

Factors that influence teachers not to pursue leadership roles within
a private language school

Min Yu

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Abstract

Educational organizations need highly qualified leaders who have a great impact on improving teaching and learning and the success of schools. However, leadership roles, particularly principal roles seem to be less attractive for many teachers. This research project aims to explore leadership supply issues within a private language school in a city of northeast China.

This qualitative research investigates how team leaders and teachers perceive leaders and leadership roles and also critically examines the factors which influence teachers not to pursue leadership roles in the private language school. In order to understand their perspectives and experiences, semi-structured interviews with five participants were used to collect data. In addition to this, the job description for the principal's role was collected and analyzed as a complement to interviews.

The findings showed that although participants considered being principals as an opportunity to gain more experience and improve themselves, these benefits were not always appealing. Concerns about lack of capabilities is one of the factors affecting teachers' willingness to become principals. Insufficient support from superiors and colleagues may be an inhibitor for team leaders to pursue principal roles as well. Another factor is that the increasing responsibility is not proportional to the gain. For those teachers whose personal work values are in conflict with organizational values, leadership roles seem to be undesirable. Last but not least, worries about losing contact with teaching and students is a reason restraining teachers from applying for principal positions.

The findings suggest that the school needs to improve potential candidates' capabilities; teachers who intend to enter principal positions also need to study independently to be capable. Apart from this, more job-related support should be provided for new leaders. Moreover, the school is suggested to reexamine principal roles and design other suitable pathways to attract further excellent teachers to fulfill the role of leadership.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signature 子敏

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Chapter one: Introduction

It seems to be common that teachers intend to make a career move after working in the same position for several years. In Phelps' (2008) informal surveys, most of the teacher candidates reveal their willingness to become leaders in their schools. Newton, Riveros, and da Costa (2013) further point out that principalship is the most obvious route for candidates who wish to enter leadership positions. With increasing working experience and professional skills, excellent teachers might become potential candidates who are identified and selected as school leaders. Taking on leadership roles seems to be appealing for many teachers. Phelps (2008) argues that the most attractive factor for teachers to pursue leadership roles is the chance to increase their difference-making ability beyond their individual classrooms. When teachers realize that they can expand their influence to lead the change, they will enjoy the autonomy for school improvement. York-Barr and Duke (2004) also state that becoming leaders allows teachers to improve their leadership skills and they will seek out more leadership opportunities as a result of these skills. Apart from the development of teachers' skills, leadership experience can increase their abilities in the area of educational technology as well as their confidence (Newton et al., 2013).

In addition to the above incentives which motivate teachers to seek leadership positions, there are many factors compelling schools to appoint those qualified candidates as leaders. For example, Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd (2009) note that many people believe that school leaders indeed have a great impact on student learning outcomes and well-being. Additionally, these career advancement opportunities are expected to enhance candidates' job satisfaction and increase organizational commitment because they are inspired to work on more challenging tasks and provided with opportunities for work innovation (Conley, Bas-Isaac, & Brandon, 1998). According to Hine (2003), "successful schools are managed by talented, dynamic and focused administrators who are effective in collaborating with students, educators, parents, and community members to achieve shared goals" (p. 267). Therefore, those potential candidates with sufficient capabilities play a critically important role in the development of educational organizations.

Despite the fact that there are many incentives which motivate teachers to seek leadership positions and it is believed that highly qualified leaders are vital for school success, there is a widespread concern that the number of teachers who potentially pursue a leadership role seems smaller than people expected (Cranston, 2007). Some researchers further state that with a decreasing number of teachers who are willing and able to move into leadership roles (Barty, Thompson, Blackmore, & Sachs, 2005), “there is likely to be a ‘crisis’ of sorts in the depth and quality of the pool of applicants for the principalship” (Cranston, 2007, p.112). Teachers’ unwillingness to seek leadership positions has been identified not only in western countries (Fink & Brayman, 2006), but some regions in Asia as well (e.g. Sirat, Ahmad, & Azman, 2012; Walker & Kwan, 2009). Hence, this research project intends to identify and examine the factors influencing teachers not to step up to leadership positions.

This chapter firstly starts with a presentation of the importance of educational organizations to appoint internal candidates as leaders. Following this, a brief introduction of a private tutoring language school in a city of northeast China is provided. The research aim and research questions are explored in the next section. Finally, the outline of this dissertation is introduced.

The importance of educational organizations to appoint internal candidates as leaders

When identifying and selecting potential leaders, educational organizations are more likely to motivate internal employees to assume leadership roles, and it is common that teachers tend to make a career move in their own institutions. Many studies regarding leadership recruitment and selection provide evidence for this phenomenon. For example, Bisbee’s (2007) survey of four colleges show that over half of the department chairs are insiders to their institution for their current positions. According to Kwan’s (2013) review of literature in relation to principal recruitment, people who are currently taking vice-principal roles are more likely to be selected as future principals. Sagaria and Dickens (1990) also argue that many higher education administrators climb the career ladder in their own organization. It is obvious that those insiders

who master a wide range of “professional skills and personal qualities are valued by their home institutions” (Salaria & Dickens, 1990, p. 20).

Compared with bringing in those new people from other fields, there are many advantages for educational organizations to hire internal candidates. One of the advantages is that internal candidates are familiar with the culture of the organization (Bisbee, 2007). Likewise, Normore (2006) reports that schools tend to promote internal candidates rather than external appointments as a result of school culture. Therefore, offering leadership opportunities to insiders can preserve the time-tested traditions of the institution (Van Amburgh et al., 2010). Another benefit of hiring those internal candidates is that they are viewed as “known quantities”. As Herman (1994) suggests, “no matter how carefully the external applicant is identified, screened, interviewed, and reference checked, a new employee is still a pig in a poke” (p. 54). It takes time to know an external candidate’s ability. Some other reasons for hiring insiders such as cost saving and employees’ increasing commitment to the organization are also identified by Herman (1994).

The above studies show that educational organizations tend to give top priority to those excellent internal candidates when there are job vacancies. Therefore, it is necessary for educational organizations to identify those capable teachers who have interest towards leadership roles, more specifically, principal roles and to provide them with training so that they can improve their leadership skills (Kwan, 2013). Strom, Sanchez and Downey-Schilling (2011) also suggest that the best encouragement for internal employees to assume leadership roles is the formal mentoring which is offered by current administrators and leaders.

Introduction of a private tutoring school

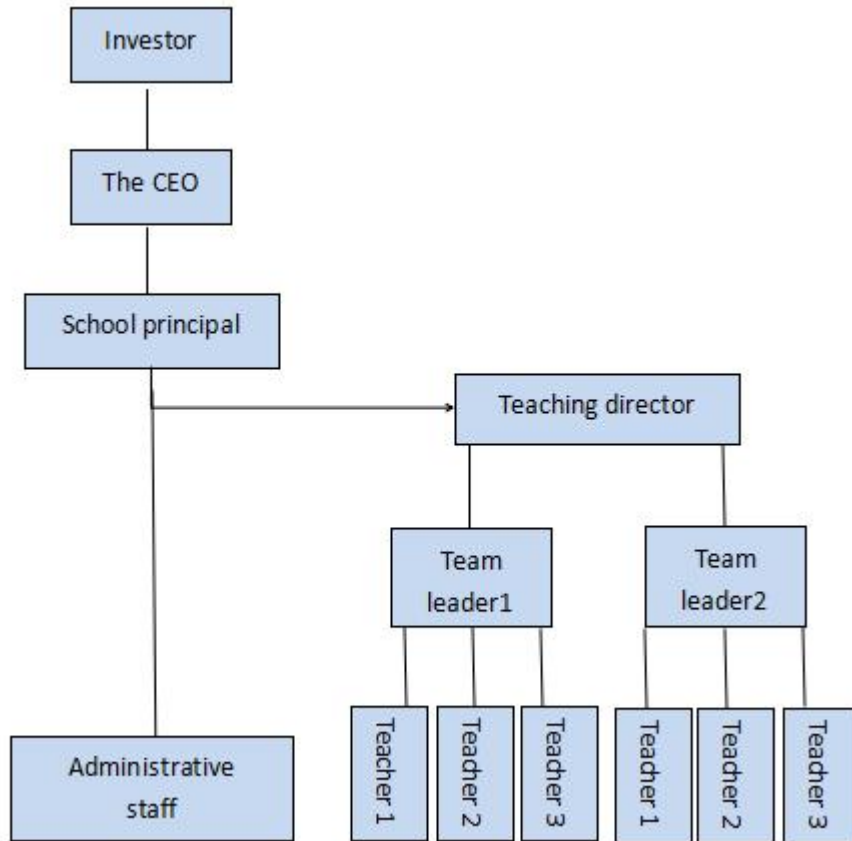
Private tutoring has expanded significantly during the last two decades in China (Liu & Bray, 2017). With the large proportion of students participating in private supplementary education, it has already become a significant part of the whole educational system (Zhang, 2013). The demand for private tutoring has been driven by a variety of factors, the most significant seems to

be the examination-targeted environment of China. National College Entrance Examination is the most critical examination which is the only way for most Chinese students to get the opportunity of higher education. Although receiving higher education is not so difficult as a result of the expansion of university enrollment, “it is extremely difficult to get in a very good university like for example Tsinghua University or Beijing University” (Klupś-Orłowska, 2015, p. 326). Hence, students receive private tutoring in order to improve their academic performance at school and especially the outcome of their examinations.

The school in which this research is conducted is built and developed in the background of the popularity of employing private tutoring. In 1980s, the first school was founded in Taiwan in response to the growing demand for high quality English education. As one of the best-known schools, the organization then foresaw the market opportunities in mainland China so it decided to open franchises in the early 2000s. The organization where I previously worked is one of the chain schools providing English tutoring. Compared with traditional public schools, private tutoring schools are more likely to be seen as enterprises which aim to seek for profits because they cannot get any financial support from government. Therefore, they have to offer professional teaching and alternative services in order for them to survive in a highly competitive franchise environment.

When referring to teacher leaders, generally, they are excellent teachers with significant teaching experience and expertise, and are respected by their colleagues (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). In this private language school, all school leaders are insiders with at least two years working experience or more. The figure below shows the organization structure and pathways of leadership:

Figure 1: Organization structure and pathways of leadership



As can be seen from the figure, teachers with teaching expertise and experience are provided opportunities to take on roles of team leader. After being team leaders for about two or three years, some may consider that moving into teaching director positions if there are job vacancies. There are cases that some team leaders who are expected to directly fulfill the role of principal as well. For teaching directors, stepping up to principal positions is the opportunity to climb the career ladder.

My interest in the leadership supply issue within this private language school is because of my previous work experiences, allowing me to observe an interesting phenomenon. On the one hand, some excellent teachers do not want to take on leadership roles and some team leaders intend to stay in their current positions even while there are vacant positions available for them to make an application. On the other hand, the CEO and human resource department always express their worries about the lack of competent applicants. In my view, leadership roles are appealing not only because of salary benefits, admiration and respect from others, but also from

motivations such as the desire to achieve and personal career development. For educational organizations, capable leaders are viewed as a significant factor which influences schools' quality and effectiveness (Ho & Tikly, 2012). Hallinger and Heck (2011) in their study also emphasize the significance of the principal's role in supporting teachers' professional development and instructional skills. Therefore, in order to understand how teachers perceive leaders and make leadership roles more attractive, this research intends to investigate the disincentives to pursuing leadership roles from teachers' perspectives. There are five participants in this research. They are divided into two types. Two of the participants are just teachers; the other three are teachers who also take on leadership roles.

