Authentic/Ethical Leadership

Leadership Practice in Higher Education

Barriers

Personal Agendas

Self-leadership

Academic autonomy/freedom

Enablers

Characteristics

Informal leadership

Academic credibility

Collegiate style of leadership

Figure 8: Leadership Practice in Higher Education

(Source – author)

Redefining Leadership in a Higher Education Context
Margaret Cook – September 2016

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4.9   Leadership Development

Motivation for Leadership

The question of why any individual would want to take on a leadership role, particularly a senior leadership role is interesting and one which was only referred to by respondents in very general terms, with some referring to the financial rewards which tend to come with leadership roles particularly senior ones. Others did refer to both the positive and negative aspects.

> *"I find it a real buzz to be responsible, although it does bring with it the nasty bits." Respondent 1*

> *"I enjoy being a leader but there have been horrid bits."*
> *Respondent 3*

> *'The opportunity to make a difference." Respondent 4*

> *'I like to have an input into shaping things and moving them forward." Respondent 4*

Given the number of individuals in leadership roles in organisations it may be safe to assume that the positive aspects of the role outweigh the negative aspects. The sense of being able to make a difference for your colleagues is hugely appealing for some individuals, as are the intrinsic rewards of personal satisfaction and self-actualisation.

"The performance management system is not as effective as it could be. There is probably a gap in the sector for this kind of talent management, it is particularly as we are a sector which lacks churn and this limits the opportunities for individual members of staff."
Respondent 3

Institutions have performance management systems which could, in theory, be used as part of a talent management process but this is not something which happens in an obvious way.

Within performance management systems there tends to be a concentration on the current role and how best to offer development opportunities within that context. This process could be used more effectively to assist in the process of identifying talented individuals and offering them support to move on in their careers.

The fact that many leaders within the University have been given leadership responsibility within their roles rather than applying for a specific leadership role there needs to be a discussion on how individuals are selected, either formally or informally, for the role that they now have.

In terms of formal appointments:

"You need a balance of internal and external appointments or the organisation becomes stale."   Respondent 7

"It is good to be able to develop talent internally but it is also important to refresh the pool by bringing in fresh blood either from other HEI's or from other sectors, you need to be able to develop both." Respondent 9

This expresses a view which needs both internal promotion but also the appointment of external individuals who can come into the organisation and challenge what is done and how it is done, continual internal appointments do not allow for that level of challenge.

In looking at this question the Focus Group explored the need for the leadership team to have a mix of skills, perspectives, outlooks and backgrounds. This need to balance the leadership team should be taken into account in any recruitment exercise.

It is interesting to reflect on the notion of bringing individuals in from other sectors, this is common in the professional services areas but it is uncommon in academic areas. It is often the case that in recruiting academic staff at Lecturer/Senior lecturer level an advert will indicate that academic experience along with professional experience is desirable this tends not to be the case with more senior academic roles. The researcher with 20 years in HE institutions has never seen

any appointment to Dean Level or above in academic roles (with the interesting exception of Principal roles) where an individual has not come from an academic background.

There is also a view which identifies the dangers in any appointment process:

"There is a danger that we create 'clones' of ourselves in selecting 'people like us' to do specific things and exclude others."
Respondent 4

This can apply equally to both internal/external appointments and also to informal/formal appointments. It can be tempting to appoint others in our own image from our own prejudices. This is well recognised in the literature and was acknowledged by all of the respondents. Processes need to be in place which prevents this from happening.

Skill Requirements

Before establishing what development leaders needs have it is important to be able to describe the skillset that they need to undertake the task in hand, and in summary the skillset identified through the research process is as follows:

- The ability to give a sense of purpose, vision and direction – these are the building block of any organisation or any part of the organisation, why are we here, what the future looks like and how will we get there.

- Communication both internally and externally to the organisation. The ability to listen to all stakeholders, to understand people, to get the meaning behind what is being said and to involve people in the decision making process. This final point is especially important in an academic environment as has been previously highlighted. Good communication builds trust in both internal and external stakeholders.

- Ability to harness the academic effort and to align it to the university strategy. This involves bringing diverse individuals together and dealing with what was referred to as the 'awkward squad' within the institution.

- Risk management – no one knows what the future holds and all decisions carry an element of risk. Managing the risk in each decision is important in the overall success of the institution. The ability to recognise which fights are worth fighting and which are not.

- Personal skills – influencing, flexibility, ability to challenge constructively, good judgement and the ability to prioritise are all

important personal skills, many of which are difficult to teach, which brings us back to the question of whether leaders are born or created. All leaders should know their own weaknesses and be able to compensate for them, this may involve appointing a top team which has the correct skill balance to ensure a complete skill set. Leaders need to understand emotional intelligence and recognise their level of emotional intelligence and attempt to maximise this.

- Good verbal skills are seen to be important where the leader is dealing with intelligent people as in HE. Staff react very negatively if they feel that they are being patronised by anyone in a leadership role.

- Motivation – the ability to be able to motivate individuals to deliver the vision but also to deliver the day to day activity of the institution, to teach students and to make sure that all of the support services necessary for that to happen are in place.

- Resilience is also important as leaders are often challenged particularly by academic staff.

- Professional and personal ethics – ethical behaviour is important in any organisation but more so in an academic institution where all issues of research are carefully scrutinised by an Ethics Committee, it would be inconceivable to have a leader who does not behave in an ethical manner when staff are subject to strict ethical constraints.

One respondent identified the need for the organisation to define what competencies it needs/requires leaders to have:

"A set of skills which each manager has or are trained in. Managers need to build a toolkit to lead/manage. There needs to be a consistency of management and language, there also needs to be behaviours that all leaders and managers display consistently." Respondent 7

It is for each organisation to identify what it needs and then to ensure that it either employs leaders with these skills or develops them consistently in their staff.

Development Activities

"Any leader needs to consider their own development and needs to role model this." Respondent 6.

It is always clear what other people need to do but as leaders we all need to be clear about our own development needs and then to be open about the development we are undertaking, role modelling of good behaviours in this way is important. It is interesting to note that only one respondent identified their own development needs as part of this process.

The respondents identified the issues round individuals taking on leadership roles without the appropriate training and development,

"I have seen some managers moving to very senior roles within the university without this training and it leaves them at a great disadvantage." Respondent 7

"You can see some individuals foundering and needing help as they have not received the basic training for the role they have moved into." Respondent 7

Having selected individuals to take on specific roles there is an obligation on the organisation to ensure that they are equipped with the skill set they require to be successful as leaders.

Some development activities are deliberate and managed through a formal process such as the PDR process. The Focus Group put the onus for identifying development needs firmly with the individual, they considered that only the individual can take responsibility for identifying their own needs then for discussing them with their line manager in a structured way through the PDR process. They also saw a key role for the individual in ensuring that their development needs were met either by the institution or by themselves.

The respondents did recognise that some of the best development opportunities are less formal but can be equally, if not more empowering.

"As a leader you need to be able to hold back and give staff the space to try things knowing that they must be able to make mistakes without fear of comeback. Support in these situations is essential." Respondent 6

The judgement of knowing who to trust with what task and then to support them rather than micro-manage the process is essential, it is often easier to do something yourself rather than allow someone else to do it as they may not do it exactly the way you would want it done. The ability to sit back and allow this to happen is difficult but essential for a leader. The ability to support in difficult circumstances is also essential.

In a more formal sense there are many ways of developing individuals and the following were identified from the research.

"We need to understand what we are likely to need in 3/5 years; we need to take a long term perspective on leadership development." Respondent 9

This identifies that just doing development is potentially a waste of time, what we are developing, that can only come from what we will need in the future. If the institution does not know what the future need is going to be then there is no point in developing for the unknown. There will always be an element of the unknown but there is always an element of the known in a 3/5 year horizon which is arguably too short a timescale but the one identified by the respondent.

Universities also develop individuals for the benefit of the sector as a whole and there are some cross sector training and development schemes available through organisations such as the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education which offers programmes which are transferrable throughout the sector. Many Vice Chancellors for example have undertaken the 'Top Management Programme' which prepares individuals for this role, the majority of alumni from this programme who are appointed to VC roles are appointed to institutions other than the one which supported their development.

"Use 360 degree feedback as part of the process of identification and development." Respondent 8.

This points the way to using formal tools such as 360 degree feedback, which can come in many forms, to seek the views of the individual themselves, their peers, their manager and their staff to identify leadership potential to assist in identifying potential future leaders and also to assist in the identification of development needs for current leaders. Such tools are not extensively used in the University for this purpose.

> *"There needs to be good underpinning staff development which needs to be mandatory as the majority would prefer not to do it."*
> *Respondent 4.*

This is a particularly directive view of mass staff development which is not tailored in any way to the needs and aspirations of individuals or the institution and may prove not to be very helpful from a development standpoint.

> *"It is my opinion that there are managers on the academic side who have not received the same training and there is less consistency."*
> *Respondent 7*

> *"I see more consistency on the professional services side, management/leadership is part of the skill set that grows as your career develops, I suspect that this is not the case on the academic side." Respondent 7*

The perceived difference that one respondent has identified about the development trajectory between academic and professional services colleagues is interesting. It is assumed in this quote that there is a standard route for professional services staff to acquire certain skills which either does not exist or is not as strong in the academic arena. More positively;

"You need to treat people like leaders and they will become leaders, the development comes later." Respondent 3

"There is a need to move people around the organisation, to change their roles as this injects greater challenge which they may well enjoy." Respondent 9

"It is helpful to observe how individuals cope with a given task, where their aptitude/interest lies. Project work is often helpful in this way as individuals can be given a specific piece of work to do." Respondent 6

"Give individuals cross-university work to bring them out of their comfort zone and show they can deliver." Respondent 8

"Give individuals the people and resources and see how they get on; allow them to make mistakes and support them through the process." Respondent 8

All of these quotes indicate that the institution should give individuals different types of work to do to 'test' their leadership skills in advance of actually appointing them to formal roles.

"Good leaders have been good mentors who have given me the confidence and trusted me to deliver; they have given me the confidence to make mistakes whilst giving me the professional guidance to improve what I do. When things have gone wrong there was no blame just guidance." Respondent 9

The need for leaders to have an active role in development may be obvious but this quote demonstrates the actual role the leader should play, they should mentor individuals and support them if they make mistakes and then offer their professional guidance to ensure that this is a positive experience for the mentee. This respondent goes on to identify the need for leaders to empower others to develop and to do their jobs to the best of their ability.

"Performance management discussions need to encourage staff to do informal development e.g. networking." Respondent 9

It is interesting that few respondents referred to the performance management process given that each of the respondents takes part in the annual process both as a reviewer and reviewee, the majority clearly do not view this as a part of the leadership development processes of the institution. The performance management process should be central to this process as it offers an individual the opportunity to raise their ambitions in this area with their immediate line manager and also for line managers to raise it as a matter of consideration for an individual.

In terms of actual development activity;

"Coaching, this was very challenging but opened up the opportunity to discuss issues in a confidential forum where your thinking was constructively challenged. It has a lasting impact and was very effective." Respondent 9

The capacity of coaching to unlock the potential of each individual through a partnership approach between the coach and the coachee was recognised by the respondents.

"……. reflection was crucial" Respondent 4

The impact that good critical self-reflection can make to the performance of leaders across the institution was also recognised.

