

Flexible leading spaces: An exploration of leader experiences of shared office spaces

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Abstract

Despite widespread research into the topic of Flexible Learning Environments (FLE) in schools as well as government policies supporting a shift to FLE schools, the way that schools choose to provide workspaces for educational leadership has not had the same level of attention. Deans working as part of a middle leadership team may experience a range of workspace configurations, ranging from open-plan shared workspaces which might reflect the principles of FLE schools, to more traditional single-cell office spaces. Schools in the process of designing or redesigning their workspaces for educational leadership teams would benefit from a greater understanding of how shared workspaces are experienced by those working in them.

The overarching aim of this study was to critically examine the lived experiences of Deans working in shared office spaces in a New Zealand secondary school context. Considering the shift towards FLEs in the New Zealand education context, this study aimed to discover the extent to which schools are adopting shared workspaces for educational leadership teams. Following on from this, the study aimed to investigate the ways in which the configuration of a workspace influences educational leadership teams' experiences of their roles, and to investigate the ways in which leadership spaces affect leadership practice. This study employed a qualitative approach that was positioned within an ontological and epistemological stance that knowledge derived from human experiences is both valid and important in developing understanding in research. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven middle leaders working in shared Deans' workspaces across three different schools across Auckland. Findings were collated into tables by interview question and analysed using a thematic analysis approach. These results were then presented by theme to answer the three research questions which guided this study.

- In what ways are schools adopting shared workspaces for educational leadership teams?
- How does the configuration of workspaces for educational leadership teams influence their experiences of their roles?
- In what ways do leadership spaces affect leadership practice?

The data revealed that flexible leadership spaces foster leadership learning, collaborative and visible leadership approaches and can exist within fixed

architectural design. The physical configuration of space was found to influence the leadership practices and experiences of Deans and could be considered a tool for supporting collegial and collaborative practice. The space does not dictate a method of leadership practice in and of itself. The benefits of increased connection, collegiality and collaborative practice as enabled through the shared space was found to be useful in mitigating disconnection and isolation experienced by middle leaders disconnected from their departments and had benefits for the wellbeing of the Deans working in the shared space over and above any stressors which were associated with the space. These stressors were all linked to tensions between transparency, privacy and confidentiality. Successfully implemented shared workspaces for educational leadership teams can therefore provide a supportive environment which fosters leadership growth as well as enhancing wellbeing for educational leaders.

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Attestation of authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best part of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), not 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.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

Helen and Serena are discussing the upcoming school year. Helen has recently been promoted to a Deputy Principal at the central Auckland secondary school they both work for. "How do you feel about moving into the Fishbowl?" Serena asks. 'The Fishbowl' is the unofficial name for the office shared by the school's Senior Leadership Team, a space with windows on three of the four walls, and situated within the student reception and admin block of the school. Helen has mixed feelings about moving into her new shared office. On the one hand, it will be great for collaboration and teamwork, but on the other hand there is a certain level of discomfort with the close quarters, and of course being very visible. After all, someone described it as a fishbowl, and the name stuck.

The work of educational leaders such as Deans in the context of pastoral care is a multifaceted role which is generally considered to require a designated office space to work in. The ways in which schools provide workspaces for educational leaders range from traditional single cell offices to more open and flexible shared spaces. Wherever it fits in this continuum, this space requires some flexibility to function in ways which are practical for the varied aspects of educational leaders' roles. As many educational leaders, particularly those in middle leadership, still spend a large amount of their schedule teaching, this also includes the planning, preparation and marking associated with their classroom teaching. A flexible office space or 'flexible leading space' can be described as one which is not 'single cell', allows for collaborative work between leadership teams, and supports a range of functions. It may also be characterised by high levels of transparency and use of portable technology such as laptops. The 'flexible leading space' can be seen to reflect both the changes in New Zealand classrooms towards 'flexible learning environments' and the shifts in the corporate world towards open plan office spaces. While these not dissimilar contexts have been thoroughly researched, and continue to be the focus of scholarly investigations, the same cannot be said of Deans' workspaces. In order to understand how these spaces can be best designed and utilised it is important to have a grasp of the lived experiences of Deans working in shared office facilities. This research focused on uncovering the nature of these lived experiences for Deans who have been working in an office shared with one or more Dean in the context of Auckland secondary schools.

Research rationale

This research is significant in bridging a gap between what is known about sharing workspaces and what is known about learning environments. For educators in schools, the classroom is their primary workspace, and so in this sense the modern and flexible learning environments (FLE) reflect a change in the work environment of educators. The business of teaching and learning is a multifaceted one. Those with leadership roles have significant responsibilities outside of the classroom which are most often undertaken from an office workspace. There is variance between schools on the physical configuration of these workspaces, with some educational leaders working collegially in one shared space, while others work in an office which is exclusively for their use. The planning and execution of office design in new school buildings should consider the lived experiences of the people who will be inhabiting and working in those spaces, not only immediately following their completion but for the foreseeable future. The recent teacher shortage in New Zealand has required those invested in educational outcomes to think carefully about the ways in which teacher wellbeing may be affected by seemingly simple aspects of the workday such as the physical setting which is being used for their work. If working in a shared space causes increased stress on educational leaders in what is already a demanding role or, on the other hand, if it causes an increased sense of support and wellbeing in facing the demands of educational leadership, then insights into how this occurs are beneficial for schools looking to support their educational leaders and their wellbeing.

The policy landscape in New Zealand accepts FLEs or Modern Learning Environments (MLE)¹ and has gone so far as to endorse and expect schools to shift towards these structures in both current and new school builds (Benade, 2019). Benade's (2019) work on Ministry of Education policy analysis is significant in understanding that flexible learning environments are endorsed by the New Zealand government. Two significant documents referred to by Benade are the Ministry of Education's (MOE) *Innovative learning environment assessment tool* – a document to be used by schools every five years to assess whether they meet the criteria of an Innovative Learning Environment, with a particular focus on FLEs – and a MOE commissioned report on the impact of physical design on student outcomes put together by Wall (2016). These two documents highlight a clear expectation that schools should be working towards modern, shared, open, flexible spaces for student learning, and include references to

¹ The terms Modern Learning Environment (MLE) and Flexible Learning Environment (FLE) are often used interchangeably as the preferred terms used in literature and policy has adjusted over time. The use of both terms within this document reflects the different sources referenced. In general, the more up to date of the two is FLE.

teacher workspaces being characterised by increased physical ‘transparency’ so that staff are visible to students. The *ILE Assessment Tool* provided the groundwork for the now more sophisticated tool which is currently in use: the *School Evaluation of Physical Environment* (SEPE) (Ministry of Education, 2020a). The SEPE is an evaluation tool which schools are expected to use to assess whether the physical school environment is fit for purpose to support teaching and learning with a focus on the school’s education vision, daily practices and how the space supports these (Ministry of Education, 2020b). While the *ILE Assessment tool* set an expectation for schools to adopt FLE, the SEPE tool expects schools to ensure their physical learning environments are designed in keeping with the ways that teaching and learning is conducted in the school (Ministry of Education, 2020a). The emphasis shifts from FLE to quality learning spaces (QLS). QLS is used in the context of school building design to refer to the physical characteristics of a space such as acoustics, light, thermal comfort and indoor air quality (Ministry of Education, 2020a). There remains an expectation that schools incorporate design principles which are outlined in *The Designing Quality Learning Spaces* (DQLS) guidelines (Ministry of Education 2020c). The DQLS guidelines focus on the physical aspects of the classroom, but seem to assume a context of FLE in discussion of features such as break out spaces, learning corridors and the use of furniture, fittings and equipment to create “efficient flexible learning space” (Ministry of Education, 2020a, para. 8). Additionally, the DQLS includes links to an earlier document, *Designing Schools in New Zealand* (DSNZ) guidelines (Ministry of Education, 2015) which it states as mandatory for schools to comply with, although this document dates to 2015. The DSNZ guidelines suggest that schools “design learning spaces to provide a maximum amount of flexibility for potential changes in the mode of future education delivery” and states that this flexibility is “most easily provided with open plan and connected environments” (Ministry of Education, 2015, p. 38).

The MOE’s *Innovative learning environment assessment tool* indicates the MOE’s understanding of and expectations for teacher workspaces (MOE, 2017). In the ‘Instructions’ section, it describes groupings of spaces with “moveable glass walls allowing for natural lighting, transparency and discrete supervision” and states that “teacher work areas are often incorporated in these groupings of spaces” (MOE, 2017, para. 16). Further, on their checklist for ‘teacher support spaces’, is the following question: “Are the workspaces transparent to students who can see teachers working or have access to them?”; and under the checklist for classrooms is the question: “Is there visual transparency, e.g. glass windows/walls, between learning spaces and

other areas, such as corridors, breakout spaces, staff work rooms” (MOE, 2017, para. 4). Benade (2017b) unpacks these questions and their implications in his article ‘The evolution of policy: a critical examination of school property under the National-led Government’, stating that based on these items it is clear that “school boards, principals and teachers are required to ‘buy into’ working in teams in shared, visually transparent spaces with significant numbers of students, and to have work areas that are open and available to student use” (p. 102). While these questions are both listed as having a ‘moderate’ rating, as opposed to being ‘core’, it indicates the support of the Ministry for this level of transparency and accessibility of staff to students (Benade, 2017b). It could be considered as an implication of this that there is an expectation that Deans work in a shared space as a team of educational leaders supporting the pastoral care of students in their school.

In the same vein, Wall (2016) outlines differing views and preferences from both schools and participants on the location of both teacher workspaces and teacher relaxation spaces. For teacher workspaces, some schools preferred “individual teacher workspaces connected to the learning space” while others preferred “a larger shared space” (Wall, 2016, p. 26). The theme of collaboration underpinned this preference, with the reasoning that “a shared space promotes collegiality and enhances informal professional discussions and collaboration” (Wall, 2016, p. 26). While Wall’s study was not specifically focused on gathering in-depth accounts of the lived experiences of teachers in innovative learning environments, the participants’ comments provide some insight into the tension between meeting the requirements and expectations of government mandates for education, and the ability to carry out a role without the additions of unnecessary stress, workload or demands. Given that this report was commissioned by the Ministry of Education, perhaps readers can take some comfort in the knowledge that this tension is seen – or a more cynical reader may wonder whether there might have been more to be said if the report had been conducted independently. The DQLS guidelines (Ministry of Education, 2020c) also suggest that teacher workspaces should allow “teachers in the work area to see the students and vice versa” (para. 9). While this doesn’t necessarily apply to Deans workspaces, it could be surmised that there is an expectation that staff members model or set an example in working visibly and collaboratively in a shared space, and as leaders in the school Deans would be setting an example to other staff as well as students. In viewing these documents alongside Benade’s (2019) discussion, there are strong indications that FLEs will continue as a phenomenon in New Zealand schools and that alongside this are expectations about how teacher spaces will demonstrate the same or similar

principles in their physical design. The presence of this intention in New Zealand Education policy documents is significant and useful to consider alongside the literature on this topic to enhance understanding of shared workspaces for Deans.