Research questions

The aim of this research is to identify and critically examine the factors which influence teachers not to pursue leadership roles in a private language school in a city of northeast China. This aim is guided by the following questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions and expectations to move into leadership roles?
2. What are the factors which influence teachers not to pursue leadership roles or to pursue leadership roles only to a team leader level and not to pursue principalship?

Dissertation structure

The dissertation is organized into five chapters as follows:

Chapter one provides the background of the research and the introduction of the private tutoring language school, while also presenting the research aims and research questions that shape the frame of this research.

Chapter two critically reviews a wide range of literature associated with the phenomenon of which many educational organizations are experiencing: the inadequacies of candidates for

leadership positions and especially the shortage of principals. It also identifies some factors according to the relevant literature.

Chapter three outlines positions and methodology of this research. According to the research aims and questions, an interpretive paradigm and a qualitative approach are best suited. In terms of data collection and analysis, the semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis are critically explained. Finally, it discusses the validity, reliability and ethical considerations.

Chapter four presents the research findings collected from the semi-structured interviews with participants and the documentary analysis of the job description for the principal's role. The data findings are organized with research questions by using headings.

Chapter five provides critical analysis of the key findings and integrate with references from relevant literature in chapter two.

Chapter two: Literature review

School leaders play a critical role not only in student learning, but also in teacher professional development and school success. However, it seems that leadership, especially principalship, has become less attractive for some teachers who might be qualified candidates. The following sections focus on relevant literature by starting with an identification of principal recruitment and retention, and then present some factors which may be linked to teachers' aspirations for making a career move. The final section critiques connections across the themes and discusses gaps in the literature.

Identification

While educational leaders greatly affect the development of various organizations, it is not uncommon that many have experienced a shortage of leaders, which means that there are not adequate applicants expecting to step up to leadership positions. Increasing evidence of leadership supply issues can be found not only in western educational jurisdictions (Fink & Brayman, 2006), but also some regions of Asia (e.g. Sirat et al., 2012; Walker & Kwan, 2009). For example, in Stone-Johnson's (2014) research project, she interviews 12 teachers from public secondary schools in Massachusetts, the USA, and the findings indicate that some participants struggle to move into principal roles. Similarly, increasing evidence shows that the number of applicants for principal vacancies is decreasing in Ontario, the most populated Canadian province (Williams, 2003). Barty et al. (2005) investigate schools in two states of Australia and they also confirm the decline in the number of principal applicants. Negative attitudes towards headship posts have been mentioned by Argyropoulou and Hatira (2014) in their study regarding Greek kindergarten heads as well. In addition to those authors who pay attention to this growing concern of recruitment and retention of principals in western contexts, Sirat et al., (2012) state that Malaysia's public universities have experienced a serious crisis of leaders and they have to seek candidates from other institutions and sectors.

When referring to the shortage of educational leaders, people will consider the quantity of potential candidates. Apart from the decline in the quantity, the shortage of qualified leaders also has been identified in various regions such as the USA (Cusick, 2003; Hine, 2003), Australia (Fraser & Brock, 2006), New Zealand (Brooking, Collins, Court, & O'Neill, 2003) and Hong Kong (Walker & Kwan, 2009). In this research, the shortage of leaders means that there are not adequate high qualified individuals wishing to pursue principal positions or to pursue leadership roles only to a team leader level. In order to address this issue and attract more capable candidates, it is crucial to examine the factors which affect the desire for teachers to enter leadership positions.

Extrinsic factors

1. Increasing responsibilities

Educational reform requires the increasing accountability for the principal who is directly accountable for the effectiveness and efficiency of the school (Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2008). At the same time, reforms imposed upon many education systems have changed the nature of expectations for leadership positions (Harris, 2004). For many leaders, dealing with expectations from students and parents seems to be one of the most important responsibilities. In Chinese public schools, in order to meet parents' expectations, principals are required to provide educational programs to develop children's academic performance (Zhong & Ehrich, 2010). Based on Cranston's (2007) study regarding principalship in Australia, many potential applicants emphasize their concerns about the challenge resulting from parental pressures. Barty et al. (2005) illustrate that "pressure from parents, the shift from managing discipline to establishing social and emotional supports for students combined with a diverse range of expectations...act as a deterrent for many people who might otherwise aspire to become a principal" (p. 11).

With the increasing responsibilities, school principals are more likely to work long hours and their lack of time seems to be a factor which inhibits teachers from pursuing the role of principal as well. Being principal is time consuming because it requires focusing on increasing managerial tasks (Thomson, 2004). A number of scholars have mentioned that reasons such as extremely

time-consuming responsibilities and “the deterioration of the quality of family life brought about by the heavy workload of the principal” are possible obstacles for teacher leaders to move into principals roles (Cranston, 2007; Howley, Andrianaivo, & Perry, 2005, p. 762; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Additionally, working with leaders who frequently voice their frustration and negative feedback, teachers might have a negative perspective of school principal as a career (Barty et al., 2005). Hence, it is not surprising that teachers are less likely to seek principal positions when they see that there is such a heavy workload for their principals to undertake on a daily basis.

2. Insufficient support

Although many teachers consider stepping up to leadership positions as a good opportunity to climb up the career ladder, it is not easy for them to make a career move without adequate support from their superiors and colleagues. Lack of support from superiors might be a critical factor in declining teachers' interest of becoming leaders. For example, Othman and Wanlabeh (2012) investigate 174 teachers in six selected private schools in Songkhla, Thailand, and the findings show that the principals' lack of professionalism and expertise, showed them to be non-supportive leaders as they fail to assist their teachers to develop skills or professional knowledge adequately. Due to the absence of principals' coaching and facilitating, it would be challenging for teachers to master professional knowledge and skills on how to take on leadership positions efficiently and effectively. Consequently, teachers might become less confident, which leads to their lack of interest to seek leadership posts. Besides support regarding knowledge and skills, teachers also believe that encouragement from their current leaders greatly influence their decision about whether pursuing a position as principal (Howley et al., 2005). Principals' support can be supplied to teacher leaders via various forms, such as “maintaining open channels of communication”, and “aligning structures and resources to support the leadership work of teachers” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 288). In order to make leadership positions more attractive, it appears to be critical for school principals and other senior leaders to offer sufficient support to potential candidates.

Not only do leaders offer insufficient support, but sometimes this can be the case from the

teachers' direct peers as well. This might have an impact on a teacher's decision because it is difficult to be a leader if others are unwilling to follow (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). When teachers become leaders, their changing relationships with colleagues would negatively affect teacher leadership (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). "These relationship shifts can be a sense of greater distance from and even a loss of specific, valued relationships with colleagues" (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 283). As teacher leaders are responsible for monitoring duties, their peers would view them as administrators, which may result in a kind of division between them (Zhang, Lo, & Chiu, 2014). The altering nature of relationships may act as a disincentive also because their colleagues consider that it disrupts the egalitarian school norms (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). When considering Chinese social and cultural contexts, achieving harmonious relationships with others has been valued as an important element by the majority of Chinese people. Poor relationships with others are inconsistent with the Chinese traditional cultural value which emphasizes on harmony (Walker & Kwan, 2009). Kwan's (2009) quantitative study of vice-principals in Hong Kong secondary schools indicates that those who uphold such a value are less likely to assume principal roles since they believe that school success could only be achieved if they maintain harmony with their colleagues. It seems that teacher leaders could become isolated as they may lose connections with their peers when they engage in leadership positions. This can be seen as a kind of insufficient support from school colleagues. When considering factors influencing teachers' lack of interest in filling in applications, support from peers should be taken into account because "growth from teacher to teacher leader evolves over time and depends on the mentoring and coaching not just of the building leaders, but of their peers, who slowly accept them in these roles" (Baecher, 2012, p. 318).

In summary, more expectations and limited time due to principals' increasing responsibilities and insufficient support from leaders and colleagues might be possible inhibitors which make leadership positions less attractive. These two extrinsic factors explain leadership supply issues more on outside environmental influences and structures while the following intrinsic factors will pay attention to teachers' personal reasons.

Intrinsic factors

1.Limited confidence

As mentioned previously, school leaders appear to be under great pressure to shoulder responsibilities for almost everything, from student achievement, teacher development to the whole school success. For those teachers who are not confident enough, all these challenges could be a barrier which might stop them from applying for leadership posts. A great deal of literature has argued that lack of confidence can be an obstacle which inhibits a teacher's career move (e.g. Kwan, 2013; Muijs & Harris, 2006; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006; Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Not only teachers, but also some middle leaders claim that poor confidence could be a barrier of teacher leadership. Based on interviews of both middle leaders and headteachers from twelve schools, Rhodes and Brundrett (2005) argue that teachers' insufficient self-confidence to step up to leadership positions has been recognized by headteachers, especially by middle leaders who have been more aware of their ability to secure leadership succession. Some authors also focus on deputy headteachers' perceptions of headship. According to James and Whiting's (1998) survey, self-doubt is one of the key factors influencing the deputy headteachers' career decision. A significant number of the participants in this survey illustrate that they are worried about the failure, mistakes, and their capability to fulfill the role of headteacher. In another research project, almost half of the deputies expressed concerns about their professional abilities (Draper & McMichael, 1998). They felt that they need more time to develop leadership skills and wider experience of different school departments. Additionally, Draper and McMichael (1998) list two quotations from female deputy headteachers to conclude that women are more likely to consider themselves unready for headship. That might be one of the reasons why there are more male principals in women-dominated schools.

2.Lost relationship with students

Many teachers may consider teaching as a great profession which can experience the joy of making a difference. These are the people who work in the front line and directly affect student success. If they step up to leadership positions, it seems that they have to spend more time in dealing with administrative management, which means leaving their class behind. The fear of the

change of professional identity and losing relationship with children have been referred to by not only middle leaders, but also deputies and headteachers as well (e.g. Draper & McMichael, 1998; James & Whiting, 1998; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2005, 2006). Their desire to maintaining high level contact with students may be a possible barrier of becoming principals. In Gronn and Lacey's (2004) research, a teacher with aspirations to move into leadership roles expresses the feeling of sadness:

The one thing that worries me about moving into administration in a school is the prospect of not having the close working relationship with students that teachers are able to build. Likewise, I would be very unhappy if I was not able to continue to participate with students in all the extra-curricular activities that are such an important aspect of school life. (p. 413)

In summary, lack of self-confidence and fear of losing contact with children might be factors which influence teachers not to move into leadership roles. What people should be aware of is that although poor confidence could be seen as teachers' personal character, it may result from inadequate support as well.

Generational theory

In addition to the above extrinsic and intrinsic factors, Stone-Johnson (2014) provides a unique perspective to explore the disincentives associated with teacher leadership through the generational lens. Unlike many other researchers who put emphasis on the changed educational context, she suggests that generational differences play more significant role in teachers' lack of interest in seeking leadership roles. The findings of her study show that different generation may prioritize different criteria in their work, therefore, it is necessary to "understand how teachers make the decision to consider becoming a principal, and the importance of the changing of factors over time" (Stone-Johnson, 2014, p. 619). In her study, some participants reveal that Generation Xers favor flexibility and they will create alternate workplace structures, for example, rather than taking on the role of principal, some aspiring leaders have made efforts to rebuild the role to satisfy their needs. Similarly, Barty et al. (2005) state that due to the modern lifestyle, young teachers will seek out other opportunities elsewhere if current working conditions cannot

meet their expectations. The situation in China seems to be no different. In order to examine generational differences in attitudes toward careers in China, Yi, Ribbens, and Morgan (2010) invited 386 people to participate in their online survey, and they finally state that comparing with former generations, the millennial generation are more likely to change jobs probably due to the One Child policy of China. Although the sample size in their research is so limited that it appears to be difficult to generalize about the context of China, it is not uncommon to see that many young people change their work frequently.