"Develop a framework of skills and competencies that everyone should have as managers/leaders." Respondent 7.

Each institution needs to develop their own set of components and then develop a development programme to deliver these outcomes.

"It is always interesting learning from other people." Respondent 4

"Networking both within and out with the sector is very important as it exposes you to new thinking and ways of doing things." Respondent 6

~~*"There is a need to have an external perspective, need to appreciate what good looks like. External networking allows you to learn from others mistakes/successes and helps to build resilience." Focus Group*~~

Opren (2010) defines networking as creating a set of informal cooperative relationships in the expectation that this will help the individual perform better in their role. Ameijde *et al.,* (2009) promote the creation of informal networks of expertise throughout the institution to support the development of leadership capacity within the institution.

"I'm all in favour of helping and encouraging people to engage in their own professional development, but I find it really tough to think constructively about what I could do here that would really help, in fact who am I trying to help?" Respondent 1

The researcher found trying to tie the respondents down to development activities that should be provided for aspiring and current leaders very difficult. This was even the case when the question was re-phrased to ask them to reflect on the most helpful development opportunities that they themselves had undertaken in their careers. The list of quotes are the most helpful ones from this part of the process but the second last one is very interesting as it expresses the frustration of one respondent in terms of what he should/could be doing.

One respondent identified the development individuals may be accessing as part of their lives out with the university, volunteering was seen by one person as a good way of developing a good but relevant skill set which was then available to the institution. It is interesting (amusing?) to note that only one respondent discussed formal leadership qualifications (MBA), somewhat ironic given that this research was undertaken in academic institutions!

Skills
Requirements

Communications

Reflection/
Challenge

Resilience

Motivation for
Leadership

Performance
Management

Talent
Management

Succession
Planning

Development
Activities

Personal
Development

Support/Trust

Long Term
Perspective

Project Work

Coaching

Networking

**Development Options for Academic Leaders
to Enhance their Leadership Practice**
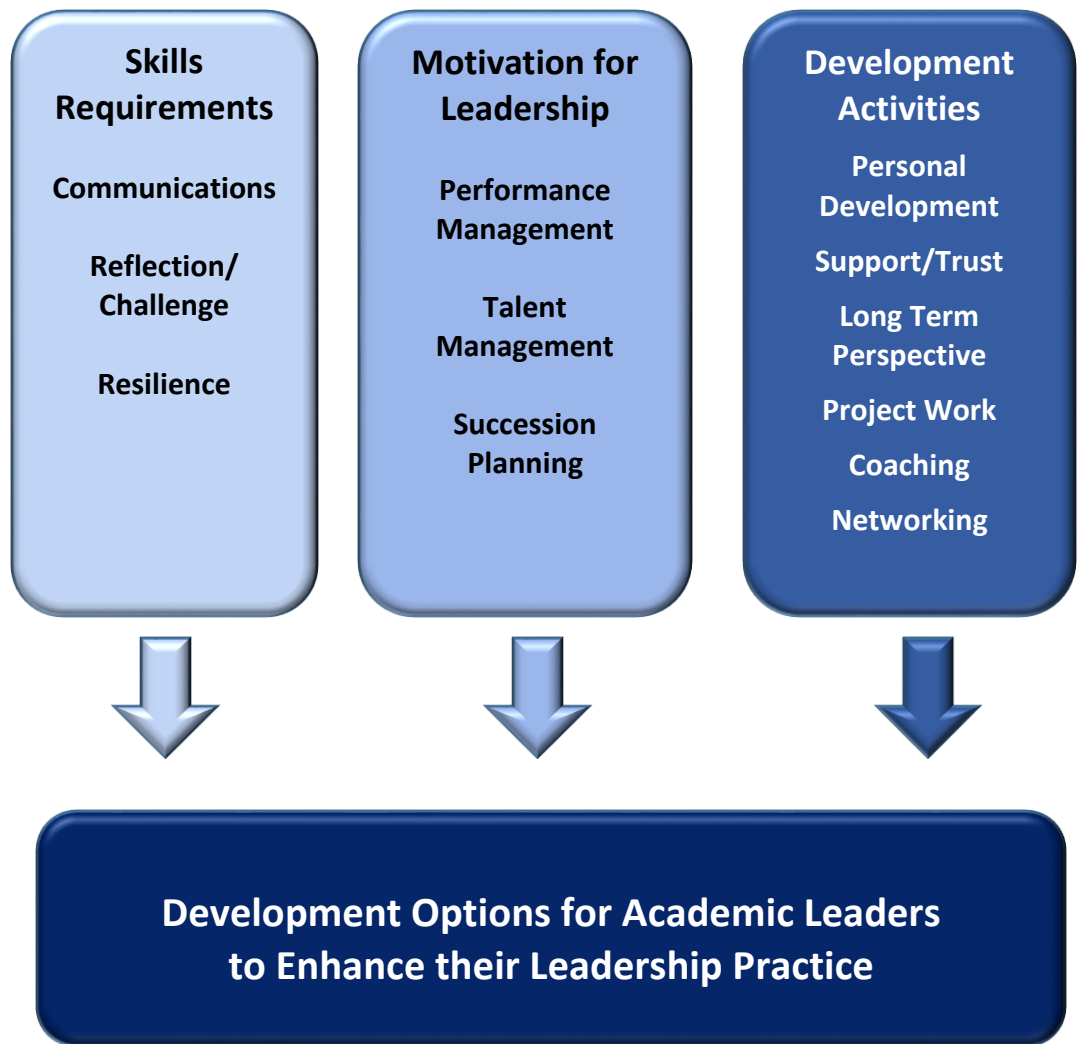
Figure 9: Development Options for Academic Leaders

(Source – author)

4.10 Outcomes from the Focus Group

The rationale for holding the Focus Group is explained on page 94. The Focus Group was asked to consider four issues, as follows.

Issue 1 – The literature suggests that good leadership enhances the success of an organisation - is that true and on what basis do you think that this is true/untrue?

The view of the Focus Group was that this 'goes without saying', they argued that leaders must create an environment where individuals can be successful and it is the alignment of the strategy, leadership and the staff which creates the success. 'Successful leaderships lead successful organisations.

Issue 2 - Do academics need leadership or do they exercise 'self-leadership'?

Academic and strategic leadership is required in all circumstances, "you can't have 550 academics 'doing their own thing!" Academics, however do not need to be led in the traditional hierarchical sense and the data form the Focus Group also suggested that academics need a less hierarchical leadership style. This leadership activity should concentrate on supporting academics and ensuring their personal development.

Issue 3 – Distributed Leadership. There is significant literature in this area but little research data. Does distributed leadership exist in HE and if so, what form does it take? What does it mean?

"We do expect others to show leadership across the institution, we are a hierarchical organisation and have roles throughout the institution which are leadership roles at all levels. We expect leaders to speak out about things which are wrong".

"Leadership is part of many roles, it is embedded in the promotion criteria and is a core aspect of an academics role".

Issue 4 – What should the content of a leadership development programme be?

The Focus Group were asked to reflect on the content of leadership development programmes they had taken part in over the years and recognising that development programmes need to be different dependant on the individuals needs and prior experience they proposed the following list:

- Formal management training
- Post-graduate qualification
- Reflective behaviours
- Ethical decision making
- Coaching/mentoring
- Team dynamics
- External networking

4.11 The Final Word

Having considered the ordering and format of the interviews it was necesary to complete the interviews with a lighter question which was unlikely to lead to more in depth discussion but which may well provoke some thought. The researcher asked for this to be a quick response to try to gauge that instinctive response rather than a considered response. The concluding question to each respondent was "could you please summarise leadership in one word?" the outcomes of this question are very interesting and are as follows:

- Inspire/inspirational – three respondents used this as their summary and justified it by describing individuals they had experienced as leaders who's best quality was to inspire others and they credited those individuals for giving them the impetus to take on a leadership role themselves.

- Integrity – this was the response of two individuals. This is clearly borne out from the content of the interviews with these respondents. They feel very strongly that you cannot be a leader without displaying integrity. Integrity is the key to ensure that any

leader can ensure that people want to follow them and as has been previously demonstrated every leader needs followers.

- Responsibility – one individual came up with this very much as 'the buck stops here!' concept, this is obviously true and leaders must be prepared to take on that responsibility before they engage in any leadership activity.

- Caring – this was the central theme from one individual's interview, the need for the leader to care about the organisation and the individuals within it. Good leadership cannot be demonstrated, in this person's opinion, where the leader is divorced from the organisation and from the individuals who make up the organisation. This arguably is central to HE leadership where the leaders must care about the concept of HE, the individual organisation and the people which crucially includes both staff and students. HE should be a caring organisation in the opinion of this senior manager. It is interesting to note that throughout the interviews students are not mentioned often by the respondents.

- One respondent could not summarise in one word however summed up in a short sentence. 'Interested in the external world, in developing yourself and your team.' – This is a positive summary and does emphasise some of the values of HE, the need to look externally and possibly to lead within the external world, we frequently see HE being asked for a view of an external event by the media. Also the emphasis on the need to develop ourselves to take on the challenges facing us but also ensuring that teams within the institution have to opportunity to develop.

One individual would not respond to this question as they considered that it trivialised the subject as it is too complex to be summarised in one word or even in a short sentence. This is also a valid response given the complex nature of the subject, the individual who refused to respond to this question was not a surprise to the researcher however they did offer this summary which is helpful;

"It is a multi-dimensional thing and its only when all of the pieces come together in certain ways, that you actually identify that yes, this is good leadership. It is partly a social thing, partly contextual thing, partly it's just a complicated thing and multi-dimensional thing and so for those reasons I am not going to give you a simple answer." Respondent 1

This chapter has considered the responses from the respondents in a structured way which has enabled the creation of four aspects which will contribute to the conceptual framework for practice which will be further developed in the next chapter.

5. Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the key themes from the findings are presented and current literature is examined to compare and support these outcomes. These themes have been chosen to capture what appeared to be the most salient issues that emerged from the analysis of the participants' discussion. Using these themes as organising devises for discussion also allowed points of comparison and contrast with preceding work on academic leadership to be drawn out; whilst enabling relevant research introduced in the literature review to be employed to frame the findings of the study. Later on in the chapter the main themes are presented in the form of a conceptual framework which, it is suggested, may be used for improving practice within HEI's.

This study was never intended to confirm or deny the validity of the existing literature on leadership but rather to draw on the relevant aspects of the literature in considering the contributions of the respondents. The use of the interpretivist perspective and phenomenological design was used to understand the perspectives of the respondents, all of whom had real lived experiences of leadership within an academic institution and who contributed these views to the research process. It is however possible to compare and discuss the findings against the pre-existing literature to draw conclusions for practical application within academic institutions.