Research aim and questions

This research aims to discover the lived experiences of educational leaders working in shared office spaces through interviewing Deans working in this context. In doing so, a deeper understanding of the relationship between these lived experiences and the functions of the workspace provided may be possible. In focusing on Deans as the educational leaders interviewed, there is consistency in the context being explored. Insights into this aspect of educational leadership may also be useful to other Deans or those seeking to understand this important branch of middle leadership which is not often the focus of literature exploring educational leadership. While it would also be useful to include the experiences and perspectives of Deans working in single-cell office spaces as a contrast, this was not possible in the scope of this research project. Similarly, the ways in which students experience interactions with deans in both shared and single-cell workspaces would be a useful perspective. However due to constraints with ethics and the necessity of keeping the research manageable for a dissertation research project this was not possible.

Contextualising this research in the field of educational research, the spaces from which educational leaders carry out their work may have some impact on their leadership practice. Traditional thinking around educational leadership positioned leaders in a more hierarchical fashion with one individual leader in a position of authority, but this notion has been challenged over time with the conceptualisation of post-heroic leadership where leadership is viewed as “collectively constructed” (Crevani, Lindgren & Packendorff, 2007, p. 62). Leadership which is conceptualised as collegial between two or more persons may be supported by or associated with a shared office space.

The questions this research sought to explore are:

- In what ways are schools adopting shared workspaces for educational leadership teams?
- How does the configuration of workspaces for educational leadership teams influence their experiences of their roles?
- In what ways do leadership spaces affect leadership practice?

Chapter Two: Literature review

Introduction

The ways in which some educational organisations may choose to provide workspaces for their leaders are influenced by 21st century trends of open plan offices, flexible learning environments, collaboration and teamwork (Benade, 2017a; Morrison & Macky, 2017). Despite educational leaders' significant roles, it seems that decisions on the spatial configurations of educational leaders' offices are based on areas of research such as open plan office spaces, flexible learning environments (FLE) or collaboration and teamwork which are not precisely linked to the nature of their work, or potentially not based on research at all. The narrative in the chapter above serves as an introduction to the question of open plan or flexible offices for educational leaders and reflects some of the ways in which the spaces in which educational leaders work has an influence on their lived experiences in these roles.

This literature review seeks to bring together research on trends of open plan workspaces and flexible learning environments (FLE) with an eye towards applying findings from both areas of literature to meeting the needs of teachers and educational leaders in their workspaces. Underpinning the movement towards flexible office spaces is the increasing value placed on collaboration both in the workforce and in schools (Benade, 2017a). This feeds into the emerging trend of 'collaborative leadership' which has implications for understanding what is needed in educational office spaces. The focus of this research is to investigate how the configuration of workspaces for educational leadership teams influences their experiences. Two key shifts emerged in the literature: the 'spatial turn' which is the shift in the way space is conceptualised, and the 'collaborative turn' which refers to the shift towards collaboration in both the classroom and the workplace.

The 'spatial turn'

The first theme that arises from a review of the literature is the changing conceptualisations of space, or the 'spatial turn'. In discussing the use of space in the context of people's experiences working in them, it is useful to explore how space is perceived and understood conceptually. In the context of schools, Nair (2014) defines spatial organisation as "the elements dealing with how the physical space in a school is organized" (p. 544) and argues that "for schools to work well it is important ... that they have adequate space" (p. 544) which is "organized properly to benefit learning" with

attention to “scale, variety, and flexibility of space, and informal learning areas” (p. 544).

In broader understanding of space beyond the school context, Lefebvre (1991) discusses three central concepts of space: “spatial practice”, “representations of space”, and “representational spaces” (pp. 38-39). This triad can also be described as “perceived ... conceived and lived” space (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38). Lefebvre’s terminology is useful for understanding the difference between the ways we perceive spatial practice and the ways that planners or designers conceptualise space to be used (Lefebvre, 1991). Considering these three concepts, the ways in which space is perceived can be different to the ways it is experienced, and likewise how it is intended to be experienced or understood may not translate into actual lived experiences. Space, it seems, has a life of its own. While Lefebvre’s work is not specifically linked to school settings, his concepts have widely influenced research within the school context. As summarised by Benade (2017a), “Space is not a passive or innocent concept. It has influence over human relationships” (p. 151). Rather than understanding space being simply an area that people can inhabit, space can actively influence those who are within it, and intentional design for spaces can therefore be a useful tool for supporting goals such as improved productivity, wellbeing or belonging. So, “space can both enable and disable; it can facilitate, or hamper, human actions.” (Benade, 2019, p. 54). These concepts can be drawn upon to understand the lived reality of these spaces for students, teachers, and school leaders (Benade, 2019). This kind of understanding of space is useful in discussions of FLEs, as the changing designs of learning spaces is inherently rooted in this notion that changing the space could in some way influence student outcomes, ideally for the better.

A flexible learning environment (FLE) can be defined as a space which shifts the focus from ‘front-of-the-room’ instruction by one teacher to an approach where student learning is the centre, and where teachers function in “collaborative, dispersed and facilitative styles, often in teams” (Benade, 2019, p. 53) in a space which is in some way shared or open. These spaces can go by many names and can vary in their levels of flexibility. FLEs should consist of “an agile environment with a variety of spaces ... which allows multiple forms of learning to happen simultaneously” and be “easy to reconfigure as needed” (Nair, 2014, p. 1369). These environments are often “technology-rich” and “characterised by large open spaces, permeable boundaries and diverse furnishings emphasising student comfort health and flexibility” (Benade, 2019, p. 58) and designed to encourage and allow for more flexibility and collaborative

teaching. It seems generally agreed that the use of space in schools can be a facilitator or inhibitor to developing skills which prepare students “to participate successfully in a globalised knowledge economy” (Chapman et al., 2014, p. 40). Nair (2014) identifies three different styles of FLE – learning studios, learning suites, and learning communities. A learning studio is defined as “a classroom that is consciously redesigned to increase the number of learning modalities that can be accomplished within its four walls” (Nair, 2014, p. 1231) so that it is not simply focused on teacher instruction. A “learning suite” is more expansive with “two or more classrooms combined to enable teachers to work collaboratively” (p. 1089), while a “learning community” expands even further to utilise “the entire wing of a traditional school building” including hallway spaces (p. 1267). An effective learning community should have “no more than 150 students and up to eight teachers” (Nair, 2014, p. 1309). To be more flexible, partitions can be used instead of permanent walls to “both separate and combine spaces as needed” (Nair, 2014, p. 1324). In Nair’s view, an agile building such as this “encourages students to take greater ownership of their learning and helps foster collaboration and good learning habits that help create agile learners who will be better prepared to take on the challenges of a constantly changing world” (p. 400).

Adopting FLEs means a rejection of traditional models of learning environments, which are often referred to as ‘single-cell’ learning environments reflecting the industrial workplaces of the nineteenth century (Benade, 2017a; Chapman, et al., 2014; Nair, 2011; Ruismäki, Salomaa & Ruokonen, 2015; Wall, 2016). Traditional classrooms are useful for lectures or student presentations but not for other types of learning such as “team collaboration, independent study, peer-to-peer tutoring” (Nair, 2014, p. 1199). Benade (2017a) considers the trend of FLE as an important aspect of teaching in the 21st century and states that traditional single cell classrooms “fall woefully short if teachers and students are to engage in practices that are preparation for a 21st century world of work and life” (p. 40). There is a sense that the school learning environment must keep up with a wide range of intersecting developments of the modern world. Chapman et al. (2014) note that changes in educational policy and discourse relating to classroom design can be understood “as responses to a number of intersecting pedagogical, economic, political and academic concerns both internal and external to educational institutions” (p. 40). The early history of traditional schooling and classrooms coincides with the Industrial Revolution and was set up and structured to prepare students to work in factory settings. Nair (2011) considers the traditional classroom “a relic” from this time, and argues that in order to “deliver the creative and

agile workforce that the 21st century demands” (para. 4) classroom design needs to adapt and evolve.

The notion that schools must prepare students for the modern workplace is consistent in the literature and it is largely agreed that changes in teaching structure and pedagogy – such as the movement towards FLEs – will facilitate this preparation (Benade, 2017a; Giles & Hargreaves, 2006). Schools are regarded by educational sociologists “to both mirror society, and be preparation for it” (Benade, 2017a, p. 47). Chapman et al. (2014) notes that FLEs “often share the logic of open-plan work environments, particularly in terms of their reliance on modes of production fostered through support teamwork, knowledge sharing and creativity” (p. 40) which indicates a perceived link between the workplace and schools. Both classrooms and corporate workspaces have changed over time in response to trends and were observed by Nair (2014) as being affected similarly by the movement of Taylorism in the industrial revolution, where tasks were reduced into “fragmented tasks” to improve efficiency (p. 70). Nair describes the way the predominant “one-room schoolhouse” (p. 139) of the pre-industrial era changed so that “modern schools began to resemble factories for teaching” (p. 164). Factories are no longer the focal point of the workforce, and school design has fallen behind (Benade, 2017a; Nair, 2014). Critics of traditional classroom models point out that they do not prepare students for a “dramatically changed workplace” (Benade, 2017a, p. 47). Nair (2014) argues that the advances in technology today create “a new imperative for redesigning schools” (p. 208) as it is enabling dramatic workplace changes which should be mirrored by similar changes in learning environments.