If senior leaders understand that Generation Xers are more likely to value flexibility, then a productive solution might be to design leadership job description to better align with aspiring teachers' desires. Therefore, to understand why teachers do not expect to become principals, it is necessary to be more aware of "generational attributes and how these characteristics have changed over time" (Stone-Johnson, 2014, p. 618).

Discussion

Based on existing literature, the above sections group possible disincentives of stepping up to leadership positions into three themes, they are extrinsic factors, intrinsic factors, and generational theory. When considering extrinsic factors, a number of researchers highlight principals' increasing responsibilities which result in higher social expectations and lack of time. Apart from extrinsic factors, there are some personal reasons affecting capable candidates' attitude of moving into leadership roles, such as their poor self-confidence and fear of losing contact with their students. All of those factors are considered to be important for this research because they are consistent with the situation in the tutoring language school where I previously worked. I have heard voices of frustration and complaint directed towards leadership positions from my former colleagues, so this experience will be useful when analyzing leadership supply issues in Chinese contexts. In addition, one of my previous responsibilities was to provide training and support for both novice teachers and in-serve teachers, allowing me the opportunity to hear and understand their thoughts and feelings. This also gave me an understanding of how a fresh or new teacher's values may vary and be opposed to the opinions of senior leaders

and decision makers (In this research, the investor and the CEO of the private tutoring school are defined as decision makers). On reflection, recognizing a generation gap, I believe generational theory could be a lens to examine what is valued by potential applicants. Moreover, according to Stone-Johnson (2014), a large amount of research just concentrates on a one aspect-changing job context, without also exploring how various generations respond to these changes.

According to the relevant literature, it seems that the majority of the studies on leadership supply issues are from the western perspective and public sectors, but rarely have been carried out in China. This is probably because “the corpus of knowledge on educational leadership and management in East Asia is still in a very early stage of development” (Walker & Hallinger , 2015, p. 554). The gap is that the context of those western research might not fit the Chinese educational structures, systems, development, culture and pathways. Therefore, in order to identify factors which influence teachers not to pursue leadership roles in a Chinese context, this dissertation intends to investigate and focus specifically on a private language school in a city of northeast China.

Conclusion

The shortage of qualified leaders could pose a threat to the development of a school. In order to identify the possible factors which influence teachers not to seek leadership roles, this literature review provides three themes according to relevant literature. It firstly analyzes both extrinsic and intrinsic factors, and then examines the possible inhibitor through the lens of generational theory. This provides a background for the research by reviewing existing studies of principal recruitment and retention, and some factors affecting teachers’ attitudes about pursuing leadership roles.

The following chapter provides an overview of research design which includes positioning, methodology, data collection and analysis, as well as the validity, reliability and ethical issues of this research project.

Chapter three: Methodology

This chapter provides a discussion on positioning and methodology. With relevant theories and research questions, semi-structured interviews and documents are used to collect data. When referring to sampling, experienced teachers with over three-year teaching experience and middle leaders who have been working for over five years are selected as potential participants. Following this, a thematic coding approach is adopted to analyze data from semi-structured interviews; content and textual analysis and Wellington's (2015) framework of a list of questions are identified to analyze documents. Validity, reliability, and triangulation are also examined to strengthen the results. Finally, ethical considerations are taken into account through the entire process of the research.

The aim of this research is to identify and critically examine the factors which inhibit teachers from pursuing leadership roles in a private language school in a city of northeast China. This aim is guided by the following questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions and expectations to move into leadership roles?
2. What are the factors which influence teachers not to pursue leadership roles or to pursue leadership roles only to a team leader level and not to pursue principalship?

The first question focuses on teachers' perceptions and expectations to move into leadership roles in order to identify how teachers understand leaders, leadership roles and principal roles. It intends to investigate whether there are differences between teachers' and decision makers' perceptions of leadership and principal positions. There is an assumption that if there is deviation in understanding, teachers will have bias on this position and this may affect their decision of applying for principal positions. The second question expects to critically examine the possible factors which affect participants' decisions to stay in their current positions and further provide decision makers with some recommendations to make leadership positions more desirable.

Positioning

“In making sense of research information and transforming it into data, researchers draw implicitly or explicitly upon a set of beliefs” or assumptions called paradigms (Morrison, 2012, p. 30). Punch (2005) further suggests that paradigm is a complex term which is also “about what constitute proper techniques and topics for enquiry” (p. 27). In general, there are three elements in a research paradigm: an ontological perspective, an epistemological perspective, and methodological approaches that are linked to the paradigm (Grogan & Simmons, 2012). According to Scott, D., (2012), ontology “refers to relationships, structures, mechanisms, events, happenings and behaviors in the world which have an objective existence, and on which the researcher focuses their attention” (p. 119); while epistemology refers to how the researcher can know or understand those objects. Ontological questions such as “What things are there in the world?” and epistemological questions such as “How can we know certain things?” are both central to all social research (Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p. 25). Together, ontology and epistemology influence methodology which “provides a rationale for the ways in which researchers conduct their research activities” (Morrison, 2012, p. 30).

Many scholars have identified that there are different types of paradigms in educational research (e.g. Creswell, 2014; Morrison, 2012; Wellington, 2015). With labels implying opposite poles, the most common contrasts in western research paradigms are positivism and interpretivism (Wellington, 2015). These two paradigms differ radically. Positivism focuses on deduction and causal laws, however, interpretivism highlights “an inductive understandings of how people create meaning in their social worlds” (Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p. 26). Wellington (2015) illustrates that for positivist researchers, the aim of their research is to seek generalizations, whereas interpretive researchers intend to “explore perspectives and shared meanings and to develop insights into situations” (p. 26). In addition, the former “believe in objective knowledge of an external reality which is rational and independent of the observer”, however, the later consider that the observer can “make a difference to the observed and that reality is a human construct (Wellington, 2015, p. 26). Moreover, positivist assumptions hold true more for quantitative research (Creswell, 2014); on the contrary, interpretivism is commonly connected with qualitative

research which emphasizes words and textual analysis (Morrison, 2012).

According to the simplified definitions of quantitative and qualitative research, the obvious distinction is that the data in quantitative research are numerical (Punch, 2005). In addition to data, a variety of differences can be evidenced between quantitative and qualitative research. For example, Creswell (2014) compares these two approaches in his research and he argues that quantitative research is usually used to test “objective theories by examining the relationship among variables”, but qualitative research is more likely to explore and understand “the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). In quantitative research, data will be analyzed by statistical procedures and the final report has a set structure; while in qualitative research, researchers make interpretations of the meaning of data and write reports with a more flexible structure (Creswell, 2014).

In this research, I drew upon a qualitative research with an interpretive paradigm. As mentioned above, for interpretive researchers, the main task is to examine the meanings of events from research participants’ perspectives (Morrison, 2012). The purpose of researchers taking an interpretive paradigm is to understand how people think and perceive (Coleman, 2012). This study intends to analyze how teachers in a private language school perceive and understand their views and experiences of leadership and principalship, therefore, it is positioned within an interpretive paradigm. I used qualitative research as a research approach because specific research approaches depend on the types of social research problems. “If a concept or phenomenon needs to be explored and understood because little research has been done on it, then it merits a qualitative approach” (Creswell, 2014, p. 20). In this research, although a large number of researchers have focused on the issue about the shortage of school leaders, little research could be found in private tutoring organizations. Additionally, the majority of the studies are from western countries, it is challenging to find relevant literature from an Asian perspective, and in particular from a Chinese viewpoint. So this research used a qualitative approach to analyze and understand teachers’ perspective in a private school within China.

Methodology and sampling

As already noted, “methodology provides a rationale for the ways in which researchers conduct their research activities”, therefore, it is “much more than methods or techniques or tools for research” (Morrison, 2012, p. 30). Methodology is “the activity or business of choosing, reflecting upon, evaluating and justifying the methods you use” (p. 33); it is vitally important because the value of research cannot be assessed or judged if people are not clear about the methodology (Wellington, 2015).

In this research project, case studies are selected as the research method. Yin (2009) states that the distinctive need for case studies “arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena” (p. 4). It provides researchers opportunities “to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events”, such as “small group behavior, organizational and managerial processes” (Yin, 2009, p. 4). This study expects to understand and investigate the phenomenon that teachers are not interested in leadership positions in a private tutoring language school. Case studies provide me with opportunities to understand how teachers perceive leadership roles and answer the question why leadership positions are less attractive so they appear to be consistent with what Yin illustrates above. In addition, Wellington (2015) identifies some key features of case studies, for example, a variety of methods may be used in case studies and they pay more attention to how things happen and why. These features are connected with this research because I intended to use interview and documents to collect data and the purpose of this study is to examine the reasons why teachers do not pursue principal roles.

While the case study is a distinctive research method, researchers have to face some problems (e.g. generalizability and reliability) when using it in their studies. These two problems will be respectively discussed in the following section. As a commonly used research method, case studies have a great many attractions (Wellington, 2015). For instance, case studies can be illuminating, insightful, accessible, and attention-holding if well written. In addition to these advantages, case studies provide the investigator with a wide range of techniques to collect data. In this research, I adopted two of them: interviews and documents.

As the primary method, interviewing is selected because it meets the research aims and assists in answering the research questions (Coleman, 2012). The aim of this research is to identify and critically examine factors which influence teachers not to pursue leadership roles, in order to meet this aim, I need to understand teachers' views and experiences of leaders and leadership. Interviewing allows me to investigate participants' "thoughts, values, prejudices, perceptions, views, feelings and perspectives" (Wellington, 2015, p. 137). This process helps to have a better understanding of teachers' interpretations. Compared with other methods, interviews can gain access to the parts which others cannot reach (Wellington, 2015). For example, observations can allow researchers to study people's behaviors but researchers cannot understand people's thoughts through observing. Focus groups can provide opportunities for researchers to investigate people's views but they might pose a threat to participants' willingness to share their personal experiences. When considering the degree of structure in an interview, I selected the semi-structured interview, because compared with unstructured and structured interviews, the semi-structured interview can overcome the inherent problems in the former approach but avoid the inflexibility of the later (Wellington, 2015). Newton et al. (2013) also suggest that the semi-structured interview "better enable participants to talk about their experiences and interpretations" so that researchers can "probe for more detailed responses to ideas that emerged during the interview" process (p. 109).

In addition to a semi-structured interview, I also collect and analyze documents. As a complement to interviews in case study, analysis of documents provides a number of advantages in educational research. Fitzgerald (2012) suggests that:

Documents from schools, colleges and universities therefore can provide valuable information about the context and culture of these institutions and frequently provide another window for the research in educational leadership and management to read between the lines of official discourse and then triangulate information through interviews, observations and questionnaires, possibly within a case study (p. 299).

I adopted the job description for the principal's role to analyze requirements and responsibilities of this position from decision makers' perspectives. Additionally, as already mentioned, semi-structured interviews provide me opportunities to investigate teachers' perceptions and

expectations of leadership roles and moving into leader positions. And then those analyzed data were compared to see whether participants and decision makers perceive principal roles differently. This comparison is important because I made an assumption that if there was deviation in understanding, teachers would have bias on this position and this might affect their decision of taking on principal roles.

Based on Wellington's (2015) examples which show the degree of access of documents, from closed to freely distributed to all, it indicates that the principals' job description of this private school can be available only by gaining special permission. The principals' job description in this school is considered an internal document, and only senior leaders and department of human resources have access to it. So it is necessary to explain the aim of this research to the head of human resources department and get permission to have access to the document.