5.2   Definition of Leadership

The original aim of this research was to explore definitions of leadership, it quickly became clear just how many definitions were evident in the literature. It is important to draw both on the literature but primarily on the views of the respondents. For clarity, each section will begin with the study findings and then move on to the supporting literature

Academic leadership was defined by one of the respondents as *"leadership of the academic effort"*. This may appear to be simplistic but it encapsulates the importance of the academic work to the institution and the need to lead it in an appropriate manner. Respondent 9 added to it as follows *"the role of leadership in academia is to harness that academic focus to deliver the strategic goals of the organisation"*. In chapter 2 Gmelch, (1993) defined academic leadership as the "act of building a community of scholars to set direction and achieve common purpose through the empowerment of faculty and staff would propose that, by combining all of these definitions into a single statement of academic leader it could bring us to the following definition:

Academic leaders must build a community of scholars and harness the academic effort of colleagues to set direction and achieve common purpose to deliver the strategic goals of the organisation through the engagement and empowerment of academic staff.

This definition is important as it grounds the concepts that are being considered, and it is key that there is a generally agreed definition to enable other issues to be built on it.

5.3 Characteristics of Leadership

The Nature of Leadership

The respondents in this process recognised that all staff have the same desire to be competently led (Respondent 5) and that this desire existed regardless of their position. They recognised that each leader has a responsibility for the leadership of their own area but also a responsibility within the wider university (Respondent 6, Respondent 1) and that that responsibility is in fact a duty to contribute (Respondent 1) regardless of whether you are asked to or not. The respondents did not directly identify the concept of followers but this was implicit in their discussions.

Most leadership is based on respect and on hierarchical roles, to be a successful leader you need to have followers and Landy, (1998) refers to 'reciprocal' theories which emphasise that leadership does not exist in a vacuum but that to be a leader you need to have followers who are happy to follow and individuals need to allow themselves to be

led. These concepts are implicit within organisations but are rarely ever explicitly discussed.

The views expressed by Respondent 9 are in line with those of Ciulla, (2005) who suggests that the concept of responsibility is key in terms of the obligations that leaders have to their followers in respect of their power, status and authority. These are powerful words and concepts but do convey the responsibilities leaders actually have and are perceived to have by their followers. This is the opposite of the definitions previously considered which refer to the power and authority which the leader has. There is a link, Goleman, (1995) argues, to the concept of emotional intelligence and the need for the authentic leader to make an emotional attachment to their followers as this has a positive impact on organisational performance, as defined in the EFQM, (2013) definition.

Greenleaf, (2002) in his consideration of followers argues that to inspire followers, leaders need to have been servants first and be able to demonstrate that that they have the required characteristics of persuasion and empathy. In an academic context this relates to the idea that academic credibility which was considered so important to Respondent 5. Lawton & Paez, (2015) argue that leaders must demonstrate their integrity to their followers on a daily basis by being consistent in their values and their actions to demonstrate their credibility to lead.

It is postulated here that leaders within an academic context need to recognise the importance of having followers who want to follow them and this followership is based on their integrity and on their academic credibility.

The impact leadership has on the organisation is important, in the semi-structured interviews the respondents did not identify the importance of leadership to the success of the organisation, however, in the focus group this was a key consideration in the discussion and the view was expressed that it was too obvious a link to discuss i.e. *'too obvious for words!'* was the term used by members in the focus group. This is understandable but does actually need to be expressed if only to underline to followers why leadership is so important. Success of an academic institution is measured in a different way than in traditional private sector organisations, league tables, QAA outcomes, financial sustainability rather than profit is measured and the success of the student population is central to overall organisational success along with research success measured currently by the REF and leadership underpins all of these measures. These largely reputational measures impact on student recruitment, international student recruitment and overall institutional income. This is why it is essential to have good leadership and for followers to be committed to that leadership and willing to follow the direction defined by the leader.

The notion of vision being important for leaders to deliver was very strong amongst both the respondents (Respondent 8, Respondent 1

in particular) and in the literature. Northouse, (2001) reported that 80% of individuals look to leaders to create the vision for the organisation. Further, Bryman (2007) identified the creation of vision as one of the four essentials of HE leadership. He argues that vision, strategic action, strategic planning and managing resources are the four essentials and that there is a clear link between the need to have a clear vision and the ability to plan appropriately to deliver that vision. This topic was also discussed extensively by Ciulla, (2005) and Ramsden, (1998).

Institutions, therefore, need to have a clear vision to enable them to progress and it is important that leaders have the capacity to create that shared vision and that followers are willing to accept to ensure the on-going success of the institution.

Responsibilities of Leaders

Strategy development is a fundamental responsibility of leaders and Respondent 6 emphasised the need to motivate people to move in the direction of the institution strategy and to work collaboratively with staff to meet these goals (Respondent 7).

The need to motivate individuals to join the leader on the journey towards strategy implementation is important and emphasises Lawton & Paez, (2015) view of the concept of leadership 'of' which highlights the importance of motivating others towards the correct ends. Respondent 1 echoed this by emphasising that the vision has to be one for the community not an individual vision. Ramsden, (1998)

also emphasises the importance of motivation in his central responsibilities of leaders and he refers to motivation as enabling and inspiring academic staff, also in the literature McLeod & Clark, (2009) and Collins, (2001) discuss motivation as do the respondents showing the close link between the literature and the respondent's views in this area.

This link between the findings and support within the literature was to be expected because of the importance of the creation of vision and the motivation of staff to deliver it for the benefit of any institution.

Activities Leaders Engage In

One way of defining leadership within the sector is to examine the activities that individual leaders actually undertake.

Respondent 4 highlighted the need for leaders to create the environment for staff to succeed, while Respondent 1 referred to the need to delegate to others to make sure that activities were carried out. There was a recognition by the respondents that various individuals can undertake aspects of these activities and the Dean of Schools was identified as one of the key role holders in this respect.

Smith, (2002) examined the role of middle managers in academia who are responsible for academic delivery and particularly identified the role of academic Deans within the institution. He argued that they need to undertake a number of functions, they need to be academic

managers, to ensure that their faculty is well managed. These activities are essential for the proper functioning of the institution.

Clegg & McAuley, (2005) point to the very difficult role Deans play within the institution and highlight the potential tension which they can be exposed to between the needs of the organisation and the needs of their own Faculty which may expect a more collegiate approach to their leadership than the institution expects at a corporate level. Two of the respondents gave examples of where they had personal experience of decisions being taken for personal reasons not in the best interests of the institution, this is clearly linked to discussions about integrity which is central to effective decision making and the values driven decision making which should, it is argued, be central to the leadership of the institution.

In summary, the role of the Dean is clearly seen as key both by the respondents and in the literature, the Dean is a role which is closer to the individual academic and is therefore a more central role than that of more senior leaders within the institution to academic staff. This pivotal role is one the respondents could identify with, as a number of them has held this role in their careers, but its importance is not in doubt either in the literature or with the respondents.

Change management is also highlighted as an activity that distinguishes leadership from management and was identified by the respondents as one of the most important functions of leadership.

Respondent 1 had a very interesting quote in relation to change management which referred to it being a contact sport which leaders needed to be part of and not bystanders to. This relates to the need to be seen by academic staff as part of the collegiate process not separate to it.

Rao (2014) in his work on transformational leadership, argued, that effective transformational change was underpinned by the organisational vision and values and through staff engagement. If the organisation was to remain the same what would the need for leadership be? Two respondents thought that the fundamental role of leaders is to lead change which will improve the outcomes for the institution and is therefore linked to the whole argument on organisational success. Kotter (1990) concurred that the pivotal role of leaders is to manage change which he refers to as dynamic change.

Change is key within organisations in this day and age. Chapter 1 demonstrated the changes which have taken place in the sector at a macro level when this is translated to an institutional level the change has been, and continues to be substantial and a recognition of its importance is key within the sector.

5.4 Desired Leadership Behaviours in Higher Education

Context of Higher Education

Under this heading we examine the outcomes from the study relating to the context of Higher Education and begin to consider the impact that the culture has on leadership behaviours.

Respondent 1 highlighted that there are a whole range of leaderships which are contingent on the culture of the organisation but also in the context in which you find yourself at any one time. Respondent 3 added to this suggesting that leadership in a university is not different to the rest of the world per se but that the emphasis of the leadership activity is different.

Johns, (2006) in his definition of context refers to the effect it has on organisational behaviours and this is particularly important in the Higher Education context. The respondents also emphasised the importance of context and its impact on the vision, values and expected behaviours within an academic environment. Feilder, (1967) & Yukl, (2002) conflate the type of organisation with the type of leadership required and this is particularly important in this context.

Context is central to the arguments in this work as the debate is around the impact of an academic culture on the leadership of the sector.

One of the key issues in Higher Education is the perceived difference between leadership and management and this was an area where the respondents had much to contribute. Respondent 10 argues that there is a dichotomy between the two functions but acknowledges that they contribute to the same overall outcome i.e. the success of the institution. Respondent 5 added that institutions would not be able to function without management of the activity with Respondent 6 stating that leaders require to have basic management skills and that leaders and managers are often the same person and that leaders are not 'better' than managers.

This increasing concept of managerialism in the sector is acknowledged by the respondents but was not strongly supported.

Turning to the leadership versus management debate first Debowski, (2012) argues that the two are actually complementary activities, not in opposition to each other, this is in keeping with the views of the respondents. There is a need for both she argues and they have to work together, universities would not function without management, the need for leadership is taken for granted. Bryman, (1996) argues the contrary view when he is dismissive of management as a technician role, management activities are often spoken about in a derisory manner within academia, although this is not acknowledged by the respondents. Powell & Clark, (2012) agree with Respondent 1 when they argue that whatever the context there are some basic tasks which have to be carried out and that this is management, Bass (1998) argues that this is transactional leadership and notes that the need to

have basic management practices in place is not in dispute as all staff require a basic infrastructure to exist within any organisation. Kotter, (1990) is clear that management is concerned with coping with complexity and that leadership is about coping with dynamic change. In spite of the different slants on management there is general agreement that management tasks require to be done in every organisation and HE is no different in this regard.

This is obviously an area where the data collected is largely supported by the literature, this was to be expected. It is important within institutions as both roles require to be carried out and both need to be valued as they move the organisation forward.

Returning to the concept of managerialism within the sector Bryman, (2007) argues that there is an increasing/creeping managerialism which he defines as not involving and consulting academics in decisions which impact on them and their work, not respecting their values and subject expertise and undermining their autonomy. He asserts that managerialism is becoming more common in academia in today's environment because collegiate working is perceived to be too slow and cumbersome. Pollitt (2007) concurs with this view and argues that it causes tension within institutions and is wholly inappropriate within the academic context. These views were echoed to an extent by the respondents, particularly those from an academic background who felt that managerialism undermined their academic professionalism. However in relation to the literature on managerialism it was interesting to note that there was not strong

support from the respondents, this could be explained by the elite nature of the respondents who would not be exposed to the concept of managerialism in the same way as other academic staff may be. This perceived difference between the literature and the data and the potential reason for it is interesting and one that institutions should consider a part of their overall context and how this impacts on the work of the institution.

Institutions are viewed as values driven organisations where the social good and impact of institutions is very important to the academic community. Englehardt. (2010) argue that universities should take decisions in all matters having regard to the values of the organisation. Respondent 3 emphasised that it is not always about what we actually do but about how we actually do things. Peters & Ryan (2015) highlight HE staffs perception that social good is extremely important and one of the motivating factors about working in the sector. The delivery of social good outcomes i.e. well educated and qualified students is hugely motivating to staff. To ensure that this works effectively each institution has to have a set of values which drive appropriate behaviours. Bryman (2007) highlights the need to have a leader who has a value driven style but who, importantly, collaborates with staff to develop the values of the organisation and who has the personal integrity to model the behaviours which underpin the values. Two respondents discussed the requirement of academic staff to have a leader who is 'values driven' who ensures that the institution has a value set which puts the whole academic endeavour at the heart of what the university does and delivers it in such a way that it is

acceptable to the academic community, this is consistent with the views of Bryman (2007).