Changes in the workplace have included shifts to open plan offices. Notions of transparency and visibility as well as the increasing expense of space requiring maximum efficiency have changed how space is organised for workers (Roderick, 2016). Cole, Bild and Oliver (2012) describe the conventional office prior to open plan workplaces as individuals working under supervision at individual fixed workstations with low levels of co-worker interaction and little autonomy. Roderick (2016) described the early open plan offices as ‘bull-pens’ with “row upon row of desks”, adjusted in the 1960s to include cubicles and partitions (p. 274). This has further evolved over time to contemporary workplaces with a range of spaces which “facilitate a collaborative work environment” (Roderick, 2016, p. 274). Morrison and Macky (2017) suggest that students who are used to learning in spaces which reflect this highly flexible and collaborative modern work environment may be “used to working with many different

colleagues and moving from space to space as their task, or as space constraints, dictate” (p. 112), and that they may not expect their own private space. While workplaces and schools are both changing in the way space is utilised, the process of adapting and adjusting what this looks like in practice may be ongoing as those using the spaces become more accustomed to it through its normalisation in both schools and the workplace.

The open plan office provides a useful counterpart to flexible spaces in education and can provide useful insights into the ‘spatial turn’ in education. Some studies on open or shared office spaces indicate potential advantages for teamwork and collaboration (Kim, Candido, Thomas & de Dear, 2016; Morrison & Macky, 2017). Kim et al. (2016) investigated differences in desk arrangements and found that an open or flexible work environment had potential for improving teamwork. If designed with this aim in mind these spaces could allow for more interaction, collaboration and even contribute to better cross-departmental collaboration by removing confines of designated locations and giving staff “ample opportunity to interact with colleagues” (Kim et al., 2016, p. 204). Morrison and Macky (2017) surmise that “working collaboratively in a team environment facilitates co-worker friendship whereas simply doing one's own work nearby others in a shared environment does not” (p. 112). Both studies found positive potential for collaboration, but both also note that shared workspaces do not automatically create collaborative teamwork. While there are potential benefits of shared workspaces, there is also clear evidence to the contrary. The findings of Bernstein and Turban (2018) found that the removal of spatial boundaries decreased interaction and collaboration by 70% and increased electronic interaction by 20-50%; this may have been due to not wanting to disturb others in the shared space with in-person interactions, or simply an issue of privacy with not wanting to be overheard. Additionally, open and shared office configurations have also been shown to lead to challenges such as increased distraction, difficulty with noise levels, and uncooperative behaviours (Laurence, Fried & Slowik, 2013; Morrison & Macky, 2017). Additionally, Morrison and Macky’s (2017) study showed increases in negative relationships and distrust as well as lower levels of co-worker friendship and decreased supervisor support. Brown (2009) argues that it could be the transition to shared spaces that negatively affects workers’ experiences as efforts to redesign offices and change the physical landscape can threaten people and undermine attempts to increase collaboration. Morrison and Smollan (2020) go so far as to state that saving money may be the only positive outcome of shared workspaces as most research in the area found a variety of negative outcomes.

Despite these concerns, open plan offices are unlikely to be reversed and as such there are recommendations which can mitigate the elements causing stress in these contexts. Morrison and Smollan (2020) state that the focus therefore must be “how best to implement open-plan office designs to capitalize on any communication, collaboration, and workplace culture improvements while ameliorating negative consequences of these environments for both male and female workers.” (Morrison & Smollan, 2020, p. 2). Common recommendations included allowing personalisation of spaces, use of plants for natural screens or divisions to add privacy, and maximising natural light (Bernstein & Turban, 2018; Laurence et al., 2013; Morrison & Macky, 2017). Laurence et al. (2013) link the decreased privacy when working in an open plan space with stress from being watched over by employers, and encourage personalisation as a means of giving workers some control over their workplace to help mitigate burnout or emotional exhaustion (Laurence, et al., 2013). Privacy was also identified as important by Bernstein and Turban (2018) who observed that without the privacy provided by a personal office, employees used artificial means such as headphones to isolate themselves and look busy under the watchful eyes of their colleagues and employers. They also conclude that contrary to what many consider to be the outcome of a shared office space, increased privacy also increases productivity and worker satisfaction (Bernstein & Turban, 2018). Bernstein and Turban (2018) suggest that open offices can actually work against collaborative work approaches because of negative psychological effects related to employee satisfaction, privacy, and focus which cause people to interact less rather than work together more.

The changes in spatial design in the corporate world have relevance for an educational setting and given these trends do not appear to be reversing (Morrison & Macky, 2011), some consideration must be given both to how schools prepare students for working in modern workplaces and how schools respond to pressures such as efficiency of space. The open plan office has evolved with technology allowing flexibility and mobility in where work can be conducted. This means that the fixed, single cell office is largely a relic of the past (Cole, et. al, 2012). Given that this is the case in the corporate world and taking into consideration the relationship between schools and the workplace there may be implications for the way that the spatial turn is translated into this setting. As government assets, school buildings must be efficient and make the most of whatever resources are available to them to ensure the best possible outcomes for students and for society (Benade, 2017a). As Nair (2014) puts it in the American context, “our country now has over \$2 trillion worth of dysfunctional architecture that is ill suited to educate children in the twenty-first century” (p. 223). It

can be surmised that the same drive to utilise space more efficiently in the corporate world is likely to be playing out in the management of existing school buildings as well as the design of new school buildings. Benade's (2017a; 2017b) analysis of MOE policy documents demonstrated that there has been an expectation that New Zealand schools, particularly new schools, are designed as modern, flexible learning environments, characterised by open spaces and increased visibility. These expectations can be viewed as being reflective of workplace office trends such as those highlighted by research company Gensler (Benade, 2017a). Despite concerns that there are extra demands and stresses associated with this spatial design, there are no signs of these trends reversing, perhaps due to the increasing expense of space as a commodity for businesses (Morrison & Macky, 2017). As these changes have been translated into school settings, such as the open-plan schools which were "very popular through the mid-1970s" (Nair, 2014. p. 194), there has been scepticism as to whether this approach is suitable. Nair (2014) argues that the open-plan schools failed due in part to lack of teacher buy-in, as teachers sought to recreate the same traditional layouts in the new space, and partly due to "fundamental flaws" in design (p. 194). Nair argues that the lack of "quiet zones, restorative areas, enclosed spaces for smaller groupings and focused work, handpicked furniture and acoustic treatments" (p. 208) set these spaces up for failure and that better and more thoughtful design would support a more successful transition to a model of teaching and learning which may better prepare students for the modern workplace.

The success or failure of modern learning environments can to some degree be dependent on teachers and how they work within these spaces. For FLE to succeed, changes in pedagogy may be necessary. These changes have implications for the way teachers and educational leaders work – both inside the classroom and outside of it. Teaching in a shared space can create "the flexibility for teachers and students to engage in forms of learning that have previously been difficult to imagine or implement" (Benade, 2017a, p. 79). However, the changes that afford this can also be experienced as "a loss of control" as teachers used to working individually with their classes behind closed doors are challenged by such "deprivatised and public settings" (2017a, p. 78) to work within. Morrison and Smollan (2020) found that a more "egalitarian desk allocation" was appreciated widely by the respondents in the law firm where they conducted their research, and while one of the partners commented on missing their "lovely corner office" they also found the new open work space "to be generally superior" (Morrison & Smollan, 2020, pp. 4-5). For educational leaders in schools this may have a similar effect. Morrison and Smollan's (2020) findings suggest that if the

spaces are designed with a thorough and thoughtful approach to ensuring they are suitable for those using them, then open plan workspaces can be successful for everyone, including those in leadership roles. If spaces are being purpose-built for the kind of work that will happen within them, then there must be a clear understanding of what different roles entail.

For educational leaders, there have been changes and developments in understandings of the roles. As the pedagogy develops within FLEs and the understanding of teaching and learning is challenged and changed by these shifts, expectations of different roles within schools are also challenged. Educational leaders historically have had more administrative and managerial responsibilities, but now there is an expectation of leadership which includes working collaboratively with a team to implement a collective vision (Bennett et al., 2011; Leithwood, 2011). Bennett et al. (2011) found that middle leaders in the 1990s experiencing this change towards having more accountability as line managers of their staff “still defined themselves as subject administrators, looking after human and teaching resources, rather than as managers or leaders” (p. 458). The changing understandings of what various educational leadership roles entail can create challenges for schools as they must continually adapt and change. The task facing those designing school buildings is to ensure that the buildings are built to outlast as many of these changes as possible, but also need to be fit for purpose and designed to suit the work of those using them. Educational leaders such as Deans may have challenges working collaboratively from separate office spaces and should have spaces that suit this kind of work if that is what is indeed expected of them. The question of flexible office spaces within an educational environment raises important questions about the nature of educational leadership in the 21st century.

The ‘collaborative turn’

The emergence of the notion of collaboration as a key skill or ‘key competency’ for 21st century learning emerges in the educational discourse from its growing presence in the corporate world, as seen above, and is now seen as a vital skill to be developed in schools (Benade, 2017a). Collaboration is seen as a valuable skill in the workplace and is often viewed as the desired outcome or product of open plan office spaces, although this is not always the case (Morrison & Smollan, 2020). The connection between teaching practice and the workplace is made explicit by Darling-Hammond, Ancess and Wichterle (2002) in their discussion of teachers’ collaborative practice, which they compared to “‘high involvement’ business organisations that place employees in staff

groups with distributed expertise that take responsibility for problem analysis and decision making, as well as for the outcomes of their work” (p. 663). It follows, therefore, that it may be possible to draw upon research from a non-educational setting to better understand the implications of collaboration.

The ‘collaborative turn’ can be seen as complementary to the ‘spatial turn’ of the 21st century as classroom structures are changing in the hope that teachers are enabled to work together in new and effective ways both inside and outside of their classrooms (Benade, 2017a; 2019; Byers, Imms, & Hartnell-Young, 2014; Giles & Hargreaves; 2006). As stated by Benade (2017a) “Collaborative work is at the heart of the pedagogical practices in schools with flexible learning environments” (p. 189) and this new way of working is seen as attractive for many teachers. In Benade’s (2017a) study, it was noted that the “prospect of working differently, in regard to collaboration, space and curriculum, act as magnets” for new staff who have been frustrated with the rigidity of school systems (p. 188). As one principal in the study stated, “there’s something about having more flexibility or being more open to things that’s really appealing” (Benade, 2017a, p. 188). Collaboration for students, teachers and leaders alike has become intrinsically valued within the educational field, to the extent that it is seen explicitly outlined in government policy and as one of the key competencies in the revised New Zealand Curriculum documents in 2007, and this remains in the current 2015 curriculum documents (Benade, 2017b). Leithwood (2011) argues that successful leaders focus efforts towards “building collaborative cultures” and “nurturing productive relationships with families and communities and connecting the school to its wider environment” (p. 6).