When considering sample selection, I chose to use purposive sampling as it fit the aim of this qualitative research. I want to examine the factors which inhibit teachers from becoming leaders so I need to understand their views and experiences of leaders and leadership. This is connected with purposive sampling which is based on the assumption that the researcher intends to "discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 96). To begin purposive sampling, some selection criteria were established. First, experienced teachers who have been working in the school for over three years and team leaders with five-year experience were selected, because novice teachers tend to pay more attention to their daily work and they need more capacities and working experience to apply for a higher position. Then, one or two male(s) were considered, because "it is always a good idea to elicit multiple perspectives on a given research question", men and women might have different views due to their different experiences and social roles (Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2013, p. 43). However, the overwhelming majority of teachers are female in this private school so it was difficult to involve males in research sample. When referring to sample sizes, five potential participants were involved in the interview and each person was interviewed for about 30 minutes. The number of participants is small due to my limited time to complete this dissertation. Coleman (2012) illustrates that qualitative interviewing

generates a great deal of data and analysis of data is time-consuming. Besides, qualitative studies are not trying to achieve generalizability (Floyd, 2012). Therefore, five individuals are appropriate for the semi-structured interviews.

Data collection and analysis

Because of the limited time and costs, it appears to be impossible for me to go back to China and do face-to-face interviews. Wellington (2015) suggests that Skype discussion can be an alternative because it allows researchers to see interviewees and thus in many ways is as good as the live situation. Therefore, I adopted an online communication tool named Wechat which is the Chinese equivalent of Skype to complete the interviews. At the same time, technical difficulties were taken into account because there is always the possibility that the internet will be poor (Bryman, 2012).

It was necessary for me to have an interview guide to help cover my research purpose, and when listing the questions on the interview guide, I was more aware of these questions and ask myself questions like “What do I need to know in order to answer each of the research questions I am interested in?” (Bryman, 2012, p. 473). In addition, some questions seem to be open-ended and flexible because “participants can construct the meaning of a situation” and researchers can listen carefully to “what people say or do in their life settings” (Creswell, 2014, p. 8). More importantly, based on Bryman’s (2012) suggestion, I conducted some pilot interviews with my friends in order to be more familiar with the process and get some experience from this.

The purpose of this research is to probe teachers’ interpretations and perspectives, hence, the function of interviews is to give them a voice and provide them with “an opportunity to make their viewpoints known” (Wellington, 2015, p. 139). This indicates that listening is one of the key ingredients of interviews and I have to pay full attention to what the participant is saying (Bryman, 2012). At the same time, I recorded and took notes during the interview process. Because recording can ensure the richness of participants’ statements and hand-written notes can form the basis of the later transcription (Coleman, 2012).

I transcribed the recordings of the semi-structured interviews by myself once I completed the first one-to-one interview because it was too late if I started to transcribe when all the interviews were done. The interviews were conducted in Chinese so I transcribed the recordings in Chinese and then translated those useful excerpts from the transcripts into English. Bryman (2012) suggests that it is common for qualitative interviewers to find some portions of interviews not useful, so I listened to the recordings once again and then transcribed those portions that I thought were relevant.

The next step is the analysis of data. Bassegy (2012) states that it is best for researchers to analyze data as it arises, rather than waiting until all is collected. Because “it allows the researcher to be more aware of emerging themes that he or she may want to ask about in a more direct way in later interviews” (Bryman, 2012, p. 484). So I analyzed data by adopting coding and thematic analysis when I completed the first interview transcription. As a generic approach for analysis of qualitative data, coding and thematic analysis has its advantages. For example, it is suitable for those researchers who have little experience of qualitative research because it is an “easy and quick method to learn and use” (Robson, 2011, p. 477). This was the first time for me to do qualitative research so coding and thematic analysis seems to be an appropriate method for analyzing data. Watling, Veronica, and Briggs (2012) suggest that “coding involves putting tags or labels against large or small pieces of data in order to attach meaning to them and index them for further use” (p. 391). Based on Floyd’s (2012) and Robson’s (2011) statement of analyzing data, I identified codes in a column to the right of the transcription and group the initial codes into a smaller number of potential themes. After that, I modified and added to these themes during the course of analysis, for example, I organized these themes into major themes and sub-themes. Finally, I developed these themes by drawing connections with literature review and documentary analysis which I had undertaken and then demonstrated the quality of the analysis.

In addition to the above techniques associated with analysis of interview recording, this section also focuses on documentary analysis. As mentioned previously, “documentary analysis is an indispensable element in most case studies” (Bush, 2012, p. 93), so I obtained the principals’ job

description to analyze the requirements and responsibilities of this position and then compared and contrasted with teachers' understandings of principal roles. Since going back to China seemed impossible, I got access to the photocopies of the original to conduct the documentary analysis. Due to the ethical considerations, I contacted the head of the human resource department to gain permission.

According to Scott, J., (1990), four criteria can be used to assess the quality of documents: authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning. In documentary research, the final criterion might be the most important and contentious aspect and it involves the literal and interpretive (Wellington, 2015). As an insider who had been working for over seven years in the private tutoring school, I am familiar with the contexts of this organization. Therefore, it appears to be easy for me to read and understand the literal meaning of the document. Then as Fitzgerald (2012) suggests, I have to pay attention to the next level of interpretation which involved both content and textual analysis. Content analysis is performed by counting occurrences of words or phrases within the documents. It is used to describe the features of the document's content through "examining who says what, to whom and with what effect" (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 58). Textual analysis is assisted to find meanings from qualitative figures of the words, texts and images (Jaworski & Coupland, 1999). Both of these analysis require classification of data and reading for embedded meanings (Fitzgerald, 2012). Additionally, I also used some parts of Wellington's (2015) framework which involves different areas of questions for interpretation. Applying the range of questions which include authorship, audience, and production allowed me to relate my "background, position and theoretical stance to the position of the document and its authors" (p. 217).

When referring to assessing quality and authenticity of educational research, Bush (2012) argues that they can be judged by addressing validity, reliability, and triangulation. The concept of validity is used to judge whether "a method, a test or a research tool actually measures what it is intended to measure" (Wellington, 2015, p. 41). There are several different types of validity, the primary distinction is between internal and external validity (Bush, 2012). Internal validity is about whether the research design reflects the reality, whereas external validity relates to the

generalizability of research findings (Punch, 2005). Due to the unique contexts of this research, the potential for generalization seems to be limited. However, it is notable that although the aim of qualitative research is “to provide a precise description of what people said or did in a particular research location” rather than generalize to the whole population, the results presented accurately reflect people’s actions in the study (Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p. 34). Hence, in order to reduce invalidity in interviews, I returned the transcription to participants for confirmation or amendment.

Another significant term is reliability which refers to the extent to which “a test, a method or a tool gives consistent results across a range of settings” (Wellington, 2015, p. 43). For documentary analysis, it can be easier addressed by using content analysis associated with repeating words or terms (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011), while for semi-structured interviews, it seems problematic since each interviewee responds in their own way, express their thoughts and feelings, and educational organizations have distinctive context for practising school leadership (Bush, 2012). So semi-structured interviews which assume “greater diversity in both the design and use of the research instrument and in the nature of responses from participants” may “limit the scope for reliability while enhancing validity” (Bush, 2012, p. 91).

According to Bush (2012), in order to determine the accuracy of information or phenomena, triangulation can be used as a tool to compare different sources of evidence. In social science, those techniques attempt to provide more perspectives to explain the richness and complexity of human behavior (Cohen et al., 2011). Bush (2012) argues that it is “fundamentally a device for improving validity by checking data” (p. 98). This research employs not only semi-structured interviews from three team leaders and two teachers in a private tutoring language school, but also documentary analysis of the principals’ job description. The data findings from documentary analysis are compared with the findings from interviews in order to examine whether teachers perceive principal roles as the same as decision makers. The process of the comparison can be seen as a means of cross-checking data to enhance the validity of this research (Bush, 2012).

Ethical considerations

When connecting with others, I was aware of the ethical issues which should be considered in the entire process of this research. Busher and James (2012) state that researchers have responsibilities to protect their participants. So I followed ethical guidelines to “help keep participants safe from harm, build trust with participants and ensure trustworthy outcomes from the research” (p. 103). I had started to collect data only if the ethics permission was given by Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEK). To gain permissions for interviews and documents, head of human resources and teaching director were contacted at the beginning. Five participants were asked for their approval to engage in one-to-one interviews separately.

The primary ethical concern in this research project is the relationship between my previous colleagues and I. Because I was a department head in that school and I still keep in touch with some teachers and senior leaders. It seems that both my previous position and the relationships might pose a threat to trust between us and may affect their willingness to participate in this research. In order to avoid the effects of this potential power relationship, I contacted one of my former colleagues who is not a manager and she sent an email advertisement to all the teachers and middle leaders in that school. Someone who was interested in this research contacted me by email directly. I did not invite potential participants directly since it was critical that people who participate in research must be voluntary and they were not persuaded or cajoled to join (Seidman, 2013). The teacher who assists to send the email advertisement is a non-manager, this can avoid the potential power imbalances between them. By doing so, all the participants were “able to freely choose whether to participate in the research”, and they did not be coerced “in a manner that makes them feel uncomfortable” (Mutch, 2013, p. 78). They also had the right to withdraw without fear. As an “insider”, another possible challenge is that participants are more likely to feel that I am judging them (Mutch, 2013). Hence, I respected all the participants and did my research in an unbiased attitude. In addition, I believed that I had conversations with potential participants in a respectful way because Chinese cultural values which emphasize maintaining people’s harmonious relationships affect how people get along with each other. Moreover, I had

already resigned from my job for over two years and I am not a department head now. This changed identity is expected to minimize the disadvantages of conducting research in my previous workplace. However, potential participants are colleagues and they are well known to each other, so the offer of confidentiality might only be limited. Potential participants were advised of this in an information sheet.

After confirming participants, I emailed them an information sheet with adequate information so they had a full understanding about what their participation involved. This is supported by Wellington (2015) who states that “interviewees should be given the essential information about the research study itself” (p. 144). Additionally, I sent participants a consent form and invite them to consent through signature. However, Seidman (2013) indicates that there are ethical pitfalls in the process of securing informed consent as well. What he suggests is that researchers go over the informed consent form with participants so that participants can understand and take the document seriously. So I completed this process through Wechat to ensure my participants’ understanding of the consent form.

In terms of anonymity and confidentiality, Mutch (2013) argues that “researchers should ensure that individuals, groups, and sites cannot be identified”; and “participants should be assured that any data they provide will remain confidential to the researcher and be stored in a secure manner” (p. 78). This has been referred to by Busher and James (2012) as well. They suggest that research conversations and other information should be stored securely. Therefore, all their names in the dissertation were pseudonyms and the identity of the school was kept confidential. Besides, all the data and relevant information were kept safely secure. To safeguard how participants are represented in and through a research project and avoid breaching their privacy and confidentiality (Busher & James, 2012), I also sent transcriptions for them to check or modify their conversations.

Summary

This chapter provides a discussion on the research methodology. The rationale of this research

project is drawn upon to justify an interpretive paradigm and qualitative approach. Data collection methods are examined regarding the two specific methods: semi-structured interviews and documents collection. It then presents how the interview data is analyzed by thematic coding approach. In terms of the principals' job description, Wellington's (2015) framework of a list of questions, content and textual analysis are employed. It finally discusses validity, reliability, and ethical issues with relevant literature. The following chapter will present the findings gathered from the five interviewees and analysis of the principals' job description of the private language school.

Chapter Four: Findings

There are three sections in this chapter. The first section presents the findings from semi-structured interviews with three team leaders and two teachers. The second section shows the findings through analyzing the principals' job description. Finally, it summarizes the key findings from the previous two sections. Semi-structured interviews aim at examining participants' perceptions and expectations of leaders, leadership and the factors which influence teachers not to pursue leadership roles or to pursue leadership roles only to a team leader level and not to pursue principalship. As a complement to interviews, documentary analysis investigates how decision makers perceive principal roles. This is important because there is an assumption that if teachers have bias on this position, it may affect their willingness of holding principal positions.