The development of the organisational values is important, should not be imposed, but developed through a consultative process. The process is essential given that it is not the role of a leader just to impose a set of values, but that there is ownership of the values and leaders are seen to believe in them and live up to them. Bennis & Thomas (2002) in their discussion on the four crucibles of leadership draw attention to the need to have a leader who has a distinctive and compelling voice and a sense of integrity which includes a strong set of individual and corporate values and to involve the community in the creation of these values. Again this consistency between the respondent's views and the literature is good as it potentially indicates that the theory and the practice of leadership is coming together in academia.

The values and ethos of the institution lead us to consider the behaviours that both the leaders and the followers demonstrate to ensure that the strategy of the institution is delivered.

Leadership Behaviour

Allied to the values are the behaviours that underpin those, values standing on their own are meaningless unless they are demonstrated by every individual in the organisation through their own actions. Rao (2014) in his discussion on transformational leadership outlined the case for the transformational 'bit' of the process to be the 'how' of achieving the organisational goals, i.e. the behaviours that require to be demonstrated to allow positive transformational change to happen. This allows for consistency in how the organisation operates and in the standards of service delivery. Respondent 7 and Respondent 9 clearly felt very passionate about the need for values and behaviours combined to drive the institution forward.

Institutions need to consider how they will engage with their academic community to ensure that their values and behaviours are created in a collegiate way which ensures that all staff can buy into them and demonstrate them consistently.

The concept of respect has been referred to throughout this work and it is important to recognise where this respect comes from. Academic respect is important and Respondent 10 is clear that the Principal must be an academic. Respondent 5 adds that academic credibility of all staff is key as that is where academic identity comes from. Combined they argue that academic credibility within the community is important and the basis of respect.

The leader at the top of the institution has a responsibility to treat all staff with respect argues Rowley & Sherman (2003) but emphasises the need to treat academic staff with the respect they deserve which stems from their professional academic contribution. They also look at the need for mutual respect as all staff need to respect their leader but that leader needs to earn their respect not just assume it because of their position/power. Leaders, suggest Rowley & Sherman (2003), can only gain the trust of their followers by being open, honest, and trustworthy and by distributing resources in a transparent way whilst maintaining a positive relationship with all staff in the institution and Dyer (1977) emphasises the immeasurable benefits from being a trusted leader bring end line up to end of paragraph

This mutual respect is the basis of all academic relationships and adds to the proper functioning of the institution. It is inconceivable to have an academic institution in which there is not mutual respect.

5.5 Leadership Practice in Higher Education

Nature of Academics

Having explored the context of Higher Education the next logical step is to consider the nature of the academic staff who are the primary employee group within the institution. Academic staff, in numerical terms, are often the smaller staff group but their views should be the dominant ones.

Respondent 4 highlighted the issue of academic staff identifying less with the institution by having less of a shared vision than other colleagues may have and Respondent 5 added to this by emphasising that academics get their identity, not from the institution, but from their peers in their subject area.

Academic staff tend to identify with their subject discipline rather than with the organisation they are employed by. They often consider their peers to be colleagues in their subject discipline at institutions round the world rather than at the institution they work in and individuals they engage with on a daily basis. However they fundamentally require to engage with the purpose of education that being either research or teaching or both. McFarlane (2007) identifies the different masters that academics must serve in their role and to assist in locating their professionalism refers to academics as 'citizens' implying that they are part of the collective which is the university and also part of the community of scholars which is a worldwide community. Given earlier discussions academics see themselves as

part of a number of communities, i.e. part of the University community but also part of the worldwide subject discipline community.

Institutions need to ensure that this particular academic priority is accommodated within their structures and to ensure that academic staff can be part of that international community of scholars, which is important to both the academic and the institution, but also be an active member of the institutional community.

The *'academic mind-set'* is referred to by Respondent 3, who, as an academic themselves argues that this is what actually makes the difference between leading a large organisation employing highly intelligent people to be leaders. Lumby (2012) echoes this view by suggesting this is the one defining factor which differentiates large scale organisations which employ lots of highly intelligent people from universities. The academic autonomy, which is different from academic freedom, is arguable the distinguishing factor in leading academics. The challenge, as they see it is harnessing that autonomy, freedom and mind-set and focussing it on the organisational goals, this has, he argues, a profound impact on the leadership style required in an academic environment. Added to this is what McInnes (2010) views as academics perception that there are two aspects to their work, firstly the work that the institution requires them to do, much of which will be teaching and then their own personal work, much of which will be their own l research. This is an interesting split and while

it could be argued that all of the work that academics do is institutional work the academic community would contest that view.

This implies that the institution can manage the institutional aspect of the workload but has no right to manage the personal work of the academic, which is a particularly challenging scenario and one which institutions need to take account of in developing their leadership style.

The Focus Group discussed the concept of *'self- leadership'* at some length and did accept that it existed but were very clearly of the view that whilst this existed it did not in any way negate the institutional need to put in place robust leadership and management processes to ensure that all staff were focussing on the delivery of the institutional strategy.

Bolden *et al*. (2012) consider this concept of academics leading themselves to be *'self-leadership'* and suggests this to be an extreme autonomy which negates the requirement for any type of leadership of the academic community. Powell & Clark (2012) found that academics do not need leadership to undertake their scholarly work but do require institutional management to provide them with the facilities to function. If this is the case then individual academics could work in any institution as they appear not to have an emotional connection to the institution just to their subject area. Peters & Ryan (2015) highlight the perception of some academic staff who consider

themselves to be *'self-employed'* (p32), this clearly impacts on their interaction with the institution.

Bolden *et al* .(2012) in discussing self-leadership consider that this is where academic freedom becomes key to the organisation and suggests that academics challenge the order of things within the institution. Jones *et al* (2012) assert that there needs to be a less formal hierarchy within academic institutions if they are to harness the academic effort in a way which delivers the desired outcomes for the institution. Mintzberg (1998) concurs with this view and suggests that academics do not require very much direct supervision of their activities and if this is imposed on them they will react negatively to it, they require what he refers to as a *'covert'* form of leadership which offers them support to be able to deliver their outcomes, these are of course the outcome that the institution requires. He also emphasises the need to ensure that the type of leadership delivered should be contingent on the organisation, this is in keeping with earlier discussions on situational leadership.

This discussion is central to the whole concept of leadership within academia. Firstly the question of whether any form of leadership is required and the Focus Group were very clear that leadership is required and secondly what type of leadership is required. The literature points to a less hierarchical form than may be expected in many organisations with the concept of a *'covert'* form of leadership being put in place to lead possibly by stealth.

This points institutions towards a need to be specific about the nature of leadership which they consider appropriate for their particular context.

Academics are happy to coalesce around their colleagues who they value not for their hierarchical leadership position but for their academic or research background and credibility (Respondent 10). This is recognised by academics as informal leadership and a concept that they value.

Informal leadership is important within an academic context as it is another aspect of leadership which is aligned to the concept of belonging to a wider academic community than the immediate institutional one. This is a key trait in the literature and the informal academic leadership as defined by Hanna & Kirilova (2013) in Figure 2, p. identifies the potential individuals who can/do provide that aspect of leadership. Lawton & Paez (2015) recognise the academic excellence that these informal leaders have and they ascertain this as having leadership **in** a specific subject either by creating new knowledge or being recognised as an expert, these are the kind of people that other academics coalesce around. These informal leaders may not seek to be leaders or to have other academics follow them but their expertise makes this inevitable in an academic environment. Bolden *et al*. (2012) highlighted the importance of these individuals in the institution because they are respected for their personal qualities, the most important quality is their scholarly status.

The twin concepts of formal and informal leadership can, and do, exist together within institutions and this is not something that institutions can influence from a formal standpoint. Institutions should acknowledge that both exist and work with both aspects for the benefit of the institution.

Academic Leadership Styles

The style of leadership required for the academic community is different from that you might expect for other communities of professionals, this has been demonstrated by defining the nature of academics and the impact that leadership has on the community. It would now be helpful to identify the best leadership styles to employ when leading this complex group of individuals.

One way of seeking to understand the context within Higher Education is to look at the emphasis of the leadership activity which takes place within the sector. The actual activities that leaders engage in has been discussed previously but to attempt to differentiate the sector from other sectors looking at the balance of activity may be helpful. Respondent 9 was very clear that the activities of leaders in the sector is the same as in other sectors however her view was clearly that the balance of activity was different.

The notion of how leaders should lead in the sector is important, collegiate working is seen to be the preferred leadership style. The word 'community' is used throughout this work but it comes from the respondents and from the literature, the sense that an institution provides that feeling of belonging that individuals can get from a variety of aspects of their lives. The concept of an academic community is central to the leadership discussion. Community and collegiality are often used interchangeably in the discussion within the literature, community provides the sense of belonging to that community but collegiality is a way involving staff within that community.

Debowski (2012) considers collegiality to be the way for leaders to operate as they engage the academic community effectively and respectfully in all of the decisions which impact on their students, their work and their environment. Academic autonomy is at the heart of collegiate working argues Bryman (2007) and it is the role of the leader to lead collegial academic teams in a collaborative and empowering way which Smith (2002) asserts is the way academic staff want and expect to be led. This is echoed by Bolden *et al.* (2012).

The respondents who came from an academic background were keen to explore the concept of collegiality as this was how they had preferred to be led when they were academic staff but as leaders while they may be motivated to lead in this way they now understand the difficulties and potential limitations of this approach.

This is in keeping with Olsen (1993) view that academics value collegiality primarily for the feeling of community that is inherent within it. Bryman (2007) argues that there is evidence to suggest that traditional leadership i.e. hierarchical leadership, which is perceived to interfere with academic autonomy, may be damaging in the sector, this is likely to happen where there are displays of overt leadership style. This has the potential to lead to the conclusion that what leaders don't do in the sector is as important as what they do resulting in the conclusion that a 'minimalist' approach is needed, this is in keeping with Jones *et al.* (2012) view of a less hierarchical approach to leadership within the sector is required. Or as Mintzberg (1998) considers it a 'covert' leadership style.

Unfortunately Olsen (1993) considers that the collegiality aspect of academic life has declined in recent years in the majority of institutions but where it does exist it continues to be one of the most appealing aspects of academic life and a key retention tool. Bryman (2007) asserts that this decline in collegial working is caused by the perception, which is widely held and comes from a managerialist perspective, that it is too slow and cumbersome and therefore inappropriate in today's fast moving environment.

Leaders within institutions need to consider how they can ensure through their structures and styles a system which enables academic staff to be part of the institution and to be involved extensively within it.

Continuing to look at the context of Higher Education brings to the fore the issue of the ethos and values of the sector. Starting from a negative perspective Bolden *et al* (2012) argue that academics do not fundamentally value leadership, but see it as counterproductive and a distraction from the 'real' academic work with which they are engaged., this isa major challenge to leaders as they need to continually respond positively to this negative perspective.