Collaboration is generally seen in a positive light as an important skill and priority. Yet implementation of collaboration does not always come easily or without increased stress. Collegiality and collaborative practice are considered highly valued traits for educational leaders to cultivate in their schools and departments (Bennett et al., 2011; Leithwood, 2011). Leithwood (2011) found in a study of leader influence on student learning that “creating structures and opportunities for teachers to collaborate” was valued by “91.7 per cent principals, 66.7 per cent teachers” (p. 7), and that “principals supported collaboration among teachers by scheduling times for teachers to meet and discuss how they were working through the curriculum.” (Leithwood, 2011, p. 7). One of the challenges for implementing collaborative practice for middle leaders is discussed by Bennett et al. (2007) who highlight the tension that exists for middle leaders between collegiality amongst professionals, and the expectation of managerial

oversight of the team. These kinds of relationships between staff members can be complex to navigate alongside some of the managerial requirements of roles of responsibility such as middle leaders overseeing a department. The contradictory nature of balancing collegiality and trust with accountability and evaluation put middle leaders in a difficult role and raises the question of whether forced collaboration has the same benefits as what might be referred to as collegial collaboration. Distinguishing whether the configuration of a workspace enables or forces a style of leadership, such as collaborative leadership, is important in understanding whether leaders have agency in their leadership style. Regardless, it was clear from the research carried out by Bennet et al.(2007) that collegiality was highly valued by middle leaders as a part of the department culture. Trust was an important part of this, and one way of building and retaining this within a collegial department was to set up a system of observations based on the premise that all members of the department have something to offer and can learn from observing each other. Bennett et al. (2007) also note that despite the high value placed on collegiality within departments, there was very little evidence of it *between* departments, who instead are competitive for resourcing, an issue further compounded by the physical fragmentation of school departments from each other in the physical layout of the school. The challenge this presents for educational leaders is how to build a collegial school culture within the limits of both physical and political structures, and understanding the relationship between spatial design and leadership practice could be useful in moving towards this aim.

Another aspect to what might be considered the hidden costs of collaboration is that while in theory collaboration should spread the workload more evenly, sometimes particular individuals end up with increased workload. In 'Collaboration Overload', Cross, Rebele and Grant (2016) outline the impact that expectations of collaborative work can have on employees, including increased stress levels and burn out. Their data indicated uneven distribution of workload in a collaborative setting, with "20% to 35% of value-added collaborations come from only 3% to 5% of employees" (2016, p. 76). They also noted that there is a trend towards gender imbalance in the emotional workload of collaboration in that women tend towards the social and personal collaboration, while men tend to share information. This imbalance is interesting considering the low numbers of male teachers compared with female, with Education Counts (2018) reporting only 25% of the New Zealand teaching profession, both primary and secondary school, as male in 2018. It may be that this imbalance of workload would not translate into the school setting. However there is a disparity in the numbers of men and women in educational leadership roles, and "the under-

representation of women in leadership positions in educational settings is a widely acknowledged, complex phenomenon” which “persists, despite the fact that teaching as a profession is dominated by women” (Fuller & Harford, 2015, p. 1). It may be that if collaboration leads to women having an increased workload in comparison with men, then in a school setting it is possible that there may be an underlying assumption that women are naturally proficient at collaborating and therefore should be able to integrate it into their practice, whether as leaders or classroom teachers. Whatever the case may be, collaboration does not just happen on its own, and requires initiation. That role may fall naturally to educational leaders as an implicit part of their role, or it may fall to other individuals with initiative who are not compensated for this with either time allocation or financial remuneration. Cross et al. (2016) recommended that in efforts to recognise the hidden costs of collaboration leaders must “learn to better manage collaboration ... by mapping supply and demand, eliminating or redistributing work, and incentivizing people to collaborate more efficiently” (Cross et al., 2016, p. 77). Their final recommendation is that organisations look to “creating a senior executive position dedicated to collaboration” in order to signal the importance of this role in the organisation” (Cross et al., 2016, p. 79). What this could look like in a school is an interesting notion to consider. If shared workspaces are being used for educational leadership teams in schools then understanding the implications of collaborative workload is useful towards the aim of exploring leadership practice and Deans’ experiences of working in a shared space.

Teacher workspaces

Teacher workspaces within the context of an FLE school can be explored with reference to both the overall principles of a FLE school and of modern workplaces, as well as the imperatives for collaboration within these contexts. Literature investigating FLEs makes clear the associations of these spaces with team teaching and collaboration amongst staff as they work to support the learning of their students. Benade (2017a) notes that the new approaches to building design and the subsequent flexibility allows new forms of learning to be engaged with which require “both innovation and collaboration” as a part of “developing modern teaching practice” (p. 79). Teaching in this way takes place in “shared, common learning spaces” (p. 53). Perhaps in a primary school context it could be assumed that these spaces become the teacher workspaces outside of timetabled teaching hours, but in a secondary school setting where teachers have non-contact time during the school day their teaching and learning space will be most likely occupied by another group of teachers and students during this time. Accordingly, there remains the question of where

teachers conduct their planning and class preparation; collaborative or otherwise. The study by Chapman et al. (2014) focuses on collaborative teaching within the classroom and identifies challenges faced by having multiple teachers working with a larger group, such as students being lost, hiding or avoiding one teacher in favour of another. These challenges clearly would require team planning outside of the classroom. This is not discussed in the study, and neither is the space in which this kind of team planning might happen. Teacher collaboration was found to be effective when prioritised in the “school’s schedules on an ongoing basis” according to Darling-Hammond et al. (2002) and the use of “collaborative opportunities” as a part of professional development provided a wider perspective across the school as well as expanding “individual teaching repertoires” (p. 663). In this way, regular collaborative planning outside of class time was seen as an integral aspect of teaching in an FLE. The location of these meetings was not discussed in the study. Nair (2014) argues that while school building design “tends to isolate teachers in classrooms, the field of education itself has been moving steadily toward a model that encourages greater collaboration between teachers” (p. 1740). While the location of teacher workplaces is often mentioned briefly, such as identifying them as being situated within or connected to the learning space, discussion of the decisions to design the spaces in this way is limited. For example, Giles and Hargreaves (2006) describe the Blue Mountain School in their study as “designed to encourage social interaction between faculty” with “dispersed [teacher] workrooms,” (p. 136) but does not discuss any further. While there is a clear awareness that changes in school design and layout include teacher workspaces, it is not clear what is the best practice, and what benefits teachers with other responsibilities outside of the classroom, such as educational leaders in pastoral care roles.

When mention is made of teacher workspaces, a common theme is the notion of transparency (Benade, 2019; Nair, 2014; Ruismäki et al., 2015, Wall, 2016). This idea is explored in terms of both structural visibility in terms of building design and materials used, but also with the intention of increasing interpersonal visibility so that teachers can be seen working and modelling appropriate behaviours. Nair (2014) states that teacher offices or workspaces should be near the learning areas of the students they work with “with a window overlooking nearby learning areas, so that teachers can keep an eye on students” (p. 1774). The use of transparent windows and doors in this way “allows teachers to meet with each other and still monitor the learning community around them” (Nair, 2014, p. 1774). What is not mentioned is whether this also allows teachers to be more visible to students and even to their managers or leaders. As

stated by Benade (2019), “just as student agency and personalisation are key features of student life in a FLS, so collaboration and deprivatisation are central to teachers’ lives in a FLS.” One example of this can be seen in Ruismäki et al.’s (2015) study of Minerva Plaza, a flexible learning environment in the University of Helsinki. One participant described it as “an aquarium-like space”, where although “they get used to being seen by everyone ... not everyone wants to teach this way” (p. 973). The comparison to an aquarium, an analogy also used by a participant in Morrison and Smollan (2020) in their study of a law firm’s office space, highlights the awareness of the transparency which teachers, or indeed any professionals new to these environments, commonly experience. If the trends of flexible and open workplaces and schools are not suitable for everyone, perhaps due to increased stress as suggested by Morrison and Macky (2018) and Morrison and Smollan (2020), then features designed to mitigate these stresses may be necessary. The deprivatisation of teaching practice may not have been the central intent of this change to more transparent spaces, and yet it can still be interpreted as reinforcing neoliberal notions of ‘being seen to be working’ so that managers can more effectively monitor productivity.

Aside from transparency, the focus of workspaces for teachers seems to be a desire to support collaboration. This is especially clear from Nair (2014), who dedicates a chapter to “professional space for teachers” with a focus on collaborative spaces. These collaborative spaces are more focused on providing opportunities for teachers working in the same subject area or with the same students than on educational leaders having a space to collaborate in. According to Benade (2017a), the shift away from traditional school and classroom structures is rooted in pedagogical change which shifts the focus “away from traditional classroom practices to ones emphasising collaboration, teamwork and the radical de-centring of their personal roles” (p. 2). These changes require mental shifts and can sometimes be “painful transitions” for both teachers and leaders. In this sense, the link between changing spatial layout and a focus on teacher collaboration is clear. Benade also notes that changing to “large, non-traditional spaces ... will not bring about pedagogical change” and that, conversely, “collaborative teaching and working with the curriculum in non-traditional ways may not require purpose-built spaces” (p. 207). Instead, he argues that the key is teachers giving up “solo” teaching to work in a team. Issues of privacy and confidentiality must be considered for teachers when designing appropriate spaces for them. Deprivatisation of the workplace can be seen as increasing workload even as it perhaps assists with collaborative practice and pedagogical change (Benade, 2017a). Schools traditionally have a staffroom or staff lounge for meetings and lunch breaks.