Interview findings

This section summarizes the research findings from interviews with three team leaders (TL1, TL2, TL3) who have over five-year working experience in three branch schools (SA, SB, SC) and two teachers (T1, T2) with over three-year working experience from another two branches (SD, SE). The table below shows the basic information of each research participant.

Table 1: Participants' basic information

Code	Representation	Work seniority
TL1	Team leader from Branch School A	Five years
TL2	Team leader from Branch School B	Six years
TL3	Team leader from Branch School C	Five years and a half
T1	Teacher from Branch School D	Three years
T2	Teacher from Branch School E	Four years

The interview questions (see Appendix 1) are designed for participants to express their perceptions and expectations of leaders, leadership, and principalship. In addition, they also allow the researcher to understand participants' experiences of leadership, which help to identify and examine the factors influencing them not to pursue leadership roles.

Teachers' perceptions and expectations of leaders, leadership, and principalship

1. Increasing responsibilities, credibility (fuzhong), implementation capacity, and prestige

The participants used a number of words and phrases to describe their perceptions and understandings when they heard the two terms "leaders" and "leadership". Based on those descriptions, four themes had been referred to by the participants. First, three out of the five participants (TL1, TL2, & T1) considered that leadership roles meant more responsibilities that need fulfilling. In addition, the three team leaders associated leaders and leadership with credibility (fuzhong) and implementation capacity added:

I think as a leader, first of all, the person should be credible. The other key word in my mind is his or her implementation capacity, which means not only continuous but also long-term implementation after a plan is made (TL3).

Apart from responsibility, credibility and implementation capacity, the last theme emerged from the conversations is prestige:

When I hear the term leaders and leadership, the word comes to my mind again, that is prestige...I think I am willing to support and follow a good leader with prestige like Amy [the former principal in school A]. ... the reason why I have been working for so long in this school is that I admire and respect Amy (TL1).

These findings showed that participants connected leaders and leadership with 1.increasing responsibilities 2.credibility (fuzhong) 3.continuous implementation capacity and 4.prestige which represents gaining others' admiration and respect.

2.Experience accumulation and self improvement

According to the discussion, four out of the five participants stated that the motivation for them to pursue leadership roles might be the opportunity to accumulate experience and improve

themselves. They believed that they would face more challenges and experience more difficult situations when holding the position of principal. Solving challenging problems successfully could accumulate management experience and improve their leadership skills. This was particularly emphasized by the three team leaders who revealed that gaining more experience in a principal position could be a stepping stone to their future development and even other work opportunities:

It is impossible for me to work in this school for a lifetime and maybe I will leave and choose to work in other companies one day. Moving up to the principal position provides me opportunities to deal with more things and accumulate more experience. Then I will know how to handle [more difficult] situations (TL2).

In my view, [teaching in] private tutoring schools which cater for children is actually a profession for young people only. Maybe one day you are not suitable for teaching so you probably move into a leadership role (TL3).

These findings showed that the motivation for participants to pursue leadership roles was the opportunity to gain more experience and improve themselves. Team leaders had their own career plan and they considered experience accumulation and self-improvement as a stepping stone to their future development and other work opportunities.

3.A person who operates and manages the school

In relation to school principals' responsibility, the five participants identified a list of daily duties and responsibilities which they believed a principal has to achieve. Among those responsibilities, staff management and student recruitment were particularly emphasized. Additionally, all of the participants agreed that a principal is a manager who is responsible for the overall planning, operation, and management of a school:

He or she needs to manage the whole school, and take up responsibilities such as student recruitment, staff management, parent communication..., all in all, he or she has to manage all the people and all the things in the school (TL2).

[Responsibilities of a school principal include] for example, employee appraisals and recruitment, financial affairs, annual plan, school activities...maintaining good relationships between school and parents, staff management and so on (T1).

These findings showed that from participants' perspectives, a school principal has to shoulder various responsibilities, staff management and student recruitment appeared to be the most important responsibilities that a principal has to focus. In brief, a principal has to operate and manage the whole school.

Factors influencing teachers not to pursue leadership roles

1. Worries of their limited capability

According to the conversations with the participants, three of them stated that the reason why they stayed in their current position and not to make a career move was that they did not think they were capable enough to be a principal. For example, one of the team leaders believed that a good team leader did not necessarily mean a good principal. Principal roles required more experience, knowledge, and skills compared with being a team leader. She further stated that she would make a career move when she believed she had those capabilities:

I have seen some people who are good team leaders but actually they do not have adequate capabilities to hold a principal position. I do not think Maria [the former teaching director] fits for this position because she could be trusted by neither our principal nor teachers due to her lack of management capabilities. ...school leaders' inadequate capabilities may lead to many problems, for example, people will not trust them and the leaders themselves will be less confident as well. When people intend to make a career move, they need to have more knowledge, experience, and capabilities. So I think I will apply for principal position when I have sufficient capabilities to manage the whole school in various aspects such as teachers, parents, and students. I do not want to become a principal now because I believe I must make every effort to be well prepared. So I will not pursue principal roles unless I think I have those capabilities to handle difficult situations (TL1).

Meanwhile, the two teachers held the same idea that they were not capable enough to seek administrative positions. One of them (T1) suggested that a principal had to shoulder many responsibilities and principalship was a highly professional position. She did not think she was competent for it. The other teacher (T2) said that she was not that outstanding and she considered that people should be role models if they wanted to lead others. She would take on leadership roles within her capabilities. When asked whether they wanted to apply for team leader positions, both of the two teachers agreed that they would have a try if there was an

opportunity.

Moreover, three out of the five participants highlighted the significance of the new leader's capability which would influence teachers' attitude to support:

I think [new leaders] will not be accepted by people in the first place..., if you do not have a high ability, [getting support from your colleagues] will be really hard. Because someone will think that more capable people should be selected but not the one who is not qualified enough (T2).

These findings showed that in the participants' view, principal roles required capable candidates with professional knowledge and skills. Additionally, participants believed that new leaders' capability would largely affect their colleagues' attitude to support. Therefore, worries of their inadequate capability is one of the factors which influence them not to pursue principal roles and to pursue leadership roles only to a team leader level.

2. Inadequate support

When asked whether new leaders would get adequate support from their superiors or other senior leaders, contrastingly team leaders and teachers held totally different views. At first, based on their personal experiences, two out of the three team leaders stated that they did not think new leaders would get enough support from superiors and other senior leaders:

When I was a new team leader, I felt that there was not much support. For example, when something happened, no one told me how to deal with it and I had to feel my way gradually. Even though there was some training for middle leaders from last year...I do not think it is adequate (TL1).

I see how my former team leader worked in this position so after she promoted and I became the new team leader, I just followed the way she worked and I was satisfied with the results. After working as a team leader for about two years, there was an opportunity to move up to teaching director position..., but I felt that I was not fit for this position. There was no one guiding you and there was no relevant training either, so I felt that I was at a loss. I did not think that I could make any achievements after one or two years so I finally decided to give up (TL3).

Whereas another team leader (TL2) considered that one could get support from superiors:

Senior leaders will teach some knowledge about how to manage a school and how to give full play to your capacity. They will provide help if you are really in trouble or they will provide training and workshops every one or two months (TL2).

As the interview progressed, however, she changed her mind realizing that it was unlikely for a new leader to get that much support:

It is hard for Kevin [the new principal of School B] to be familiar with all the administrative affairs in such a limited time so I think he just learns by doing,... actually, it is unrealistic for senior leaders to [???] you since they are busy every day, and Kevin is a person who prefers to solve problems by himself rather than disturb others. So there is probably not that much support as I thought (TL2).

On the contrary, the two teachers stated that one could get sufficient support from their superiors, additionally, one of the teachers also emphasized the importance of studying independently to be more excellent. She believed that people should not only rely on others' support; they need to make efforts to improve themselves as well.

When referring to the support from their colleagues, all of the five participants agreed that it is hard for a new leader to get adequate support from their colleagues in a short period of time.

One participant expressed her worries about this:

It is not easy for a new leader to satisfy all the teachers and get their support, especially when you step into someone's shoes. It is common that teachers compare you with their former leader. As long as they are not satisfied with you, they will not support you..., and they will take a wait-and-see attitude toward you. ... I am afraid that if the result is not good, many people will not be satisfied with you [me] and this will affect me [whether applying for principal position] a lot (TL2).

These findings revealed that superiors' inadequate support will affect team leaders' decision making of being principals, whereas, it does not seem to be a problem from the teachers' perspective. The participants' different personal experiences and positions might lead to their different opinions. Novice teachers are more likely to be assisted and mentored directly by their

team leaders, however, team leaders and principals with little experience rarely get adequate support from their superiors. If new leaders cannot be supported in time, it appears to be an uphill climb for them to work as an effective principal. Hence, inadequate support might be an influencing factor affecting the decision team leaders make not to pursue principal roles. In addition, lack of support from colleagues might be an inhibitor for the participant who considers meeting others' satisfaction a significant personal value towards job satisfaction.

3. The increasing responsibility is not proportional to the gain

Apart from worries about their lack of capability and support, two out of the five participants (TL2 & T1) pointed out that a principal had to shoulder heavy responsibilities and work under great pressure, which are not in proportion to their salary. Both of them revealed that they would apply for principal positions if the salary met their expectations:

After seeing senior leaders' working mode, I think their workload is too heavy. You will see that they [the teaching director and the principal] are busy from dawn until dark and sometimes they have to work overtime, whereas the result is not always good so their superior is not satisfied with them. I just feel that they have to bear great pressure which is too exhausting (TL2).

She further referred to Kevin who currently moved up from teaching director to principal position as an example:

*I feel that he works under great pressure recently. He was only responsible for academic teaching management when he held teaching director position, but now he has to deal with administrative duties as well...He said that he always lost sleep and even cut his finger when he was cutting vegetables because of thinking about school affairs...I think he was **too** tired. If one day I had to suffer from stress like that, I think I could not bear that and it would drive me crazy. In addition, too much stress caused some teachers' mental or physical illness. ...compared with principal positions with so many responsibilities and stress, teachers only need to pay attention to their own classes, but they may get the same pay sometimes (TL2).*

These findings showed that teachers were less likely to pursue principal roles when they saw their principal work with increasing responsibilities and under great pressure. They did not think the efforts which principals have made were proportional to the gain.

4. Personal work values are in conflict with organizational values

According to discussions with participants regarding work values, two out of the five participants argued that they valued students, parents, and teaching, however, this might directly conflict with the organization's interest.

One of the participants (T2) mentioned that when making decisions, principals sided more towards the school's interests while teachers were more likely to side with students' and parents' standings. A team leader (TL1) also argued that principals had to 'represent the school's position' highlighting this phrase several times. She added, by standing by school decisions sometimes had a negative effect on students' and parents' engagement.

Another team leader pointed out that she valued teaching, whereas senior leaders who represent the school's interest considered student recruitment more significant:

Actually, I choose to be a teacher in this school due to the previous principal whose ideal is to create the best language school of this city. ..., and put my heart and soul into teaching. ..., I feel that the school previously attached great importance to teaching, including providing training and workshops for teachers. But it pays more attention to student recruitment nowadays. It is understandable that profits are vital for private tutoring schools. But focusing more on this may distract me from teaching. ...it makes me feel ostracized...and I feel it goes against my original intention (TL3).

These findings revealed that teachers who held conflicting values with organizations were less likely to pursue leadership roles.