This points to the personal style of the leader which is covered extensively both in the literature and in the respondents' comments, Collins (2001) argues that leaders who have the greatest impact on their organisations share two characteristics; strong professional will and personal modesty. Style is closely linked to Goleman's (1995) notion of emotional intelligence, it is that emotional intelligence, he argues, that allows individual leaders to adapt their style dependant on the circumstances they find themselves in but also the audience that they are addressing. This is however balanced by the notion of authentic leadership (Leroy *et al* 2012; Lawton & Paez, 2015, Luthans & Avolio, 2003) suggesting that individual leaders cannot, nor should they, adapt their behaviour to act in a way which is not their natural style and personality. The literature refers to behavioural integrity which is about being true to oneself.

Confidence and an optimistic style are referred to in the literature (Leroy *et a.,* 2012, Rego *et al*., 2012 and Griffin *et al*., 2007) largely in relation to authentic and ethical leadership and are powerful tools when combined with a moral integrity which encourages individual

members of staff to emotionally identify with the leader (Goleman, 1995) the outcome of this positive combination is improved organisational performance. The key to this behaviour argues Leroy *et al*. (2012) is that the leader's behaviour is consistent and observable to their followers.

Clarity and simplicity also inspire confidence in the followers as does a positive attitude to the situation. This does not mean that leaders should give a false position in relation to a situation but that confidence and clarity in that situation is essential. Grint (1997) asserts that it is the responsibility of the leader to look at the big picture in which the organisation is located and then to make sense of that for his followers, the leader must understand the complexities faced by those he is leading and seek to explain them in a manner which is helpful but not patronising.

This needs to be continually demonstrated by all behaviours, there can be no instances where the individual leader's behaviour falls short of what is expected or their integrity is questioned and their leadership position becomes more difficult (Ciulla (1995), Brown *et al*. (2005), Englehardt *et al*. (2010)). This relates to the issues highlighted earlier about leadership definitions where the importance of values and behaviours was highlighted as being important in all environments, this is reinforced in the academic context as being more important than is seen in other environments.

Authentic/Ethical Leadership

Respondent 3 highlights that leadership is not about *'doing it by numbers'* but is about the personal qualities of the individual leader. It is about knowing when and how to apply your leadership skills (Respondent 6) and fundamentally it is about the personal qualities that individuals bring to it particularly in relation to their moral stance and behaviour (Respondent 4).

It is also about having a consistent style and being the person you actually are, not about pretending to be something you are not (Respondent 1).

The concepts of ethical and authentic leadership feature prominently in the literature and in the respondent's views and have been extensively referred to throughout this research. These concepts build on the notion of collegiality. Authentic leadership builds on the earlier discussion about values and having a distinctive and compelling voice in relation to values and the development of them. The concept of responsibility to do the right things is one of the 'crucibles' of Bennis & Thomas (2002) and they express it as having a sense of integrity which also includes a strong set of individual and corporate values. This, they argue, will enable an individual leader to act responsibly. Lawton & Paez (2015) go further and define integrity as being 'true to oneself' and argue that leaders must demonstrate their integrity to their followers on a daily basis by being consistent in their values and their actions to demonstrate their credibility. Leaders need to be able

and willing to demonstrate their authenticity and integrity without question to be accepted by the community.

Trust is fundamental to the leadership relationship and this cannot, argue Rowley & Sherman (2003) be ordered, trust must be earned by the leader and this requires positive and consistent behaviour. These behaviours must be in line with those described above.

Individual leaders must give consideration to their own moral and ethical stance to enable them to build a leadership style which is their own and be consistent in that style in all of their actions. Basing leadership on authentic and ethical principles is personally beneficial to the leader but also acceptable to the academic community.

Distributed Leadership

Throughout this work there has been reference to the concept of a community of scholars and one of the key aspects of membership of that community, which is very important to academic staff, is where their leadership emerges and how and where decisions are actually made.

The issue of leaders who were 'close' to their followers and the 'distant' leaders who individuals find difficulty in identifying with is further looked at in relation to the concept of distributed leadership. In the introduction to this work the formal Scheme of Delegation for the institution was referred to, this document defines where authority for decisions lies and it shows that authority is vested in many role holders across the institution. The semi-structured interviews failed to

show an appreciation of the concept of distributed leadership with the respondents, which was very surprising to the researcher, in the Focus Group this was a key question and it emerged that the participants did recognise the distributed nature of leadership in HEI's. They acknowledged that both formally and informally leadership is practiced across the institution and that this is required to ensure that the institution moves in the direction of the strategic aims. The formal aspect of the structure but also of the rules and procedures such as the Financial Regulations facilitate this distributed style of leadership. The notion of distributed leadership relates to the concept of the community of scholars where empowerment is crucial to individual academics, this is emphasised by Gmelch (1993).

Academic staff argues Gmelch (1993) wish to be led in a devolved manner where the leader seeks to build a community of scholars which is enabled to set direction and achieve a common purpose and are empowered by the leader to do so as outlined in thier definition of academic leadership. Bolden *et al.* (2012) argue that this process is self-leadership and that it is a defining characteristic of academic staff which challenges the whole nature of leadership and decision making as academic staff perceive that they have the capacity and ability to make their own decisions and do not require leaders whether in close proximity to themselves or more distant to make these decisions for them.

As has been earlier argued by Dyer (1977) academic credibility is crucial to the acceptability of leaders within the sector, academic staff will not accept leaders who they consider are not academically credible. This has an impact on all leaders within the institution, it is not just the leader at the top who must be academically credible, this needs to cascade throughout the institution and has implication for a range of institutional policies e.g. recruitment, promotion.

Barriers and Enablers

The barriers and enablers are expressed in the graphic on page 223 they have been described and discussed in detail as part of the discussions on the nature of academics; academic styles and distributed leadership. The barriers and enablers are opposite sides of the same coin in that the characteristics that we value in academics ie autonomy, academic credibility can in certain circumstances make them a difficult cohort of individuals to lead. The key to being a good leader in Higher Education is to be able to harness such characteristics and make them work in favour of the institution.

5.6 Development Options for Academic Leaders to Enhance their Leadership Practice

Each manager in the institution needs to have a standard set of skills which enable them to undertake the role expected of them (Respondent 7). There is a standard set of expectations from leaders and they need to be trained in them areas such as, strategic development, communication, risk management, influencing skills, flexibility, ability to challenge, good verbal skills etc (combined list from Respondents)

The whole area of development is one where there is a significant amount of literature and one where the respondents had extensive views, as they has all been exposed to leadership development activities throughout their careers. Gold *et al*. (2010) asserted that all interventions in this area should be focussed on developing good leaders to improve the performance of the organisation. Gmelch & Minskin (2011) emphasise the need to fully understand the complexity of academic leadership to ensure that development programmes address the very heart of the issue and should be taught in a cohesive way rather than focussing on individual components one at a time.

Having considered distributed leadership as being an appropriate leadership model for an institution then it is important to ensure that the development activities that are put in place support this model and are aligned to it. This, in practice, means that development

opportunities must be offered to all staff with a leadership role and opportunities must be delivered at the most appropriate level dependant on individual need. The timing of such activities is key to their success, Charan *et al* .(1972) refer to a leadership pipeline and identify the transition points where development opportunities are important and most likely to be in Zuber-Skerritt's (2010) terms most sustainable and have the greatest impact on both the individual and the institution.

Institutions need to define the skillset required for leadership roles and to put this in place for staff taking on leadership roles but also ensure that on-going development is available for existing leaders to ensure that their skillset is current and relevant.

Motivation for Leadership

Having identified Charan *et al.* (1972) pipeline suggesting the appropriate time for development activities then we need to look at how individuals are selected for leadership roles. Some roles within the institution come with a leadership function and where this is the case then the individual's capacity to undertake that aspect of the role should form part of the selection process for the role. Out with this then the use of a performance management system which objectively manages individual performance is a good basis for identifying potential for leadership roles. This is an aspect of succession planning which is defined by Munro (2005) as a process to identify who will take on the 'baton' of corporate leadership in the future. This indicates that the organisation will have forecast and plan , as far as is possible, the

nature of their future business and the skill set which will be required to deliver this in a 5/10 year period.

Bentley (2005) emphasises the need to ensure that the balance between external recruitment and internal promotion is correct so that the appropriate external influence and experience is balanced with the promotion of talented internal individuals.

Development Activities

It is argued by Respondent 3 that the most appropriate way of developing leaders is to treat individuals as leaders and they will become leaders with the formal development coming at a later stage. Giving individuals challenging project/roles in different areas of the institution is the way to develop people (Respondent 9), bringing them out of their comfort zone argued Respondent 8 is the most challenging thing to do. Let people make mistakes and support them in doing so is key (Respondent 8).

The definition of formal development activities is suggested by Garavan *et al.* (2009) as being "intentionally constructed learning activities that are generally considered to come within the domain of Human Resource Development" and Gold *et al* .(2010) emphasise the reason for undertaking such activities as too enable leaders to become more effective. In this study the respondents identified the need to have a toolkit of skills which would enable them to perform their roles more effectively.

The planned nature of these activities removes it from the informal activities individuals undertake. The respondents spoke extensively about the informal aspects of development such as informal networking both internally and externally which were of great benefit to them so these informal aspects must be considered by the institution when drawing together its development plan.

Institutions should consider the requirements staff have for development and put in place a formal development programme for Leadership Development but also make activities available for staff to undertake such as secondments and projects.

Conceptual Framework for Considering Leadership Practice in Higher Education

As indicated in the introduction to this Chapter the discussion was formulated in such a way as to lead to the creation and explanation of a conceptual framework, this framework is now attached as Figure 10. And the explanation of it follows.