However Nair (2014) goes so far as to suggest that a staffroom is an unnecessary use of space. He argues that because any full staff meetings take place outside of teaching hours, there should be a suitable multipurpose space which could be utilised and, in the same way, teachers can eat and socialise in the same spaces as students and thereby model appropriate behaviour in these settings. A report for the New Zealand MOE on school design echoed these ideas and highlighted the trends towards collaboration and transparency. The report also outlined the tension between these features and being able to have a space to relax and be off duty, suggesting that there is a wellbeing component which must be considered when providing spaces for teachers (Wall, 2016). Whether or not teachers' being visible to students means they are also always available is an important question when considering teacher workload. Nair (2014) recognises that "teachers need to have a space in which to sit, reflect, and plan, individually and in a team" as well as to store their belongings and resources (p. 1784). He also notes that "teachers complain that they need an acoustically secure space for occasional private phone calls or meetings with students or parents, away from their colleagues" (p. 1795). This is indeed a crucial requirement for many educators, but particularly educational leaders such as Deans or deputy principals. Nair argues for spaces such as this to be provided, but still in a space which is "available for both students and teachers" (p. 1795) located within a larger learning-community space. This makes sense for teachers whose main role is within the classroom, but perhaps falls short of meeting the needs of educational leaders who may spend a significant part of their day not only making phone calls but also in confidential meetings with other members of staff, students or whānau.

Leader workspaces

The literature which refers to teacher workspaces does not definitively state whether these are being used by teachers in specific leadership roles, and there is not a clear indication as to where school leaders undertake the necessary work that is involved in running a school in these contexts. This gap in the literature is significant for several reasons. Firstly, in examining the sustainability over time of innovative schools with FLEs one of the factors which inhibit long term success is the staff and leader turnover (Giles & Hargreaves, 2006). It seems strange that the physical space dedicated to those who ensure the running of the school may not be built to suit the specific requirements their roles. Secondly, if considering the notion of 'flexibilisation' as a feature of neoliberalism's influence in the workplace, the question of how the configuration of a workplace increases or decreases teacher or educational leader workload must be addressed (Roderick, 2016). This is illustrated by Benade (2016),

who describes a conversation with an architect involved in remodelling The University of Copenhagen. This architect explained the decision to put the lecturers' offices in a highly visible location within the library as motivated by a desire to allow for an 'accidental meeting' of lecturer and student, as well as ensuring that the lecturers can be seen to be doing their work (Benade, 2016). Benade sees this increased transparency in design as coming from an increasing neoliberalist "demand for accountability", causing an "intensification of work" requiring teachers and academics to "do more and more with less and less" (Benade, 2016). As noted by Blackmore et al. (2011), "open staffrooms can raise issues of privacy, confidentiality and security for teachers" (p. 23). In considering the roles of school leaders, the spaces designed for their use must balance this demand for transparency with the requirements of confidentiality and privacy which characterise many of their responsibilities.

If lessons can be taken from the research done in the corporate world synthesised with what is known about FLEs, and then applied to educational leaders' workspaces, then the initial guidelines for setting up a shared leader workspace might include the following features: a shared communal space to be used for collaborative work and meetings; smaller rooms to be used for making phone calls or private or confidential meetings with students, staff, or families; personal workspaces which are located either within or attached to the communal space; and shared relaxation spaces for breaks. All these areas would be characterised by varying levels of transparency with use of glass, which would allow maximisation of natural light, as well as meeting the requirements of availability and transparency.

Given that in the New Zealand context, FLEs have been a government-mandated feature of any new school build (Benade, 2017b), it is in the government's interest to invest into ensuring that these spaces and their associated pedagogy can withstand the test of time (Ministry of Education, 2015; 2020a). One way of doing this could be by supporting educational leaders to uphold this transition in more complex ways than simply 'modelling' the principle with a flexible or transparent office space. If placing these leaders in an office space that is not suited to the complexity of their role increases their workload unnecessarily, and adds to their emotional exhaustion and stress due to a feeling of being constantly 'on display', then there is a risk that they will not sustain the demands of their role long term, resulting in a higher turnover of educational leaders. Considering the findings of Giles and Hargreaves (2006) that leader stability is a key resilience factor for the longevity and sustainability of innovative schools, this is a significant area for further investigation. This research project adds to

the wider understanding of how spatial design of leader workspaces could be utilised in supporting educational leaders in their work.

Chapter Three: Research design

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to explore the lived experiences of educational leaders working in shared workspaces in secondary schools. The provision of workspaces for educational leaders such as Deans is an aspect of school design that is not well researched despite the importance of these roles in secondary schools. The prevalence of open plan workspaces and the rise of flexible learning environments in recent years are trends which have influenced many organisations in their decisions on how to provide workspaces for their educational leaders. Ingrained in this change is also the increasing emphasis on collaboration and teamwork which are both trends present in the wider context of corporate workplaces. If there are useful lessons to be taken from non-educational settings, these can help to build a better understanding of the implications of collaboration and shared offices within an educational context.

The objective of this research was to develop a deeper understanding of educational leader's lived experiences in relation to the spatial provisions made for them in their work environments. Insights into the ways that working in a shared space influences the functioning of educational leadership teams may be useful for institutions reviewing or planning the design of offices for their leadership teams.

This research is important in the context of New Zealand, especially in response to the increasing expectations on schools to implement FLE and the difficulties the sector has faced in teacher recruitment and retention. While entry rates to teaching have been increasing since 2015 and the rate of teachers leaving has decreased slightly in the past two years, the issue of teacher retention remains one which should be regarded with caution (Education Counts, 2020). Since there has been an expectation as discussed in chapter two that "school boards, principals and teachers are required to 'buy into' working in teams in shared, visually transparent spaces ... and work in areas that are open and available to student use" (Benade, 2017b, p. 102) then it is important to develop a deeper understanding of the implications of this within the experiences of school leaders.

Methodological approach

This research takes the ontological and epistemological stance that knowledge derived from human experiences is not only valid but important in developing understanding in

research. This research is approached through the paradigm of qualitative research. A research paradigm is an overall theoretical framework which is made up of the ontological and epistemological assumptions held by the researcher. Research paradigms can be broadly broken into the categories of qualitative and quantitative research. The difference between these two categorisations is based in the ontological assumptions of what can be considered as valid data. Qualitative research “aims to uncover the lived reality or constructed meanings of the research participants” (Mutch, 2013, p. 45). In quantitative research, data is based in facts and figures which can be analysed through statistical analysis, while qualitative research has a different view of data and encourages engagement with people as sources of information. Qualitative data considers “relationships, character, emotions - how we live our lives and express ourselves - as legitimate sources of information that can be used to make sense of the world” (Newby, 2014, p. 48).

In choosing a research paradigm it is important to consider the purpose of the research. Newby (2014) described qualitative researchers as those whose purpose is exposing views rather than defining what is the truth. This approach aligned with the purposes of this research which is focused on educational leaders in shared office spaces. The focus on human experiences of educational leaders positioned it in a humanistic field and the interest in the lifeworld of individuals aligns it with phenomenology (Newby, 2014). Phenomenology can be categorised as descriptive or interpretive. Descriptive phenomenology aims for primary data and requires the researcher to ‘bracket’ themselves and avoid having any prior knowledge to draw upon as they make interpretations. Conversely, interpretive phenomenology has an integrated approach where the researcher is seen as a part of the research, arguing that such bracketing is likely not possible (Matua & Van Der Wal, 2015). As Benner (2012) states, “the aim of interpretive phenomenology is dialogue and understanding” (p. 8) and to cultivate this it is necessary to have “an ethos of respect for the voice, actions and texts of those studied” (p. 8). For this reason, the approach to gathering data for this study emerged from a qualitative paradigm, drawing on elements of interpretive phenomenology and making use of interviews to develop an in depth understanding of the lived experiences of educational leaders in both shared and unshared office spaces. Benner (2012) lists interviews, first person experiences and near accounts or real events as “relevant lines of inquiry” in interpretive phenomenology (p. 10).

Newby (2014) describes methodology as “how the toolkit of research methods is brought together to crack an individual and specific research problem” and describes the methods as “the tools themselves” (p. 53). In this case, the methodology is one of qualitative research, drawing upon interpretive phenomenology and critical theory. In order to gather data and analyse it the primary method utilised was interviews. These interviews were conducted with individuals working in a pastoral care or ‘Deaning’ leadership team in a shared office space within the context of Auckland secondary schools.

Data collection: Semi-structured interviews

Interviewing has become a significant aspect of qualitative research practices which can fit into a range of approaches including phenomenological and interpretative approaches (Brinkmann, 2008). There are a range of interview types to draw from, including: formal or informal; structured or unstructured; face-to-face, phone, or online (Brinkmann, 2008). In order to allow for respondents’ descriptions to be more spontaneous accounts, I adopted a semi-structured interview format, with set questions focused on my research, but leaving room for exploring other ideas as they may come up (Brinkmann, 2008). This allowed the interview to flow as a discussion rather than an interrogation. These interviews were conducted face-to-face. Newby (2014) defines semi-structured interviews as “an interview in which themes are identified and lead questions specified but where the interviewer is given training to ask supplementary questions that will provide the data needed by the research programme” (p. 670). One of the criticisms of interviews is the issue of “whether interviews can provide a more or less direct pipeline to the participants’ life-worlds” under the proviso that “nondirectional unbiased questioning” is used; some scholars are concerned that interviews may actively create meaning rather than uncover pre-existing meaning (Brinkmann, 2008). To mitigate this, the questions I used were set in such a way as to allow open ended answers, however at times when participants required further prompting I was able to give further clarification or examples to help them understand what was being asked. The informal style of the interviews allowed for this and helped the participants to relax into the conversational tone planned. Interviewing educational leaders who are working in a shared office space generated information that was analysed for themes and insights to help inform an understanding of what it is like to work in this environment.

The participants and their workspaces

The table below summarises key information about the participating schools and their teams of educational leaders working as deans. The three participating schools, all located in Auckland, represent a range of deciles. Deciles are ratings used by the Ministry of Education to determine the funding a school will receive and is based on the “the extent to which the school’s students live in low socio-economic or poorer communities” (Ministry of Education, 2020, para 2). The ratings go from decile 1 as indicating low socio-economic communities through to decile 10 representing wealthier communities (Ministry of Education, 2020). Both single sex and co-educational schools were included. The number of deans working in a shared space varied between schools from two deans at Tawa High, three at Kauri College and eight at Nikau High. The table also indicates the location of the shared office used by the deans. The deans interviewed are listed under their respective schools using their pseudonyms, and a brief overview of their level of experience as a Dean. This information is helpful in providing some context to the interview data presented in the findings tables in Chapter Four.