5. Losing touch with teaching and children

One of the participants stated plainly that she could not put her heart into teaching because dealing with administration affairs occupied most of her time. She described her past experiences of being in the role of a teaching director and because of increasing administrative demands and less time actually teaching she gave up:

Personally I do not like administration and I am not good at that either. I do not want to move up because all I intend to do is to put my heart and soul into teaching. Becoming

leaders such as teaching directors and principals may devote more to administrative workload. I found that almost 80% to 90% of my energy was put into administration after I became a teaching director, sometimes I had no time to prepare my own class... It is not acceptable for me if there is no time to focus on teaching. ... and when people hold principal positions, they do not engage in teaching, yes, they do not teach children any more (TL3).

Another team leader referred to her superior as an example to support the view that senior leaders are swamped in administration rather than the act of teaching:

I do not think he [the former teaching director of school B] had much time to prepare his own class, maybe he had little time to concentrate on teaching. His time was spent in assisting other teachers to prepare classes or dealing with administrative management. So his own class was unlikely to be prepared adequately (TL2).

Although taking on leadership roles means leaving people's own class behind, the team leader further stated that she did not think investing limited time in teaching and students was a big problem for herself and her superior. Similarly, the other three participants agreed that this was not a key factor which influenced them not to make a career move.

These findings showed that worries about losing touch with teaching and students was of great significance to the one of the participants who prefers teaching over administrative management. For others, however, while they agreed that becoming leaders would diminish the time and energy to focus on actual teaching and their students, they did not consider it as an inhibitor that would influence them not to pursue leadership roles.

Documentary analysis

After gaining permission of human resources, I obtained photocopies of the principals' job description. In the following section, I first adopted parts of Wellington's (2015) framework which involves different areas of questions for the initial phase of interpretation and analysis. Then, based on content and textual analysis, some themes which are concerned with interpretations of principal roles from decision makers' perspectives were summarized.

Initial key findings:

1. Authorship

Due to the nature of this school, the parent company has an obligation to provide support for franchisees. According to the experience of hundreds of successful schools, the parent company edits several brochures called “Knowhow” to assist franchisees to manage their independent branches. As a part of “Knowhow”, the principals’ job description shows the responsibilities, and expectations required for this position. The authors cannot be found in any of these brochures. I made an assumption that it was compiled by the human resources division of the parent company.

2. Audience

In this school, the targeted audience are the franchisee - the investor, the superior of principals - the CEO, the human resources, the teaching director, as well as the new principals especially those who do not have much experience and skills relevant to this position. This “Knowhow” document allows the investor and the CEO to have a clear understanding about school principals’ responsibilities so that they can assign tasks and assess performance. Human resources can use relevant information from this job description for recruitment announcements. For new principals, this document plays an extremely important role in understanding the position and providing guidance for their daily work.

3. Production

The year in which it was produced is unknown. It might have been produced in the 2000s according to the history of the school’s development. As noted previously, private tutoring had expanded significantly in China during that time.

Decision makers’ perceptions of principal roles

1. Experience, knowledge, and capabilities

The parent company produced these brochures in order to assist franchisees to run schools effectively. Within the brochure, the principals’ job description directly represents the parent company’s perceptions of the principals’ duties. More importantly, it also reflects perceptions

from the investor and the CEO who can make hiring decisions on prospective school principals.

According to the principals' job description, there are three key words in relation to the requirements of this position: experience, knowledge, and capabilities. To begin with, people who intend to apply for principal positions are required to have at least three years managerial experience. Second, marketing knowledge is needed. Last but not least, potential candidates need to have organizational, communication, and coordination capability.

The above requirements imply that experienced team leaders in the school are potential candidates for principal positions. After working as middle leaders for over three years, they are familiar with the environment of the school and they can accumulate front-line management experience regarding how to lead small groups. This relevant experience can be seen as good practice and preparation towards a future management role within the education sector. In addition to managerial experience, potential candidates are required to have marketing knowledge. This indicates that student recruitment is one of the most important responsibilities to which a principal needs to be highly proficient and administer successfully. As already noted, private tutoring schools do not receive any financial support from government so profits which largely depend on student recruitment are critical. Moreover, principals need to have organizational, communication, and coordination capabilities as their work is so complex, and the role may involve future planning, resource allocation, employee motivation, department coordination and so on. Principals without these capabilities are looked upon as less likely to run the school effectively, hence, those experienced people who meet the standards with marketing knowledge and adequate capabilities are expected to enter principal positions.

2.A large number of responsibilities

Principals' job description primarily lists principals' responsibilities and daily duties. The table below shows particular words and phrases of which are repeated within the principals' job description that I have obtained.

Table 2: Documentary analysis

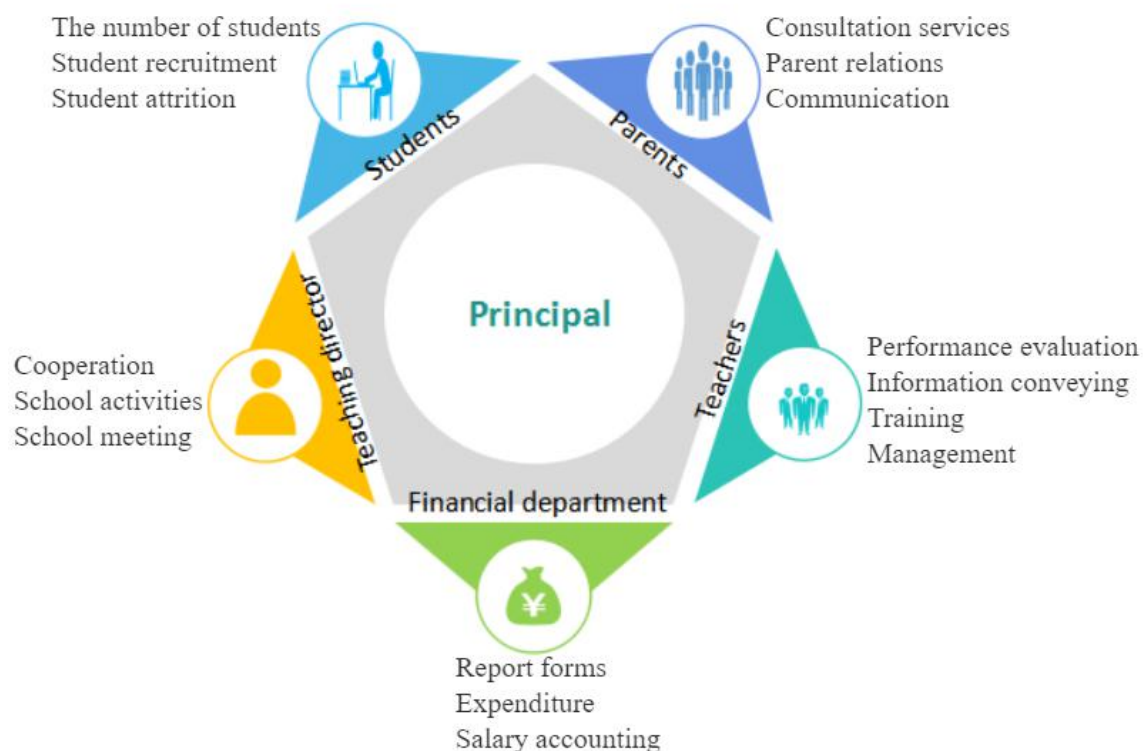
Content analysis		
Number	Words/Phrases	Frequency
1	Form	8
2	Manage/Management	7
3	Understand	6
4	(Student) Attrition	6
5	Number (of students)	6
6	Teaching director	5
7	Setting oneself an example to others	4
8	Financial affairs	3
9	Service	3
10	Evaluate (staff performance)	3
11	Capability	3
12	Cooperate	3

According to the table above, it is obvious that principal roles are associated with a variety of responsibilities such as filling in report forms, decreasing student attrition, counting the number of students, evaluating staff performance and cooperating with others such as the teaching director and financial department. Based on these repeated phrases and contents of the document, I then used the following figure to represent some primary responsibilities that a principal has to take. As can be seen from the figure, a principal is a key person who needs to take responsibilities for almost everything within a school. He or she needs to manage the day-to-day activities of the school in order to complete various tasks effectively.

One of the most significant responsibilities that a principal has to take is to increase student recruitment and decrease student attrition which aims to make a profit. Additionally, a principal needs to lead all the staff to provide professional consulting and teaching services for parents and students. Communicating and interacting well with parents is an important skill and particularly critical when students have learning difficulties academically and their parents have concerns. Furthermore, a principal must cooperate closely with the teaching director so that they are able to work together effectively. In terms of teachers management, principals and teaching directors share responsibilities for in-service training, performance evaluation and so forth. Finally, a principal needs to cooperate with financial department. As a whole, principal roles cover many different areas with a great number of responsibilities and are expected to operate

and manage the school successfully with their professional knowledge and skills.

Figure 2: Principals' responsibilities



Among the most frequently used words and phrases in this document (see table 2), it is notable that both the phrases “student attrition” and “the number of students” are repeated up to six times. The repetition shows that there is a strong emphasis on principals’ responsibilities to decrease student attrition and focus on increasing the number and sustainability of students. According to the document, for example, part of the principals’ daily duties include counting the number of the students who pay fees on any particular day; also they need to count the number of registered students, new transfer students and student attrition rates monthly. By doing so, they can understand general conditions of student numbers. More importantly, based on gathering these statistics, they are able to make student recruitment contingency plans. The repetition of these two phrases provides evidence to support the former idea that private tutoring schools need to seek profits by increasing student numbers in order to survive in a competitive environment.

3. Setting oneself an example to others

It is worth mentioning that at the end of the document, the last two sentences are in boldface. These two sentences indicate two themes: setting oneself an example to others and

human-oriented management. The first theme which emphasizes on setting good examples emerges in this document four times (see table 2). Apart from focusing its high frequency on the surface reading of the text, the contents of the document can provide evidence to support the emphasis of this value as well. Because there is no doubt that a principal per se is a good example if he or she is able to meet the requirements of this position and shoulder all of the above responsibilities to lead a school successfully. As to the second theme, although human-oriented management is highlighted in boldface type, there seems to be no evidence in how to apply this value in practice. This reveals that decision makers may not consider a people-oriented management style that significant. Consequently, people who hold principal positions are more likely to ignore this as well.

Summary

The data findings identified participants' perceptions of leaders and leadership which are associated with increasing responsibilities, credibility (fuzhong), implementation capacity, and prestige. The attractions of leadership roles are the opportunities to gain more experience and improve oneself. It is considered as a stepping stone for personal development and other work opportunities for those team leaders who have their own career plan. In terms of principals' responsibilities, participants believed that a school principal has to operate and manage the whole school effectively. There are various responsibilities for a principal to take; staff management and student recruitment appear to be critically important.

In relation to the aspects which affect teachers not to pursue leadership roles, participants' perspectives varied due to their personal experiences and positions. First of all, concerns about lack of capability is one of the inhibitors which influence team leaders not to pursue principal roles and teachers to chase leadership roles only to a team leader level. Next, inadequate support from superiors and other senior leaders might be a factor which influence team leaders not to apply for principal posts; insufficient support from colleagues will affect the participant who considers meeting others' job satisfaction significant. Teachers are also less likely to pursue principal roles when they see their own principal work with increasing responsibilities and under

greater pressure, as they do not think they are proportional to the gain. Fourth, principal roles are less attractive for those participants who hold conflicting values with organizations. Finally, worries about losing touch with teaching and students is of great significance to one of the participants who prefers teaching to administrative management.

Documentary analysis shows that in order to make sure the school runs effectively, those experienced people who have marketing knowledge and adequate capabilities (organizational, capability, coordination capability) are expected to apply for principal positions. From a decision maker's perspective, principal roles involve a variety of responsibilities and among those responsibilities, student recruitment needs to be paid more attention. The findings finally reveal that principals should set themselves good examples to others.