**Conceptual Framework for Considering Leadership Practice in Higher Education**
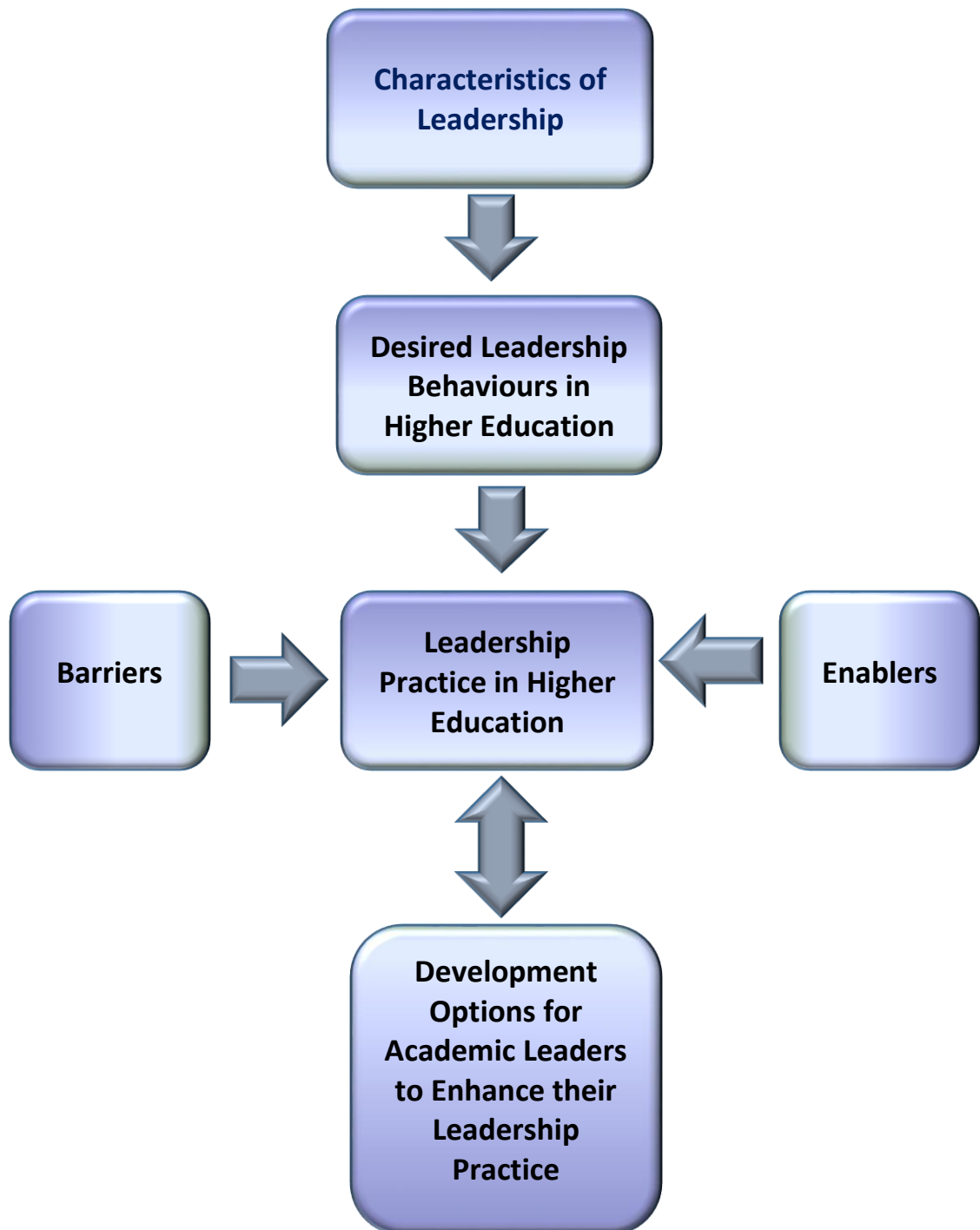
Figure 10: Conceptual Framework for Leadership Practice

(Source – author)

The above graphic is presented to assist organisations in understanding leadership practice in Higher Education and influencing the development of academic staff to lead other academic staff within the institution.

The graphic above is a framework which seeks to enable individuals to visualise the progression from the general leadership definition through to the specific context of Higher Education to looking specifically at the detail of academic leadership from a managerialist perspective. It investigates the enablers and barriers to leading academics and then the specific development opportunities for leading within this context. The arrows between boxes 1 and 2 and boxes 2 and 3 indicate that this is a progression in understanding the whole context leading to Leadership Practice in HE, the arrows going both ways between boxes 3 and 4 indicates that this continues to be a progression but that in addition the development options will also impact on the understanding of leadership practice and improve that leadership practice. The barriers/enablers boxes feeding into leadership practice also enhance our understanding of what prevents and assists enhanced leadership practice.

In *Box 1* the characteristics of leadership are considered, this consideration of the nature of leadership is fundamental to understanding the research aims from the perspective of the respondents. This aspect of the study comes from the original desire to be able to define leadership. Defining leadership both from a literature search and from the respondent's views is difficult as there

is no agreed definition although the researcher has selected a definition, which she considers most appropriate from the plethora of available definitions. This desire for a definition translated through the research process into an understanding of the characteristics of leadership which was felt to be more helpful in practical terms to the impact on practice of this research. By developing the characteristics of leadership we can now understand the nature of leadership itself covering areas of theory/practice, vision, the need for collective responsibility and action and the impact of authentic and ethical leadership styles. This also includes consideration of the activities that leaders actually engage in, this is important as it distinguishes leadership from other functions within the organisation, it looks at the development of vision and strategy and the delivery of these along with risk management and change management. Allied to the activities that leaders engage in are the responsibilities of leaders. All of these are viewed from a practical perspective.

Having established the characteristics of leadership there is an obvious next step of understanding leadership within the context of Higher Education, this is explored in *Box 2.* It is important to understand the context of HE as this has a fundamental impact on the leadership agenda for academic staff. The focus of this research is leadership within the context of academia therefore exploring and understanding the context within which academics operate is essential. The context is broken down into areas of culture where all respondents agreed that the culture within HE is 'different' to the context of other organisations and the impact of that is explored. The

management/leadership debate in HE is a lively one and the introduction of managerialism into the sector was referred to extensively by the respondents and in the literature, both from a positive and a negative perspective. This led to the view that the activities of leaders in the sector are not different to that found in other sectors but that the emphasis of activity is different because of the nature of the sector. The need to work in a collegiate manner is obvious in the view of the respondents, this has implications for the leadership style adopted by academic leaders which will be explored later.

The whole ethos/values and the 'how' we do leadership in the sector is important and is directed by the need and desire for collegiate working. Collegiate working has far reaching consequences for how leaders spend their time. Leadership behaviours in the sector are important with respect for academic staff being central to everything that is done, that respect when coupled with emotional intelligence is very powerful. The need for leaders to have a confident and positive outlook is important whilst marrying that with a realistic outlook.

This then leads to an exploration of how academic staff should lead academic staff in *Box 3.* It is important to understand the nature of academic staff before considering how to best lead them. Academics are very focussed on their academic activity and, in a general sense, have less interest in leadership roles than perhaps their colleagues in professional services departments. They value academic credibility and ability above all other skills and this leads to a potential situation

where they prefer to coalesce round informal leaders rather than those identified by the institution in a hierarchical sense. Academics identify those informal leaders from individuals who they consider are great academics and they will take guidance from them in a way in which they would not necessarily do from those they are told are their leaders. Academic freedom is also important to the academic community and this impacts on how academics want to be led.

Academic style is important, academic leadership is about leading the academic effort and channelling it in the direction of the university strategy, this is a managerialist perspective of academic leadership but it is not inconsistent with the academic ethos which drives academic behaviour. Academics prefer to be led in a manner which takes account of their individual qualities and engages them in an open and honest manner, they value and respond when treated in a moral and persuasive manner. Adapting individual leadership styles is important to academic staff.

It has become clear that a distributed leadership structure, where decisions are taken at the lowest level utilising the expertise of the most relevant staff, in many cases the academic staff, is the most appropriate model of leadership for an institution and one which is facilitated by the rules of the institution. This model allows for delegation of tasks/decisions to role holders across the institution and allows for collegiate working rather than a top down managerial imposition of decisions. It also recognises the academic credibility of individuals and allows them to use their capabilities to contribute to

the process of leadership. Line management responsibility is then allocated to the most appropriate individuals.

The barriers to this view of leadership practice are clear, the personal agendas of academic staff, where they do not recognise or identify with the institution can make it difficult for other academics to lead. The concept of self-leadership where the extreme autonomy of academic staff interferes in the leadership process and the legalistic and moral aspects of academic freedom along with academic autonomy put obstacles in the way of galvanising the academic effort and pointing it in the direction of the institutional strategy.

The reverse of this are the enablers which can be the opposite side of the coin from the barriers as it is often dependant on how individuals choose to use their skill set to enable activity within the organisation and this can be done in a positive manner. The characteristics that individual academics display are important, their reliance on informal leadership can be used positively as it is good to have positive role models who will assist in mentoring young academics, provide a sounding board for other academics and contribute to the academic life of the institution, and this is all based on academic credibility. The collegiate style of leadership is beneficial both to the academic community and to the wider institution.

This moves us to *Box 4* to look at the Development Options for Academic Leaders to enhance their Academic Practice. This box is linked to *Box 3* by arrows facing each way as the two boxes are interdependent the leadership practice identifies needs in respect of development and the development delivered impacts on the quality of leadership practice.

Motivation for taking on a leadership role is interesting as it is often not something that an academic member of staff may think of early in their career although having identified the need for a collegiate style of leadership with distributed decision making activity then it may become something that individuals do consider more readily. There are two tools which should be used to assist individuals in discussing their options in relation to leadership activity, these are performance management where line managers should discuss interest/aptitude for this with individuals. Line managers should also be involved in the area of talent management in identifying those within their area with potential to undertake these roles.

The leadership development identified in *Box 4* concentrates on the skills required, communications, in its widest sense both internally and external to the institution and identifies the need to develop good communication skills both to convey academic material but also to take part in the life of the institution. The need to consider how to apply judgement to everything that is done, this is an area where academics develop skills early in their careers as they are required to

make academic judgements however there is a different skill set needed to apply judgement in other areas of activity.

The need to develop resilience both individually and institutionally has become something which is now discussed widely, when it wasn't discussed previously. The need for individuals to recognise stressful situations and to develop coping mechanisms for those situations is important then collectively for the institution to be able to cope when the environment becomes difficult is now a key risk for institutions. Individuals need help in identifying their own personal style in relation to this.

There are many development activities which can be used to ensure that the academic community are equipped with the skills they require to take on leadership roles and to continuously update their skills in this area. It is important to take on board the long term perspective for development ie what will the institution look like in 3/5 years' time and what skill set will be required to lead in that environment. It is for individuals to work with their line manager through the performance management process to identify their own personal development needs and to then ensure that these needs are met through a process directed by the institution but also through individuals own learning. This performance management process requires trust and support on the part of both the individual and the line manager.

There are clearly a wide range of development activities that individuals can engage in from academic programmes to structured development programmes and then to project work, exposure to new activities, or coaching, mentoring and networking opportunities.

6. Chapter 6: Conclusions & Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the extent to which the research achieves its aim and objectives as detailed in Chapter 1, it also examines the limitations of the study and looks at areas where further research would be appropriate. It also offers some concluding remarks to bring the study to a conclusion.

6.2 Achievement of the Aim and Objectives of the Research

The overall aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions of senior leaders within Higher Education to determine their views of the key challenges in contemporary academic leadership and to use this to inform practice for the future.

This aim was achieved through the critical review of the literature; primary data collection from university senior leaders; analysis of the responses from those individuals; reflection on the findings in the context of the literature and the development of the Framework for Considering Leadership Practice in Higher Education.

- **Research Objective 1** - To consider key literatures and definitions of the concept of leadership in relation to Higher Education.

Achievement of this objective was demonstrated by the Literature Review (Chapter 2). This demonstrated engagement with a range of literatures from the two subject areas of Human Resources and Education Management. The debates relating to leadership within Higher Education, the nature of the sector and the nature of academic staff were examined along with the selection and development of those staff.

Engagement with the literature was an iterative process throughout the period of the study and this had a significant bearing on the process.

- **Research Objective 2** - To investigate the perceptions of senior leaders of the practice of leadership in Higher Education.

This was achieved through the collection of the primary data from senior university leaders and through the analysis of that data. The on-going engagement with the literature referred to above also allowed for this objective to be achieved.

- **Research Objective 3** - To identify key challenges in leading academic staff from the perspective of senior leaders.

Again the primary data collection, data analysis and reflection on those findings allowed this objective to be achieved.

- **Research Objective 4** - To develop a conceptual framework of academic leadership to inform the practice of leadership development.