Table 1: Key information on participating schools

	Tawa High	Kauri College	Nikau High
Decile	9	10	2D
Co-ed/single sex	Girls School	Co-ed	Co-ed
Number of Deans sharing office	2	3	8
Deans interviewed	Blair, Madison, Taylor	Riley, Jordan	Ana, Ben
Experience levels of Deans	All in first or second year of deaning	Both experienced Deans	Ana – experienced Dean, Ben – first year of deaning
Office location	Admin Block	Admin Block; linked to year group common room	Student Services building

Data analysis

The analysis process which followed the transcription of the interviews involved analysing the data for common patterns or experiences to highlight the common aspects of working in a shared office space. By comparing individual experiences from similar contexts, the findings were triangulated to ensure that any themes found are robust. In undertaking this process, differences between contexts were considered, such as school or cohort size or the structure of the Dean teams at each school. This also made for an interesting comparison with findings from research into shared office spaces in a non-educational context, such as that of Morrison and Macky (2017). The transcripts were analysed using a colour coding system to highlight repeated themes or ideas covered in each interview. Participant responses were analysed question by question using a table format to indicate the number of times ideas repeated. The ideas which came through more strongly were then grouped together thematically to form the basis of the discussion in the findings chapter. This synthesis of information across the three schools allowed for themes to emerge clearly which highlight a range of aspects of the experiences of working in shared office spaces for secondary school Deans.

Validity, credibility and trustworthiness

In undertaking research it is necessary to ensure that the findings are trustworthy and credible (Mutch, 2013). In qualitative research, a wider range of data can be considered valid; however this does not ensure that all data collection is reliable. According to Jensen (2008) "credibility can be defined as the methodological procedures and sources used to establish a high level of harmony between the participants' expressions and the researcher's interpretations of them." (p. 139). Cope (2014) describes this as "the truth of the data or the participant views and the interpretation and representation of them by the researcher" (p. 89). Particularly in instances of data collection such as interviews where the researcher is questioning participants, there is the potential for bias in the researcher's approach or views. In order to support credibility, researchers can engage in a range of methodological procedures (Jensen, 2008). These include ensuring that appropriate time is given to enable an appropriate amount of contact with participants and the context, examining the data "from different perspectives and viewpoints to get a holistic picture of the environment", making use of colleagues and support networks with relevant knowledge to "review and critique research and data analysis findings" and using triangulation to seek out "multiple sources of data" in a variety of ways (Jensen, 2008, p. 139). Lastly, member checking with the participants is an important step to support credibility, which

involves giving them an opportunity to review the data and check that “the data analysis is accurate and consistent with their beliefs and perceptions of the context being studied” (Jensen, 2008, p. 139). Member checking involves the researcher communicating “a summary of the themes that emerged” (Cope, 2014, p. 90) to their participants and requesting feedback. This allows the participants to “validate the conclusions” and confirm whether the researcher has “accurately interpreted the data” (Cope, 2014, p. 90). Cope (2014) states that the final step for researchers aiming to evidence the credibility of their research is “reporting the strategies performed to supply evidence to the reader” (p. 90). The combination of describing the strategies used with “rich, vivid quotes from the participants” allows the reader to critique the credibility of the study for themselves (Cope, 2014, p. 90). In order to avoid my own views adding bias to the study I ensured that I did not preface my interviews with any of my own experiences or thoughts regarding working in a shared space. This allowed the participants to formulate and voice their responses to the interview questions authentically. The following is a summary of strategies used in this research to support the credibility of the study.

First, to allow for triangulation I chose to have three different schools representing the context of shared office spaces for secondary school Deans. In the process of recruiting participants for this study, the first two schools to agree to participate were similar in that they both had a high school roll. Consequently, each had more than one Dean working collaboratively together overseeing a cohort. While having these two contexts which were quite similar allowed for strong resonance between the two contexts, I wanted to ensure that a range of perspectives and data were gathered and accordingly persisted in finding a third school with a smaller roll and Deans overseeing a cohort individually but working together collaboratively with their deaning colleagues. Further triangulation by including a range of data gathered by other methods such as field notes or surveys, while potentially useful, would have taken this study beyond the scope of a dissertation project.

In choosing a range of schools across Auckland with different organisational structures for their Deans it was hoped that the contexts represented would resonate with other Deans or educational leaders familiar with these contexts. It was important that the findings of my research “resonate with those in or familiar with the case or setting” of deaning (Mutch, 2013, p. 110). At one of the schools included in the research, the office was shared by two co-Deans who were house leaders, meaning that their cohort was made up of students from all year levels of the secondary school, at another

school the office was shared by co-Deans who shared a year level cohort. At the final school the office was shared by all of the Deans with the exception of two; a total of eight Deans in the shared space. Each Dean worked with a specific year level. Mutch (2013) considered resonance as improving credibility of findings. Throughout the process of conducting interviews the Deans' responses resonated with my own experiences as a Dean. This was an indication that at least to myself and my deaning colleagues there was resonance between our experiences as educational leaders.

Member checking was also used throughout the research process. Participants were given the opportunity to member check their transcripts after the interview and transcribing had taken place, and the findings from the study to "see if they fit within their understanding" of shared workspaces (Mutch, 2013, p. 110). Once the findings were completed a summary was sent to all participants to allow them to check that the themes which emerged from the data across all the interviews resonated with their own experiences. Resonance between individuals who have shared the same or similar experiences is considered important as "credibility is enhanced by the researcher describing his or her experiences as a researcher and verifying the research findings with the participants" (Cope, 2014, p. 89). In the context of this research, I requested that participants to allow for one hour of their time in scheduling our meeting. This allowed me to establish rapport between myself as the researcher and the participant, as well as setting a relaxed tone for the discussion. Additionally, it was possible to talk more informally after the interview about shared interests. As a part of this I was able to share and describe my experiences of work as a Dean throughout the interview. The recorded element of the informal interviewing ranged from around twenty to thirty minutes.

Trustworthiness is viewed in terms of transparency of process, so that the "research decisions, research design, data-gathering and data-analysis techniques" were "clearly documented" along with demonstrating an "ethical approach" to the research process (Mutch, 2013, p. 109). This approach was important in working with participants and accordingly before each interview I introduced myself, gave a brief overview of the purpose of the research. I explained the format of the interview as semi-structured and encouraged them to treat it as a conversation. Additionally, the confidentiality of their responses and the way answers would be recorded and used was outlined. This helped to establish a relationship between myself and the participants and encouraged them to speak freely. This took place immediately before the interview commenced. Building a relationship of trust with participants in this way adds to the credibility of this

research as participants were able to communicate openly and share experiences within a safe space.

Ethical considerations

In any research study it is important to address the ethical guidelines by which the research process will be undertaken. Researchers must be aware of the ethical implications of their research; particularly given that they are “in a position of power” researchers must also be “answerable to someone” for their ethical decisions (Mutch, 2013, p. 37).

There are several commonly accepted guidelines when undertaking research in an ethical manner:

Informed consent Clear communication is important, as participants must be informed of the purposes of my study and the process that I followed, including my aim as a researcher, and what I intended to do with my findings. The Participant Information Sheet was provided to all participants, ensuring that they entered into the study as willing participants with all the information they might need.

Limiting deception In a research context where deception is required it is agreed that this should be limited to only what is absolutely necessary. In the context of this research there was no deception required and participants had all the information about the research process available to them.

Do no harm One generally accepted notion is that no participants should be harmed in any of the steps of the research process, including the results (Newby, 2014). Given that this research sought to explore the lived experiences of Deans without necessarily being evaluative, there was not any discussion which was critical of schools, their staff or practices.

Cultural and social sensitivity It is important as a researcher to be aware of social and cultural elements related to the research, especially given the position of power and responsibility which comes with the role of researcher. I addressed this ethical requirement in my research by establishing positive relationships and rapport with participants before beginning the interview.

Anonymity and confidentiality One main ethical issue which may arise from this study is confidentiality. For this reason, the participants, their schools, and the people and organisations to whom they might have referred in their interview, were given pseudonyms in all documents and records related to the research, as well as in the final dissertation.

This study was undertaken with an ethic of respect for participants, for the knowledge they provided, as well as that which was generated by the research. During the interview process it was important to outline this information before the interview and to allow the participant to ask any questions they had about the research. As has been mentioned already, the participants were given the option of reviewing the transcriptions relating to their interview to check that they had been interpreted accurately. Participants were informed of the purpose of the research and sent a copy of the findings once the study was complete.

Due to the interpretive nature of this research, it was important from an ethical standpoint that I avoid bias and did not allow any of my own preconceptions to influence my interpretation of participant's statements and comments. This required me as the researcher to be prepared to critically interrogate my own assumptions and beliefs, so I can be open to findings (Newby, 2014). One of the reasons I was interested in this topic is that it has been raised as a possibility in my workplace that the team of Deans I work alongside could be moved into a shared office. I chose to explore the issue of workspaces for educational leaders further because I recognised that it is a complex one which does not seem to have a simple answer. In completing my literature review this complexity was confirmed, as looking to the corporate office studies such as that of Morrison and Macky (2017) showed that the benefits of a shared office may not necessarily be worth the increased stresses and demands that come with it. So while I may have had an original leaning towards favouring a shared office environment, the purpose of this study was not to evaluate which office configuration might be better, but to gain a better understanding of what it is actually like to work in these environments and in doing so to gather some insights which may be useful for schools to make their own decisions on the matter. In order to maintain reflexivity, it will be important to revisit and interrogate my own influence on the research throughout the process. In summary, my aim was to carry out this research with integrity, and to maintain this I have continued to "address the moral implications" (Preissle, 2008) of the way I represented participants throughout the various stages of my study.

Potential outcomes and benefits of research

The potential outcomes for this research would give useful insights to those who may be involved in planning school office layouts and prompt thought and discussion into how leadership teams could work and examine the best ways to provide for their needs through physical spaces. This is especially important in the context of New Zealand

secondary schools where the shift to FLE has become a policy expectation – decisions are and will continue to be made on how to design the work spaces for educational leaders, and it is important to the sustainability of the school community that these decisions are not made carelessly. It is my hope that by capturing some of the reality of lived experiences in a shared office as an educational leader, there will be elements that resonate with others in similar scenarios. While these moments of resonance may not in themselves make an impact on school decisions, they will contribute to thematic findings which can be drawn upon to support the decisions being made about sharing or not sharing an office space with at least some evidence. If, for example, a theme of decreased wellbeing arises from educational leaders working in shared offices due to increased stressors in a shared space, then this would have implications for whether a school continues to expect their leaders to function from a shared and therefore potentially stressful space. Or, if a theme of increased support and collegiality arises from educational leaders sharing an office space, then it would affirm some of the measures being implemented alongside FLE. These are two very opposing examples, but in either case the findings of this study could provide some evidence to feed into an educational institution's decisions on how to provide spatially for leadership teams.