The next chapter will compare the data findings in order to see whether teachers and decision makers have different perceptions of principal roles. Meanwhile, it will discuss some key findings with reference to chapter two, taking into account literature reviews and other research in the field of teacher leadership and principal recruitment. It will also make recommendations for further practice and study on this issue in the field of private tutoring.

The table below summarizes the key findings of this study:

Table 3: Summary of the key findings

Themes	Interview findings	Documentary analysis	Themes
Teachers' perceptions of leaders and leadership	Increasing responsibilities, credibility (fuzhong), implementation capacity, and prestige	Experienced people who have marketing knowledge and adequate capabilities	Requirements of principal positions from decision makers' perspective
Attraction of leadership roles	The opportunity to gain more experience and improve oneself Teacher leaders: stepping stone		
How teachers perceive responsibilities of principal positions	Operating and managing the whole school; various responsibilities; staff management and student recruitment are important	A variety of responsibilities; student recruitment is important; setting oneself example to others	How decision makers perceive responsibilities of principal positions
Factors influencing teachers not to pursue leadership roles			
Team leaders' perspective		Teachers' perspective	
Worries about lack of capability			
Inadequate support from superiors and senior leaders or colleagues			
The increasing responsibility is not proportional to the gain			
Personal work values are in conflict with organizational values			
Losing touch with teaching and students			

Chapter five: Discussion, conclusion and recommendations

This chapter firstly compares and contrasts the findings from semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis in the last chapter. It then links those key findings to the literature reviewed in chapter two and other research in the field of teacher leadership and principal recruitment and retention. Following this, it provides the conclusions and recommendations for future practice, research limitations and recommendations for further research.

This research project adopted a qualitative approach that generated descriptive data through semi-structured interviews from perspectives of both teachers and team leaders in a private tutoring school in a city of northeast China. In addition, the principals' job description is obtained to examine how decision makers perceive principal roles. It should be noted that there are strongly identifiable links between participants' perspectives and decision makers' expectations of principal roles.

Discussion

Teachers' perceptions and expectations to move into leadership roles

The interview findings showed that participants connected leaders and leadership with more responsibilities, credibility (fuzhong), implementation capacity, and prestige. This can be partially supported by documentary analysis which represents how decision makers perceive principal roles. Textual analysis showed that principals had to take many responsibilities to operate and manage a school. In addition, decision makers expected that principals were those experienced candidates who had marketing knowledge and various capabilities such as organizational capability, communication capability, and coordination capability. Although implementation capacity was not directly referred to in the principals' job description, it can be seen as a sort of capabilities for principals to achieve desired outcomes.

In terms of principals' responsibilities, all of the participants identified a list of daily duties and responsibilities that their principals had to take, among them, staff management and student recruitment were emphasized. In addition, they agreed that a principal is the person who needs to operate and manage the whole school. These data findings were largely consistent with documentary analysis which showed that a principal was a key person responsible for almost everything in a school; he or she is expected to run a school effectively. Furthermore, content analysis also indicated that increasing student recruitment was one of the most important responsibilities for principals to undertake as it directly affects the private tutoring school profitability.

The data collected from interviews also showed that the most appealing attraction of leadership roles was the opportunity to gain more experience and improve oneself. Participants considered that their management skills and abilities could be developed if they moved into leadership positions. For example, one of the participants stated that stepping up to the principal position could allow her to deal with more things and accumulate more experience, then she would know how to handle more difficult situations (TL2). These findings are supported by York-Barr and Duke (2004) who suggest that the strongest effects of teacher leadership "is growth and learning among the teacher leaders themselves" (p. 259). In addition, findings of Newton et al.'s (2013) semi-structured interviews which focus on the influence of teacher leadership in career advancement report that it is beneficial for those respondents who have opportunities to become leaders because they can develop their leadership skills and abilities because of the leadership experience.

Factors which influence teachers not to pursue leadership roles

1. Participants' concerns about their lack of capability

Interview findings showed that participants' concerns about their inadequate capability is one of the factors which influence them not to pursue principal roles and to pursue leadership roles only to a team leader level. One of the participants stated that people needed more knowledge, experience, and capabilities if they intended to make a career move. But she considered that she was not capable enough to enter principal positions. So she would apply for the position when

she believed that she had sufficient management capabilities to manage the whole school (TL1). These findings can be partially supported by one of the intrinsic factors in the literature review chapter. According to relevant studies in that chapter, teachers' limited confidence could be a barrier to teacher leadership. Their poor confidence and self-doubt may arise from various aspects, worries about the lack of professional capabilities is one of them. So compared with one of the intrinsic factors in relation to teachers' limited confidence, interview findings of this research identify a more specific factor which explains why teachers are unwilling to become principals.

Based on documentary analysis reflecting decision makers' expectations of principal roles, participants' concerns about their inadequate capability seem to be reasonable. As mentioned in the last chapter, in order to ensure that schools can run effectively, potential candidates are required to have marketing knowledge and adequate capabilities (organizational capability, communication capability, and coordination capability). This is generally consistent with some selection criteria set out by Hong Kong school hiring bodies: communication and presentation skills, knowledge and experience, and generic managerial skills (Kwan, 2012). Hence, it concludes that potential candidates are required to master professional knowledge and capabilities in order to lead a school successfully. Significantly, people who worry about their lack of capabilities are less likely to pursue principal roles.

2.Lack of support

Interview findings revealed that inadequate support from superiors would affect the team leaders' willingness of becoming principals. For example, two team leaders noted that no one guided them when they moved into team leader positions, they just felt their way through or continued the way the former team leader worked (TL1 & TL3). In addition, all of the three team leaders stated that little training was provided for middle leaders and seniors leaders. These interview findings are largely consistent with one of the extrinsic factors in the literature review chapter. According to literature reviewed in chapter two, lack of support from superiors might be a critical factor in declining teachers' interest of becoming leaders. The slight difference between data findings of this research and literature reviewed is that the former associated support with

training and guidance; whereas the later refers to more forms (such as aligning structures and resources, maintaining open channels of communication) of superiors' support which can be supplied to new leaders. This difference may be due to people's variable understanding of the term "support". Participants in this private language school are more likely to connect it with job-related training and workshops when hearing this term.

Apart from insufficient support from superiors, worries about the lack of support from colleagues support may be an inhibitor as well. According to interview findings, all of the five participants agreed that it was hard for a new leader to get adequate support from their colleagues in a short period of time, one team leader stated that it would affect her willingness to become a principal. She was concerned about not being able to deliver to her colleagues' expectations towards job satisfaction (TL2). These interview findings can be evidenced by one of the extrinsic factors in relation to insufficient support from teachers' peers in chapter two as well. It is notable that many relevant studies in literature reviewed emphasizes potential candidates' concerns about changing relationships with colleagues, especially in a Chinese social and cultural context which consider harmonious relationships with others significant (Walker & Kwan, 2009), however, this is not evident in interview findings in the context of this research. This might be because of the nature of this particular private school. The average age of the teachers and middle leaders in this school is about 26, so traditional Chinese cultural values with an emphasis on harmony is less likely to affect their decision making.

3. The increasing responsibility is not proportional to the gain

Interview findings suggested that principal roles became less desirable because some teachers do not think the principals' heavy administrative workload is proportional to the gain. For example, one of the participants referred to her new principal as an example, she stated that her new principal sometimes got the same pay as teachers who gave more classes (TL2). Teachers can see how their principal works every day, assuming that principals have to shoulder heavy responsibilities and work under stressful conditions without adequate reward or remuneration to the amount of extreme productivity expected.

In addition, based on teachers' perceptions of principal roles and documentary analysis, it also shows that principalship is associated with many responsibilities. As mentioned above, when asked how to perceive leaders and leadership, participants connected "more responsibilities" with the two terms. They also stated that student recruitment is the most important among the principals' various responsibilities. This became evident in the documentary analysis showing that principal roles were associated with a large number of responsibilities, and increasing the number of students has to be given a high priority.

The findings can be partially supported by the other one of the extrinsic factors in the literature review chapter. Relevant studies in chapter two suggest that increasing responsibility is one of the inhibitors making teachers reluctant in pursuing leadership roles. However, a slight difference is that participants in this research highlighted the significance of providing increased salaries which is proportional to the principals' workload, whereas this is not evident in literature reviewed.

After weighing factors such as principals' increasing responsibilities, heavy workload, and disproportionate salary, it is not surprising that teachers are not willing to seek principal roles. This is supported by Dorman and D'Arbon (2003) who suggest that deputy principals in their research are satisfied with their current positions and see little benefit in shouldering extra principal responsibilities.

4. Personal work values are in conflict with organizational values

The interview findings also revealed that participants whose personal work values are in direct conflict with organizational values, are less likely to pursue principal roles. A team leader pointed out that she valued teaching, whereas senior leaders who represent the school's interests considered marketing and student recruitment rather more significant (TL3). The emphasis on student recruitment is aligned with both teachers' perceptions of school principals' responsibilities and documentary analysis which shows that student recruitment is one of the most important responsibilities of the principals roles. As mentioned in the last chapter, private tutoring schools have no financial support from government so they have to seek profits through

increased student recruitment. Therefore, the individual who values teaching is less likely to apply for a principals position.

There is no evidence that can provide support in literature review chapter. Initially, I intended to use Stone-Johnson's (2014) Generational theory to explore the disincentives associated with leadership through the generational lens. Because different generations may prioritize different criteria and have different work values. But during the interview process, I found that it was hard to translate terms such as "criteria" and "work values" into Chinese, and it seemed difficult to answer the interview questions as well. I also realized that the sample size of this research was too small to adopt Generational theory.

5.Losing touch with teaching and children

The research findings showed that worries about losing contact with teaching and students was of great significance to one of the participants who preferred teaching to administrative management. For others, while they agreed that becoming leaders meant people need to pay more attention to administrative affairs, they did not consider it as an inhibitor of pursuing leadership roles. This research finding is aligned with the other one of the intrinsic factors in chapter two which suggests that lost relationships with students could be an obstacle of becoming a principal.

Conclusion

This qualitative research was conducted in a private tutoring language school in order to identify and critically examine the factors which influence teachers not to pursue leadership roles.

This study showed that participants' perceptions of leaders and leadership were associated with increasing responsibilities, credibility (fuzhong), implementation capacity, and prestige. The attraction of leadership roles were the opportunities to gain more experience and improve themselves. In terms of principals' responsibilities, participants believed that a school principal had to operate and manage the whole school effectively. There were a great number of

responsibilities for a principal to take onboard; staff management and student recruitment appeared to be critically important.

This research showed that many inhibitors may influence teachers not to pursue leadership roles, as follows:

1. Participants' worries about their lack of capabilities.
2. Insufficient support from superiors and colleagues.
3. Principals' increasing responsibility is not proportional to the gain.
4. Participants whose work values are in conflict with organizational values.
5. Worries about losing contact with teaching and students.

According to the conversations with those participants and the above data findings, deciding to apply for a leadership role is a life changing experience and should be analyzed thoroughly before making any final decisions. As Bretz, Boudreau, and Judge (1994) report that job choice is a strategic decision and people usually evaluate the extent to which their expectations can be satisfied. Although participants considered that being a principal is an opportunity to gain more experience and improve themselves, these benefits were not always appealing to potential candidates. Sometimes teachers are less likely to see them as appropriate trade-offs when comparing with those various inhibitors.