The use of the primary data collection, data analysis and reflection also allowed this objective to be achieved.

6.3 Recommendations

Having considered and discussed the literature and the respondents views it is now important to identify the recommendations from this piece of work. These are as follows:

- Each institution should consider their own definition of academic leadership and then use that definition to build their own systems and processes around it.

- Distributed leadership is an effective leadership model for the Higher Education Sector and institutions should consider their own structures and leadership models taking account of this.

- A collegiate style of leadership is an effective style for leaders to adopt, authentic and ethical leadership models are acceptable to the academic community and institutions should consider their own style of leadership in relation to this.

- Academic leaders must be academically credible and this should form part of the selection criteria for leadership roles.

- Academic leaders should consider how they empower the academic community to deliver the institutional strategy.

- That appropriate development opportunities, formal and informal, should be afforded to leaders throughout their leadership careers.

6.4   Contribution to Knowledge & Practice

In considering the literature for this research I was struck by the fact that much, but not all, of the literature on academic leadership concentrated on the view of the academic staff, Bolden et al (2008) & (2012), Gmelch (1993) and Brungardt (1993) and their views of being led.

This study examined the views of senior leaders within an institution and their experiences of leading academic staff. In terms of the significance of this different approach/perspective. It allowed the participants to appreciate that there may be different lens through which to view academic leadership. It also allowed them to consider, from their own perspective how this may impact on them and own leadership style.

In terms of the contribution to knowledge from this study it has added to the wider understanding of academic leadership through the investigation of the perspectives of senior leaders within the Higher Education context.

The specific contribution to practice is the conceptual framework for considering leadership practice in Higher Education. This may be used by an institution as a guide to enhance the development opportunities and interventions provided to their academic staff, through enabling them to fully understand and personalise their academic leadership context. This framework can be used flexibly to allow the institution

to consider its responses within its culture and overall operating context and is therefore not prescriptive but rather presents the key factors that may influence practice and therefore may enhance organisational leadership outcomes through the development of the academic cadre.

The Framework provides a structure to guide strategic dialogue across an institution and identify particular cultural aspects which may influence leadership definition, style and development. It emphasises the individual nature of each organisation, whilst at the same time allowing consideration of the factors identified to improve leadership practice within the institution.

6.5   Limitations of this Study

The overall aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions of senior leaders within Higher Education to determine their views of the key challenges in contemporary academic leadership and to use this to inform practice for the future. In seeking to achieve this aim an appropriate interpretivist, phenomenological methodology was adopted in order to investigate individual leaders' previously unexplored perspectives on the subject matter.

The use of an interpretivist phenomenological methodology does present a number of challenges. Firstly, understanding and assessing the extent to which the researcher has adequately reflected the life experiences of the respondents is a challenge and there is no way of assessing whether this has been done adequately. Secondly, the methodology adopted leaves the study open to the criticism that is common in all qualitative studies that it does not have the scientific rigor and credibility of quantitative methodologies.

This study is non generalisable but is transferable to like organisations in the sector and any perceived limitation of generalisability is balanced by the strength of this study. The researcher would argue that the level, experience and nature of the respondents who contributed to this study and the insight that they were prepared to give to the process compensates for any perceived lack of generalisability. This elite input into the process is a substantial

strength and gives weight to the findings as it represents the views of senior leaders on the front line.

The table below presents the recommendations from the findings in a form that differentiates between inputs and outputs of effective leadership. It also identifies for each the source of the recommendation ie the semi-structured interviews or the Focus Group.

Effective Leadership	Outputs and Source	Inputs and Source
Each institution should consider their own definition of academic leadership and then use that definition to build their own systems and processes around it.	Output - Understanding of leadership within individual institutional context. Source – context was identified in the interviews and findings as important.	Input - Use of the conceptual framework developed as part of this work. Source – the components of the framework were developed from the interview and focus group.
Distributed leadership is an effective leadership model for the Higher Education Sector and institutions should consider their own structures and leadership models taking account of this.	Output - Clear understanding of roles leading to a motivated academic staff resulting in improvements in the institutional KPI's. Source – the Focus Group identified this as a crucial part of leadership.	Input - Formal scheme of delegation from the University governing body with all systems and policies reflecting the distribution of leadership. Source – Focus Group emphasised this, discussed in findings.
A collegiate style of leadership is an effective style for leaders to adopt, authentic and ethical leadership models are acceptable to the academic community and institutions should consider their own style of leadership in relation to this.	Output - well motivated academic staff. Source – style of leadership was important to the individual respondents and to the Focus Group.	Input - selection of individuals for leadership roles who reflect the institutional values as detailed. Also appropriate leadership development programmes based consistently on the leadership model. Source –succession planning and the development of leaders was very important to the respondents.
Academic leaders must be academically credible and this should form	Output - an academic staff who have respect for the academic	Input - selection criteria for leadership roles must

part of the selection criteria for leadership roles.	credentials of an individual and that they can look to as a role model. Source -	reflect the need for academic credibility. Source -
Academic leaders should consider how they empower the academic community to deliver the institutional strategy.	Output - all staff able to contribute to the strategy and to feel that they have ownership of the strategy. Source – this was discussed widely in the interview process.	Input - empowerment is a key aspect of the organisational values and systems; processes and development must reflect this. Source – the interview process identified this area consistently and strongly.
That appropriate development opportunities, formal and informal, should be afforded to leaders throughout their leadership careers	Output - well-developed credible leaders who are able to lead the academic staff to deliver institutional strategy. Source – the interview process and the focus group were consistent in this area.	Input - well-structured development opportunities delivered as part of the Performance and Development Review processes. Source – focus group were clear on the range of development opportunities which were appropriate.

6.6 Focus of Further Research

The next logical stage to this study would be to apply the framework within an institution and to consider key influences within each of the constituent factors to further enhance understanding of the various choices that may be open to organisations considering development opportunities and interventions.

The outputs from this study identify a gap in leadership research from the perspective of senior university leaders and whilst this study has begun the process of filling that gap there is clearly more work required to ensure that leadership in the sector is viewed from the dual perspectives of the views of the academic cadre and of senior managers. This will ensure that there are better led institutions with motivated academic staff ensuring continued improvement in the student experience.

6.7 Concluding Remarks

It is also important to consider how this work might be disseminated to interested individuals. The framework has transferability and may be presented to the community for consideration through the Universities Human Resources (Scotland) network. Articles and the use of the findings in consultancy work within institutions may also follow.

Overall the thesis has produced a Conceptual Framework for Considering Leadership Practice in Higher Education which can be

used by HEI institutions. The benefits from this may include an improved strategic implementation of academic leadership and improved development opportunities for academic leaders. This will have a positive impact on the student experience and outcomes of the institution.

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8. Appendix 1: Informed Consent Form

Edinburgh Napier University

Doctor of Business Administration

Informed Consent Form

I (name), (role), (organisation), agree to take part in the research study being conducted by Margaret Cook, Research Student, Edinburgh Napier University.

I understand that data collected will be by semi-structured interviews and will be recorded using a digital recording device and the recording will be subsequently transcribed for use in the study.

In agreeing to take part, I note the following commitments given by Mrs Cook in connection with this study:

- I have the right to withdraw from participation in this study at any time including during and post-interview.

- The data I provide as part of the interview may be used as part of the data for the final study.

- My identity, and that of my institution, will not be divulged to any third party and will be anonymised in any written work associated with this project. All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that identities cannot be inferred from the text.

- I have the right to refuse the use of recording equipment and may ask for the equipment to be turned off at any stage of the interview. I will be provided with a transcription of the interview and have the right to amend/approve it prior to it being used for any purposes. I have the right to withdraw the transcript in full or in part.

- All electronic and hard copies of the interview will be held securely by Mrs Cook. These will be destroyed on completion of the process.

………………………………….
Name/role/organisation

………………………………………
Margaret C Cook
DBA Student
Edinburgh Napier University

9. Appendix 2: ==Semi-structured Interview== Question Grid

Question	Reason for Question	Comments
Can you define leadership?	Introductory question to get the respondent to consider the topic in general.	Question is intended to put the respondent at ease.
What aspects of that definition do you consider most important?	Slightly more in-depth question to begin to explore the respondent's views.	Allows the respondent to begin to think in more detail.
What would motivate an individual to take up a leadership role?	General question to get the respondent to consider the wider implications of a leadership role.	Anticipate that the respondents will think about leaders they have experience of and what may have motivated them.
What motivated you to take up your first leadership role?	An opportunity for the respondent to consider their personal motivations.	Individuals are usually comfortable speaking about their own experiences and this gives that opportunity.
What do you consider, if anything, to be different to leading within an academic environment?	Focussing down on the specifics of an academic environment.	Respondents were academic and professional services staff and this gave a wider perspective than just academic staff.
What impact does the structure of an HEI have on its leadership agenda?	Moving on from the general discussion on an academic environment to the structural impact on leadership.	This allowed both academic and professional services staff to consider the impact of structure.

What would you identify academic leadership as?	Encourages respondents to consider how they perceive the difference, if any, between academic and professional services staff.	This was intended to encourage respondents to really question their pre-conceived notions on any differences between the 2 groups of staff and to be able to explain them.
Do you consider leading academics to be different to leading other staff? If so in what way?	Having considered the potential differences between the groups the Impact of these differences need to be explored.	It was anticipated that the respondents would identify differences and would then reflect on the leadership challenge of these differences.
How do you think future leaders should be identified?	It is important to reflect on current practice and identify any potential improvements which could be made in this area.	It was anticipated that the respondents would all have a view on the improvements which could be made to current practice.
How do you think that current leaders should be developed?	This allows the respondents to reflect on their own needs and preferences for development styles.	Personal experiences are important in this study given that it is a phenomenological study.
How do you think that future leaders should be developed?	Forward thinking is a leadership skill and this question allows the respondents to influence the future development of colleagues.	This allows the respondents to take their own experiences and reflect on them and to then develop that for their future colleagues.
What is the best leadership development you have ever experienced?	This allows the respondents to reflect on the development opportunities they have had in their careers.	Again the lived experiences of the respondents are important given the nature of the study.

Can you define leadership in one word?	The respondents were asked to respond quickly to get their instinctive response.	This question is intended as a light hearted way of ending the interview process but one which would force the respondents to think and respond instinctively.

10.   Appendix 3: <mark>Focus Group</mark> Question Grid

Question	Reason for Question	Comments
The literature says that good leadership enhances the success of an organisation, is that true and on what basis do you think it is true/untrue?	The semi-structured interviews did not identify the link between leadership and organisational success, this needed to be explored.	Seeking to identify this link within HE as it was clear in the literature.
Do academics need leadership or do they exercise 'self-leadership'?	The literature indicates that academics are self-sufficient and do not need leadership, this was to test the literature in relation to lived experiences.	Opinions of senior HE leaders were valuable in this area.
There is significant literature in the area of distributed leadership but little research data. Does distributed leadership exist in HE and if so what form does it take? What does it mean?	Initially the contextual information indicated a form of distributed decision making, this was to go further and assess whether there was a devolved structure of leadership.	My own sense was that there was distributed leadership within the institution, this was not clear from the interviews and required further exploration.
What should the content of a leadership development programme be?	A list of activities which leaders and development professionals felt would be positive in the sector was what I was looking for and what I got.	Needed further information to build on from the information initially gathered.