Conclusion

Engaging in research about the experiences of Deans working in shared workspaces is an exciting area of study. This chapter has outlined my methodological approach as fitting within the field of qualitative research from an ontological stance which values people's experiences as rich data for insights into their lived experiences. By effectively using the methods discussed, I have learned from the experiences and interpretations of Deans working in shared office spaces. Issues of validity, credibility and ethical considerations have been discussed. Lastly, the potential outcomes and benefits of this research have been explored. The following chapter presents the findings of this research.

Chapter Four: Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from analysis of the interview data and outlines the participants' responses to interview questions. Each interview transcript was analysed closely, and responses categorised for each question asked and collated into tables. In the tables below, question responses are summarised as either verbatim quotes or in some cases paraphrases of participants' responses. The tables are organised in the same order as the interview questions. Where participants provided an answer to a question before it had been asked - for example as a natural flow on from a previous question - the response has been grouped with the question it best answers.

Findings: Question tables

Question One asked: Could you please describe your workspace for me? (layout, number of people, windows/lighting, etc.)

Table 2: Workspace Description

Category	Tawa High School		Kauri College			Nikau High School		Total responses
	Blair	Madison	Taylor	Riley	Jordan	Ana	Ben	
<i>Number of people sharing workspace²</i>	2	2	2	3	3	8	8	7
Workplace described as a shared space	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7
Workspace is used for meetings	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7
Windows and natural light	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7
Desks separate	n	y	y	y	y	y	y	6
Extra table located in workspace	y	n	n	y	y	n	n	3

² * In this table the number of people sharing workspace data does not refer to number of times this was mentioned but gives the number of Deans working in each participant's shared workspace. In each case this was mentioned once.

When asked to describe their workplaces, the participants all used the term 'shared'. While the overall office space was shared, the desks were separated into individual workstations and, in the case of the larger shared space at Nikau High, this included some small room dividers. The offices at Kauri College had an extra table which could be used for meetings, and Blair at Tawa noted that this was something she would have liked to have in her office. Neither of the other participants at Tawa High mentioned having an extra table and like Blair did not have another table in their office. They did however have a small workspace outside their office where students sometimes would work. Extra tables were not mentioned by either participant at Nikau High School and there were not extra tables for meetings in their shared office space. Participants were prompted within this question to identify details such as number of windows, lighting, layout and number of people. Responses indicated that all participants worked in a space which had natural light and windows. A sense of transparency was indicated here; Taylor at Tawa High described their glass doors as allowing them to "see who is coming" and pointed out how lights on through the internal windows of the Dean offices were a visual indicator of whether someone was in their office or not. Despite the transparency of the doors, Madison noted that they were often used as a signal of whether a meeting happening was minor or more serious, as the doors would usually be open for conversations about things like attendance or truancy.

At Kauri College, Jordan described how having the desk by the door meant that he was more visible to anyone coming to the office, while his two deaning colleagues in the same office could "just hide" if the door was shut. Ben at Nikau High described how having windows in the meeting rooms used by the Deans added to a sense of safety as people could see what was happening inside. At Tawa High and Kauri College the Dean offices were located off to one side of a corridor with external windows on one wall, and at Nikau High the Dean office was one shared classroom sized room with external windows along two walls attached to a student reception area.

Question Two asked: Are you aware of the reasons behind your school putting you in a shared office space? If so, what are these reasons?

Table 3: Reasons for shared office spaces

Category	Tawa High School			Kauri College		Nikau High School		Total responses
	Blair	Madison	Taylor	Riley	Jordan	Ana	Ben	
No explicit awareness of reasoning	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7
Workspaces shared in this way for a long time	y	y	y	y		y	y	6
Convenience of being located with team-members			y		y	y	y	4
Support and connection with team-members			y	y	y		y	4
Efficient use of space				y	y			2
A secure location for resources and belongings (shared and individual)	y	y						2

None of the participants were aware of any explicit reasoning or rationale behind working in a shared office as Deans. However, all participants were able to give reasons why it was useful. Six out of the seven participants mentioned that the Deans had been catered for in this way for as long as they could remember. This may indicate that the shared office was not associated with any new changes being implemented by the schools as to how they expect their Deans to lead.

Four out of the seven participants associated it with convenience of being located alongside those they worked most closely with. Taylor considered it logical for the team to be together: "It makes sense to be together so we can work off each other and see who's done what and that sort of thing". Jordan saw having all the Year 9 Deans in one space was convenient as students had "one place" to go for Dean support. Ana made a similar point, describing the Dean office as "a central point of contact" for both students

and teachers. At Nikau High all year level Deans were in this space and any Dean would offer support to others. Ana explained: “We are not restricted to dealing with just our year levels”; in the absence of the year level Dean whoever was available would take an “initial report” to pass on to the year level Dean. Ben, at the same school, found it useful that all the Deans were together as the shared knowledge of all the Deans was invaluable and he could “ask anyone and anyone will help”. He believed this was more beneficial than a Dean’s course he had attended, saying: “I learnt far more sitting in that space” than on the course. Clearly, shared office spaces offered a site for learning, support and sharing the workload.

Four out of the seven participants associated the shared office space with having better support and connection with their Dean colleague(s). Three of these participants were the same as the above paragraph, with Taylor, Jordan and Ben all making comments which indicated this to be the case. Riley at Kauri College commented that there was better support in the Dean’s corridor where all the year level Dean offices aside from her current year level – the Year 13 students – were located. In her view, it was more likely that you would receive support in this space than where her current office was placed: “There is always someone in the Dean team that can support you or has encountered an issue before ... It’s much more collegial over there, every Year 13 Dean has said that”. While Riley certainly appreciated the support of her two co-Deans in her shared office, she missed the connection that the shared Dean’s corridor gave her to the wider deaning team.

Riley and Jordan, both from Kauri College, were the only participants to mention the more efficient use of school space which is interesting as out of the three schools included in the study it was the largest both with regard to space and school roll numbers. Blair and Madison, both from Tawa High, were the only participants to mention the office functioning as a shared resource space to safely store personal or work-related resources, but it is possible that the other Deans utilised the space in this way too.

Question Three asked: How long has your school utilised shared workspaces for educational leaders? Are they used for both Deans and DPs?

Table 4: Use of shared workspaces by educational leaders

Category	Tawa High School			Kauri College		Nikau High School		Total Responses
	Blair	Madison	Taylor	Riley	Jordan	Ana	Ben	
Deputy Principals work in single cell offices, not shared	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7
Shared spaces have been used for Deans as far back as participants can remember	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7
Buildings recently been redone but kept same general arrangement	y		y					2
Space availability seen as a factor	y	y						2
International Deans in a shared space	y	y						2

In all three schools, shared offices were only associated with Deans. Deputy principals all had their own individual office spaces. The only educational leaders working in a shared space in these three contexts were Deans and international Deans. At Tawa High the international Deans also had a shared office space as mentioned by Blair and Madison. Deputy principals were seen by Ben at Nikau High to “need to be able to close the door” due to the nature of many of their meetings being more serious or confidential than the issues dealt with by Deans on an everyday basis. Blair noted that deputy principals had both a desk and another meeting table which allowed them more flexibility in how they used their office space. She noted that this would have been useful in her shared office space if there was room for it. Taylor pointed out that while

the DPs had their own offices, the space was sometimes taken over for other purposes such as Special Assessment Condition (SAC) exams near the end of the year. So, while the DP office spaces were not characterised by sharing with other educational leaders, they did fit some of the other characteristics of flexible leading spaces. At Tawa High the buildings had recently been redone but no changes had been made to the general layout or levels of sharing for educational leaders, except perhaps to make all the spaces slightly more spacious. None of the Deans at any of the three schools could remember a different set up for their educational leadership office configurations.

Question Four asked about the uses of the workspace:

1. In what ways do you use this shared space?
 - a. In what ways do other members of your team use this shared space?
 - b. In what ways do others use this shared space?

Table 5: Uses of the shared workspace

Category	Tawa High School			Kauri College		Nikau High School		Total Responses
	Blair	Madison	Taylor	Riley	Jordan	Ana	Ben	
Meetings with students	2	3	1	1	1	1	2	11
Meetings with teachers	1	2			1		1	5
Central location for accessing Dean support		1		1		1	2	5
Used for non-deaning purposes as needed		2	2					4
Paperwork and admin				1	1		1	3
Parent meetings		1			1		1	3
Guaranteed space		1		1				2
Taking breaks e.g. lunch				1			1	2
Meetings with Dean colleagues		1			1			2
Teaching preparation and marking			1	1				2
Phone calls			1					1

By far the most common use of the shared space was for meetings, either with staff or students or families. In total there were 21 mentions of meetings for this question (combining all categories). The majority of these were with students, with eleven

responses, and interestingly only two responses were given about meeting with other Deans. It was clear from the interviews that the Deans spent a lot of time in communication with each other, with convenience of having dean colleagues available for support and connection or to check ideas featuring in participant interview responses to questions two and six (see Table 3 and Table 7). Perhaps this incidental ongoing communication in the shared office space reduced the need for expressly organising a meeting with co-Deans.

Parent meetings sometimes took place in the shared office space but often would be booked elsewhere. The reasons for this ranged from courtesy to co-Deans, confidentiality, and increasing the seriousness of the meeting through a different space. Blair stated that holding parent meetings in the shared office space was generally done “if there are not meeting rooms available” and even then, she would check this with her co-Dean to ensure it didn’t bother her. Participants from each school highlighted that the shared space served as a central location for members of the school community to find and access Deans. Blair described it as her “main hub” and Madison as “a bit of a hub for points of information”, describing some of the meetings which would take place in the office space. Ana described it as “a central point of contact” and Ben as “first and foremost a place students know they can come” as well as teachers and parents. Many of the other uses of the space could be categorised as administrative tasks, either to do with deaning or teaching and learning. Riley, Taylor Jordan and Ben all mentioned administrative tasks such as paperwork, tracking student progress, making phone calls and writing emails. Taylor and Riley both also mentioned doing their teacher planning and preparation in the office space, although Riley was more likely to do that work at home as the demands of deaning took up most of her time in the office. Madison noted that her Dean’s office was “the only desk I have in the whole school” but that her laptop allowed her the flexibility to do her work from anywhere she needed to.