Recommendations

Based on the comparisons made on interview findings and documentary analysis, various factors may be disincentives for teachers applying for principal posts. In order to make principal positions more attractive, this research concludes with the following recommendations centered on four themes:

1.Improving potential candidates' capabilities

The literature and research findings suggest that the role of principal requires individuals with professional capabilities in various disciplines. The responsibilities and requirements in the role

of principal were greatly different from those of team leaders. This is the reason why a participant stated that a good team leader might not be a good principal (TL1). Besides, people with adequate capabilities were more likely to gain colleagues' advocacy. Therefore it is critically significant for the private tutoring school to enhance potential candidates' capabilities with solid, all-round training to aid their development of leadership knowledge and skills (Kwan, 2013). School leaders should also be encouraged to participate in leadership development programs which may organized by other educational institutions. Apart from training from schools, teachers who intend to hold principal positions need to study independently to improve their capabilities and enrich their professional knowledge at the same time. With the development of technology, there are various learning resources and opportunities for people to utilize and then become more capable and well-prepared for administrative positions.

2. Providing support for new leaders

According to the findings, job-related support (such as guidance, training, and workshops) for new leaders was so limited that they may be at a loss for what to do. One of the team leaders revealed that this might be the reason why she went back to a team leader position after becoming a teaching director (TL3). This reflects the importance of providing more support for those first-time leaders. For example, schools can organize job-related training and workshops which allow excellent principals to share their valuable experience. Whitaker (2003) argues that mentoring programs and networking are important for new principals. She further mentions high quality induction programs which enable schools to provide training for mentors. Besides, the private school can also make connections and build networks with other educational organizations, and then leaders are able to learn and get support from each other.

3. Reexamining principal roles and providing increased salaries

The research findings and literature showed that principal positions have become overwhelming. This makes principal roles particularly difficult for new principals to manage. So it is necessary for decision makers to consider how to find ways to alter the role of principal. For example, schools can provide teachers with both formal and informal teacher leadership opportunities to encourage them to assume some responsibilities of principal roles. This may help to reduce

some pressure of principal positions and increase teachers' leadership capacity as well. Another reason for reexamining principal roles is because of the nature of the principals' job description. As mentioned in the last chapter, the principals' job description might be produced in the 2000s while it has not been modified or improved within the last decade. Hence it is necessary to redesign the job description to ensure its timeliness and make principal roles better suit aspiring teachers' desires. The findings also showed that principals' salaries did not keep pace with their heavy workload. So it is recommended to better ensure that people entering principal positions are compensated sufficiently for more responsibilities.

4.Design more possible pathways

The findings of this study indicated that worries about losing contact with teaching and students was an influential factor to one of the team leaders to not pursue principal roles. In addition, participants who held conflicting values with organizations also revealed that they considered students, parents, and teaching to be more important than student recruitment. It is recommended that schools need to design more possible pathways for those teachers who value teaching and have close relationships with students. If more appropriate pathways were designed according to teachers' work values and personal interests, then there may be increased motivation, engagement and possibilities to nurture talent to its full potential.

Limitation of research

There is a limited availability of literature relating to teacher leadership and recruitment and retention of principals in Chinese social and cultural background, especially in the private tutoring schools where this research focuses on. So the majority of the literature which is reviewed and used is from other countries and sectors.

Another limitation is the small scale and non-representativeness of this research. Considering the vastness and diversity of China, it is clear that it will be difficult to generalize the context of private tutoring schools without large sample sizes. So the findings should be treated with caution.

Finally, when examining the inhibitors which stop teachers from pursuing leadership roles, the last factor was brief. This does not mean that this factor is less significant. Due to the limited time, only five participants are included in this small-scale research. Hence, there was less evidence for it.

Recommendations for further research

Due to the limited size and diversity of the research sample and the lack of research on exploring the non-western perspectives of leadership supply issues, further research is recommended to gather a wider range of data from more private tutoring organizations in China. The research findings also suggest that more research (both quantitative and qualitative) is required for further identification of the factors which influence teachers not to pursue leadership roles. This would support and challenge the findings of this research. In addition, if decision makers consider teachers' perceptions important, they could employ the research findings to make principal roles more desirable and attract more potential candidates to pursue principal roles.

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Appendix 1: Semi-structured interview questions

Title: Factors that influence teachers not to pursue leadership roles within a private language school

Question1 What comes to mind when you hear the term leader or leadership?

Question2 What are the responsibilities of principal in your school?

Question3 If there is an opportunity of becoming a team leader or principal, what are the factors which prompt you to apply for this position?

Question4 What makes you stay in your current position but not to make a career move?

Question5 Do you think new leaders will get enough support when they take up leadership positions?

Question6 Have you ever heard someone who expressed worries about losing contact with students if becoming leaders?

Question7 Describe any experiences regarding teacher leadership

Question8 Is there anything else you can tell me about this matter?

Question9 Do you think there are differences in work values between you and your principal or some other senior leaders?

Appendix 2: Consent form

Project title: Factors that influence teachers not to pursue leadership roles within a private language school

Project Supervisor: Ruth Boyask

Researcher: Min Yu

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 7 August 2017.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes No

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 19 July 2017, AUTEK Reference number 17/230.

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix 3: Consent form - participants' first language

同意书

项目标题：一所私立语言学校中影响教师不申请领导职位的因素

项目指导教师：Ruth Boyask

研究人员：于敏

- 我已于 2017 年 8 月 7 日阅读并了解信息表上所提供的关于该研究项目的信息。
- 我已被提供询问问题并给予解答的机会。
- 我已了解在采访过程中研究人员会做笔记、录音，录音会被誊写。
- 我了解参与研究是出于自愿的（我自己的选择）并且我可以在任何时间退出而不会对我有任何形式的不利。
- 我了解如果我退出那么我可以选择把关于我的数据移除或者让它们继续被使用。而一旦研究结果产生，数据将不能够被移除。
- 我同意参与该研究。
- 我想要收到关于研究结果的概要（请选择）： 是 否

参与者签名：

参与者姓名：

参与者联系信息 (如果有的话):

.....
.....
.....
.....

日期:

由奥克兰科技大学伦理委员会审核于 2017 年 7 月 19 日，AUTEK 编码 17/230。

注意：参与者要保留该同意书的复印件。

Appendix 4: Information sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

7 August 2017

Project Title

Factors that influence teachers not to pursue leadership roles within a private language school

An Invitation

Hi, My name is Min Yu and I am a student at Auckland University of Technology completing a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership. This research project is part of my degree programme so I would like to invite you to be a participant in my research project about leadership.

What is the purpose of this research?

The aim of this research is to investigate a leadership supply issue in a Chinese private tutoring school. I will be researching teachers' perceptions and expectations of taking up leadership positions and identifying possible factors which influence teachers not to pursue leadership roles.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

This research project intends to identify the factors which influence teachers not to pursue leadership positions. In order to ensure that all your participation is voluntary, the email advertisement which you have received was sent by a teacher who is a non-manager. You are identified because you are the teachers who have been working in this school for over three years or team leaders with over five-year working experience.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible. If you would like to be interviewed for this research please contact me at xkm6252@autuni.ac.nz

What will happen in this research?

I will collect data via an online interview which will be lasting for about 30 to 40 minutes. The interview will be recorded and transcribed and all features that could identify you will

be changed. You will have opportunities to read and check the transcription for authenticity. All the data collected from you will be stored securely, and only my supervisor and I will have access to them. If you wish, you can also contact me to see a summary of research findings. I hope that you will agree to participate in this research, and if you agree, you will be asked to sign a consent form regarding the interview.

What are the benefits?

This research provides an opportunity for you to tell your stories. If senior leaders consider your views important, they may make a change and this might be beneficial for your career development. This research will be beneficial for me to obtain a qualification as well.

How will my privacy be protected?

I will try my best to maintain your confidentiality, for example, all your names in my dissertation will be pseudonyms. Besides, all the data (e.g., interview transcripts) and information will be kept safely secure. But the offer of confidentiality might only be limited because of my previous position and the relationship among all the participants.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Ruth Boyask, ruth.boyask@aut.ac.nz, +64 9 921 9999 ext 7569. Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz, +64 9 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

You can contact me at xkm6252@autuni.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Ruth Boyask, ruth.boyask@aut.ac.nz, +64 9 921 9999 ext 7569.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 19 July 2017, AUTEK Reference number 17/230.

Appendix 5: Information sheet - participants' first language

参与信息表

该表生成日期:

2017年8月7日

标题

一所私立语言学校中影响教师不申请领导职位的因素

邀请

你好,

我叫于敏,是奥克兰科技大学的学生,正在完成教育领导力的硕士学位。此研究是我学位课程的一部分,所以我想邀请你作为我关于领导力研究项目的参与者。

该研究的目的是什么?

该研究的目的是要调查一所中国私立培训学校的领导供给问题。我将会研究老师对于担任领导职位的理解和期待并且分析出有可能影响老师追求领导职位的因素。

我是如何被确定参与该研究的以及为什么我被邀请参与该研究?

这个研究项目意在探求影响老师不申请领导职位的原因。为了确保你的参与是自愿的,你收到的电子邮件广告是由一位非领导岗位的老师发送的。你被确定参与该研究是因为我的研究对象是三年工作经验的老师以及五年工作经验的课长。

我如何同意参与这个研究?

你的参与是自愿的(出于你的选择)并且你参加与否对你都没有任何影响。你可以在任何时间选择退出该项目。如果你想要退出,那么你可以要求把关于你的数据去除或者允许它们继续被使用。而一旦研究结果生成,那么你的数据将不能被移除。如果你愿意参与该研究,请与我联系 xkm6252@autuni.ac.nz

在这个研究中会发生什么?

我会通过一个30至40分钟的线上采访收集数据。采访会被录音,誊写,你的可以被识别身份的特征都将会被替换掉。你也有机会阅读检查誊写稿的真实度。所有收集的数据都将会被安全保存,只有我的导师和我有机会接触到这些数据。如果你愿意的话,你也可以与我联系得到该研究的结果概要。我希望你可以参与到这个研究项目中,如果你同意,你将会被要求签署一份关于接受采访的同意书。

有什么益处?

这个研究提供了一个分享你经历的机会。如果高层领导重视你的意见，他们也许会对现状做出改变，那么这可能会给你的职业发展带来益处。这个研究也会有利于我取得学位。

我的隐私如何保证？

我会尽可能保护你的隐私，例如，你的名字在论文中会以匿名形式出现。此外，所有的数据（例如采访的誊写稿）和信息会被安全保存。但是由于我之前的职位还有参与者之间的关系，隐私保护可能只是有限的。

如果我对该研究有任何担心怎么办？

任何担心都应该首先与该项目的指导教师联系, Ruth Boyask, ruth.boyask@aut.ac.nz, +64 9 921 9999 ext 7569.

关于该研究的实施请与 AUTET 的行政秘书联系, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz , +64 9 921 9999 ext 6038.

关于该研究的更多信息与谁联系？

请保存该表单及同意书的复印件。你也可以与以下研究团队联系：

调查者联系信息：

你可以通过电子邮件联系我 xkm6252@autuni.ac.nz

项目指导教师联系信息：

Ruth Boyask, ruth.boyask@aut.ac.nz, +64 9 921 9999 ext 7569.

由奥克兰科技大学伦理委员会审核于 2017 年 7 月 19 日，AUTEK 编码 17/230。

Appendix 6: Email advertisement

*You are important!
Your voice should be heard!*

AUT
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TAMAKI MAKAU RAU

<u>About Me</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Method & Location</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Inclusion Criteria</u>
Hi, I'm Min Yu and I'm a student at AUT. I would like to invite you to be a participant in my research project about leadership.	Factors that influence teachers not to pursue leadership roles within a private language school	Online interview at your preferred location	30-40 minutes	Teachers with at least three years experience

*contact me at xkm6252@autuni.ac.nz in **two** weeks after you receive this invitation*

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 19th July 2017, AUTEK Reference number 17/230