11.   Appendix 4: Ethics and Governance Approval Form

BUSINESS SCHOOL RESEARCH & KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER ETHICS AND GOVERNANCE APPROVAL FORM
Section 1 – Research details
Name/s of researcher/s **Margaret Cook** Staff/Student? (Matriculation number/s) **09018542**
Title of project **Redefining Leadership in a Higher Education Context – Views from the Front Line.**
Aim of Research **To explore the idea that leadership within the Higher Education Sector is in some way 'different' to leadership out with the Sector and that the activities, skills and development needs of HE leaders needs to be considered within that context.** **Research Objectives** **1.   To consider various definitions of leadership generally and then to specifically examine how it relates to HE, this is intended to identify the areas of similarity and difference as there is a perception within HE that leading within the sector is 'different' from leading out with the sector.** **2.   To discuss the context of HE to assist in the understanding of any potential differences between leading out with and within the Sector.** **3.   To consider any differences in style/substance in leading the institution and in leading academic staff.** **4.   To consider the best ways of identifying potential leaders for institutions and identify the best ways of developing them.**

Details of the research methods to be used

I intend to use semi-structured interviews of elite individuals within an organisation having considered who would most likely hold the information/opinions which would inform my study. The semi-structured interviews will provide a common framework for the interview and will be a collaboration between the researcher and the respondent.

The individuals have been selected using purposive sampling (Saunders et al., 2009) and come into the following categories:
- **Senior University Management – 4 individuals**
- **Dean – 1 individual**
- **Director/Depute Director of Service – 2 individuals**
- **Development provider – 2 individuals**

This will enable me to interview individuals who have themselves been developed in to leadership roles from both an academic and professional services perspective and also experienced staff developers who have responsibility within their roles for the development of staff across the institution.

I have spoken informally to the individuals who I would like to interview and they have agreed to be part of the process however I will follow this up formally.

From an ethical perspective the study has been designed to minimise any chance of embarrassment, harm or disadvantage throughout the process.

In terms of reliability and validity I am assuming that from the interviews I carry out I will be able to identify themes and cross-check the opinions/information from those being interviewed.

The questions to be used are currently being developed in conjunction with my Supervisors and are being piloted as part of my pilot process, they are enclosed as appendix 1.

All data collected will be retained in accordance with the 'Code of Practice on Research & Knowledge Transfer Ethics and Governance' and the Data Protection Act 1998.

Who/what will be the research subjects in the research?

a. Staff/Students of Edinburgh Napier (please give details)

Pilot Study

- **Dean FECCI**
- **Depute Director IS**

Study

- **Principal**
- **Vice Principal (S&R)**
- **Vice Principal (Academic)**
- **University Secretary**
- **Director SAS**
- **Head of CL&D**
- **Head of Academic Professional Development**

b. Vulnerable individuals (please give details e.g. school children, elderly, disabled)

None

c. All other research subjects (please give details)

None

Section 2 – research subject details
Will participants be free NOT to take part if they choose? **Yes – each participant will be asked in writing if they wish to take part in the study and will be able to withdraw at any time.**
Explain how informed consent will be achieved. **Each of the participants identified above will receive a letter asking them to take part, this will explain the research project, the data collection methods and the anonymising and storage of data. They will also be advised that the interviews will be recorded and transcribed, they will receive a copy of the transcription for checking and all of their feedback will be incorporated into the transcription.** **Each participant will sign a form giving informed consent.**
Will any individual be identifiable in the findings? **No**
How will the findings be disseminated? **Through the DBA thesis, potential articles and invitation to speak at UHR (Scotland) conference.**
Is there any possibility of any harm (social, psychological, professional, economic etc) to participants who take part or do not take part? Give details. **No**
How / where will data be stored? Who will have access to it? Will it be secure? How long will the data be kept? What will be done with the data at the end of the project? **I will record all of the interviews and retain them till I have transcribed the interview which will be within 7 days. I will then retain the transcriptions securely with all of my other data in the University systems.** **See above**
Any other information in support of your application **Continue to section 3**

Section 3 – REG Advisors Approval
Delete as appropriate: I approve this research / I refer this research to the FREGC (give reason for referral)
Name of REG Advisor   Signature of REG Advisor   Date
Signature of researcher/s to confirm understanding and acceptance of REG decision   Date

Section 4 – FREGC Approval
FREGC decision
Does this issue need to be referred to the UREGC? If YES Secretary to forward to UREGC Secretary for referral with any appropriate paperwork Date actioned
Reason for referral
Signature of Convener of FREGC   Date
Date researcher/s informed of FREGC decision – include copy of email to researcher/s

12.   Appendix 5: Business School Research Integrity Approval Form

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">**BUSINESS SCHOOL RESEARCH INTEGRITY APPROVAL FORM**</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">**Section 1 – Research details**</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">

Name/s of researcher/s: **Margaret Cook**

Date: **20 March 2016**

Staff ☐

Student - Matriculation number: 09018542

Undergraduate ☐   Masters ☐ Doctoral x ☐

</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">

Title of project

Redefining Leadership in a Higher Education Context: Views from the Front Line

</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">

Aim of Research –

To explore the idea that leadership within the Higher Education Sector is in some way 'different' to leadership out with the Sector and that the activities, skills and development needs of HE leaders needs to be considered within that context.

Research Objectives

1. **To consider various definitions of leadership generally and then to specifically examine how it relates to HE, this is intended to identify the areas of similarity and difference as there is a perception within HE that leading within the sector is 'different' from leading out with the sector.**

</td></tr>
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2. To discuss the context of HE to assist in the understanding of any potential differences between leading out with and within the Sector.

3. To consider any differences in style/substance in leading the institution and in leading academic staff.

4. To consider the best ways of identifying potential leaders for institutions and identify the best ways of developing them.

Broad Research Questions (Phase 2)

Phase 1 of the project generated significant data and this has been analysed and has generated specific areas where the researcher feels that the information generated was incomplete and in some areas generated unexpected outcomes which would benefit from additional information/discussion amongst the original participants in the research.

1. To what extent do you consider there to be a link between good leadership of an institution and its success? (Siddique (2011)).

2. Can you define 'Academic Leadership'? (Bolden et al (2015)).

3. What do you recognise from the expression 'self-leadership' in the context of academic leadership? (Lumby (2012)).

4. How would you define distributed leadership in the context of this institution? (Debowski (2012)).

5. If you were asked to design a leadership development programme for this institution, what content would you include?

Details of the research methods to be used, please consider all of the following in your response:

This research project adopts an interprevist approach to understand the nature of leadership in HE.

This application is a follow on from the ethical approval which already exists for this research.

Having now collected and analysed all of the data in Phase 1 of this project it has become obvious that the project would benefit from further data collection in specific areas, this is effectively Phase 2 of the project I am asking permission to carry out.

The process will be as follows:

- **The data will be collected by focus group, one focus group will be held and it is anticipated it will last for approx. one hour.**
- **The focus group will be used to discuss the outcomes from Phase 1 of the study to elicit further more detailed responses to specific questions (as identified above).**
- **The data required will be collected at this focus group, there will be no other data collected. The focus group will be held in Craiglockhart Campus.**
- **All participants will be asked to give written informed consent before taking part in the focus group.**
- **The data will be collected by the researcher personally, the focus group will be digitally recorded and subsequently transcribed by the researcher. All participants will be sent copies of the transcription by e-mail and will be given the opportunity to comment on its accuracy.**
- **All the previous participants will be invited to the focus group, a minimum of 4 will be required from the original group to ensure that the focus group can generate sufficient additional data.**
- **All previous participants will be e-mailed to ask them to take part in the focus group.**

Who/what will be the research subjects in the research? a. Staff/Students of Edinburgh Napier (please give details) **Senior staff from Edinburgh Napier University** continue from section 2 b. Vulnerable individuals (please give details e.g. school children, elderly, disabled etc.) **nil** continue from section 2 c. All other research subjects (please give details) **nil** continue from section 3	

Section 2 – research subject details
Will participants be free NOT to take part if they choose? **yes**
Explain how informed consent will be achieved. **Informed consent will be discussed at the focus group and individuals will be asked to sign a consent form**
Will any individual be identifiable in the findings? **no**
How will the findings be disseminated? **Doctoral thesis and possibly follow up articles, also an invitation to present at the UHR (Scotland) conference.**
Is there any possibility of any harm (social, psychological, professional, economic etc) to participants who take part or do not take part? Give details. **no**

How / where will data be stored? Who will have access to it? Will it be secure? How long will the data be kept? What will be done with the data at the end of the project? **The focus group will be recorded and transcribed, all electronic data will be stored securely on an individual PC at the home of the researcher, the PC is locked and cannot be accessed by anyone else. The transcription will be sent to the individuals taking part in the Focus Group and they will be asked to confirm that it is a proper record of the discussion.**
Any other information in support of your application   **Continue to section 3**
Section 3 – RI (Research Integrity) Advisor's Approval
Delete as appropriate: I approve this research / I refer this research to the FRIC (give reason for referral)
Name of RI Advisor   Signature of RI Advisor   Date
Signature of researcher/s to confirm understanding and acceptance of RI Advisor's decision   Date

Section 4 – FRIC (Faculty Research Integrity Committee) Approval
FRIC decision
Does this issue need to be referred to the URIC (University Research Integrity Committee)? If YES Secretary to forward to URIC Secretary for referral with any appropriate paperwork Date actioned
Reason for referral
Signature of Convener of FRIC   Date
Date researcher/s informed of FRIC decision – include copy of email to researcher/s

13. Appendix 6: Potential Sample

The Management Team of the institution consisted of a range of academic and professional services staff and can be best described as follows:

Role	No of roles	Gender M/F	Age range	Tenure in role	Other HE management experience	Private sector experience	Highest Qualification	Sample Y/N
Principal	1	F	60 and over	5/9 yrs	Yes	Yes	PhD	Yes
Vice Principal	2	M x 2	50/59 40/49	Less than 5 yrs x 2	Yes	No x 2	PhD x 2	Yes
University Secretary	1	M	50/59	Over 15 yrs	Yes	No	PhD	Yes
Dean	3	M x 2 F x 1	50/59 x 2 40/49 x 1	Less than 5 yrs x 3	Yes	Yes x 1 No x 2	PhD x 2 Masters	2 of 3

Role	No of roles	Gender M/F	Age range	Tenure in role	Other HE management experience	Private sector experience	Highest Qualification	Sample Y/N
Head of School	8	M x 5 F x 3	40/49 x 3 50/59 x 4 60 and over x 1	Less than 5 yrs x 4 5/10 yrs x4	Yes	Yes x 3 No x 5	PhD x 5 Masters x 3	No
Directors of Professional Services	6	M x 2 F x4	40/49 x 4 50/59 x 2	Less than 5 yrs x 2 5/10 yrs x 3 More than 10 yrs x 1	Yes	Yes x 3 No x 3	Masters x 4 Professional Qualifications X 2	2 of 6
Head of Academic Development	1	F	50/59	More than 5 yrs	Yes	Yes	Masters	Yes
Head of Learning & Development	1	F	50/59	More than 5 yrs	Yes	Yes	Masters	Yes