Question Five asked: What is it like working in a shared office space?

Table 6: Experiences of the shared office space

Category	Tawa High School		Kauri College			Nikau High School		Total Responses
	Blair	Madison	Taylor	Riley	Jordan	Ana	Ben	
Positive experience working in shared office	1	2	2	4	1	1	1	12
Enjoys working closely with Dean colleague	2	1	2	1	1	1		8
Working together as a team				2	2	1	1	6
Collegial support and camaraderie				3		1	2	6
Positive relationship helps the experience			1	3				4
Respectful of each other's need to focus		1	1	2				4
Useful space for meetings and communication					2		1	3
Awkwardness with overhearing other Deans meetings		1		1				2
Shared space seen as an improvement on shared department workrooms	1		1					2

When asked to describe the experience of working in a shared space, the participant responses were overwhelmingly positive. All participants described it positively, and all but Ben mentioned the enjoyment in working closely with team members. It is clear from other parts of the interview that Ben valued this too, appreciating collegiality and

camaraderie with his fellow deans as well as feeling part of a supportive team (see Table 7 and Table 10).

Only two participants mentioned the awkwardness with being able to overhear colleagues' conversations. Madison described how sometimes it was "a bit awkward" when the other Dean was meeting a student about something sensitive and she was in the shared space "trying to pretend you're not in the room". Similarly, Riley explained how one Dean having "those really in depth conversations" could overlap with another Dean having "called up five kids that I just need to talk about absences or something" could cause problems in the shared office, as it wouldn't be appropriate for those conversations all to happen in the same space due to privacy. Riley considered student trust and safety to be paramount in these situations and while she would usually be able to move into another nearby office this was not without its challenges and was difficult to plan for, as sometimes a serious conversation might emerge from something that on the surface seemed minor: "Often you don't know you are going to get into those conversations, so you don't prepare for it, it just happens". While Madison's comment didn't specifically include this element of student safety there was a sense of concern in her comment for the privacy for students coming in in, as it indicates a reluctance to intrude on what can be quite a personal conversation. On the other hand, Taylor considered the added set of ears in the room to be beneficial for the safety of the Dean involved in this conversation, and thought it was likely in these situations that the co-Dean was likely to hear about it anyway so it added a level of efficiency and allowed for instant feedback or debriefing following the conversation. Riley was the only Dean to mention a negative relational experience in the shared office space. She also made mention of the positive elements of the shared space more than any other participant. Working in the shared space required Deans to be "really respectful of each other's work" and not interrupt each other. Working closely together had in some cases allowed Riley to become "really close" and she described there being a sense of collegiality where all the Deans had each other's backs. Working with one colleague in the same space for two years led to them becoming really good friends, however Riley cautioned: "If you were with someone that you didn't get on with it would be really tough because you are with them all the time". Her own experience with this had come "out of nowhere" and made her feel very uncomfortable in the shared space. This experience was short-lived, and Riley did not believe it to be a common occurrence: "I've worked with lots of Dean teams and we have always just ... it's been awesome".

Positive relationships and working collegially with other Deans were real highlights for the participants in their experiences of shared deaning office spaces. While potential

shortcomings could be seen in maintaining student privacy and confidentiality it was usually possible to manage this. Relational breakdown could be a real hazard in a shared Deans' office, but this was not something which had been experienced widely by the participants.

Question Six asked: Are there any aspects of the shared space which are especially challenging or helpful? (To you, to your team?)

Can you share an example of a time when the shared space was challenging? (To you, to your team?)

Can you share an example of a time when you found it helpful being in the shared space? (To you, to your team?)

Table 7: Challenging and helpful aspects of the shared workspace

Category	Tawa High School			Kauri College		Nikau High School		Total Responses
	Blair	Madison	Taylor	Riley	Jordan	Ana	Ben	
Challenges with meetings in the same space – e.g. crowding or privacy	2		1	1		2	1	7
Convenience of having deaning colleague(s) available to check ideas and ask questions		2	1		2			5
Collegiality and camaraderie				2	1		2	5
Positive experience of shared space		1		1	1		1	4
Pressure to uphold unspoken rules such as tidiness		2		2				4
Convenience of touching base with Dean colleague(s)	1		1		1		1	4
Increased				1	1	1	1	4

visibility of work or leadership								
More likely to intervene in colleague's workload					1	1	2	4
Observing other Deans' approaches as an opportunity to learn						1	2	3
Useful to have meetings with Dean colleague(s)	1		1		1			3
Safety of another person being present			1				1	2
Positive relationship makes shared space work well		1			1			2

The key challenges identified in working in a shared space were primarily linked to challenges with conducting meetings in this environment. As identified in Question Four, the most common use of the shared space was to have meetings with students and other members of the school community. When asked about key challenges to working in a shared environment, issues linked with tensions around meetings and privacy factors were at the forefront of the participant responses.

Blair, Taylor, Riley and Ben all identified challenges with having meetings in the shared space. Both Ana and Ben identified "issues with privacy". Ana didn't specifically link her comments to meetings but stated: "Sometimes when it's busy there's not enough space" and that when doing work such as making phone calls "you are very aware of your surroundings" and that "there are always ears listening". For Ben, privacy was the only issue with the shared space but was easily dealt with by relocating to another meeting space as needed. Blair believed that the limited space sometimes influenced

her effectiveness in getting “the point across” to her students if her co-Dean was conducting meetings with students at the same time as she was meeting with students. This was highlighted particularly “during busy times” when there were more students coming and going. Blair likened the unpredictability of this scenario to teaching: “I guess things don’t always go to plan anyway in teaching”; she found this challenging but was used to having to adjust as she went. For Taylor, the issue was not so much the meetings with students, but was related more to if she wanted to meet with any colleagues from her department about coursework. It was hard for her to have marking or moderation meetings in the PE office due to how many people shared that space but she didn’t want to disrupt Madison’s work by meeting in the shared office: “It’s more respect for her, I don’t want to disrupt her but I also kind of would like to have space you don’t feel like you’re getting on someone’s toes”. Not wanting to feel a bother to co-inhabitants of a shared space highlights some of the unspoken tensions which can be felt by leaders working in this environment.

The comments from Riley for this question further develop this concept of unspoken tensions or expectations. While Riley considered the biggest challenge to be meeting with people, she went on to describe how sometimes seeing the work her Dean colleagues were busy with could make her “Kind of feel a bit stink” if she was working on something else: “You feel like you have to justify yourself as to why you are not working on what they think is a priority right now for them”. As Deans, the shared office space was where participants conducted not only their deaning work, but other tasks associated with their responsibilities for the classroom as well as any additional responsibilities they had in the school. Riley’s comment reveals how a sense of visibility in the office could have negative implications; whether perceived or real, the sense of being judged as not doing your role properly would be a source of increased stress for educational leaders in these shared spaces.

Increased visibility, while a potential source of stress in Riley’s office, was considered by several participants as useful for new Deans for learning from their experienced colleagues. Sharing an office allowed Ana to offer her language expertise to support a Samoan student from another year group who was accused of being violent to give his side of the story. Ana thought this was a real benefit of the shared space, but also recognised that there was an added stress in navigating interventions in her deaning colleagues’ work: “It’s those moments where I can hear what’s happening behind me, I stand up and leave, but at the same time, if I feel I need to, I intervene for the sake of the kids because everybody deserves to have their name said correctly”. For

educational leaders working in a shared office space the work they do as an educational leader is much more visible to colleagues. For Riley, this could be a source of stress and pressure, and for Ana it added pressure on her as an experienced Dean with significant cultural expertise. However, as Ana pointed out, overall it was helpful, both for students having improved outcomes as deaning colleagues could be encouraged to do better in areas such as cultural competency, and for the deaning colleagues' professional learning and development. Ana stated: "I think it is helpful because the newer Deans can just observe for a little while". This was echoed by Ben's comments: "Every day I'm still learning ... The knowledge is in the room. There's so much experience in there. We all support each other". Ben noted that the shared space forced a measure of collegiality between the Deans: "Just by virtue of the fact that we are all there together, we can't help but be collegial in how we work".

A range of benefits and challenges associated with the shared deaning workspace were identified by participants. Overall, the experience of working in a shared space was helpful because of the extra support, collegiality and convenience it offered. Challenges of increased visibility were perhaps a double-edged sword and issues of privacy were widely experienced, but easily resolved in most cases. These challenges were largely accepted by the participants as a normal part of the work rather than an issue they wished to change. Ben, for example, acknowledged the challenge: "It's just around privacy, when you need privacy, but then you just address it. You just say okay, we've got to go, we'll go somewhere else".

Question Seven asked: When you meet with students, whānau, or teachers do they come into the shared space or is there another space used for meetings? How is privacy and confidentiality for sensitive information and discussions managed in a shared environment?

Table 8: Managing privacy and confidentiality

Category	Tawa High School			Kauri College		Nikau High School		Total Responses
	Blair	Madison	Taylor	Riley	Jordan	Ana	Ben	
Booking a different space for meetings as needed			2	1	1	1	1	6
Privacy and confidentiality not an issue between deaning colleagues	1	1	1					3
Students needing privacy in some cases e.g. if visibly upset		1		1			1	3
Different meeting spaces used can signal seriousness of a meeting			1	1	1			3
Checking with students if they are ok with the other Dean being present				1	1			2
Use of door to signal levels of privacy		1						1

The participants all recognised at different points in the interview that privacy and confidentiality had to be factored into the experience of working in a shared office. Participants from each of the three schools identified that a separate meeting space would be booked if needed. Riley considered it vitally important that students feel completely safe to share with her in a private space and was conscious that if there were other Deans in the space or, of more concern, other students meeting with the

Deans, that this would not be the case. At times it could be unpredictable what a student's needs would be in a meeting; they may have been called in to talk about attendance only to reveal that their attendance issues were linked to a trauma they were facing in their personal lives: "You can just call someone up for an absence and then you find out that their mum has got cancer and they have got this and that or whatever is going on and they actually just have never talked to anybody about it or whatever is going on and it all just comes out". Riley thought perhaps a bigger space for the three Deans to work in would solve this. Both Riley and Jordan would try to mitigate the situation by asking students if they were okay with the other Dean being present for a conversation, and both pointed out that students had never said no to this. Whether this is an accurate reflection of students' experiences is important to consider as students may not express concerns if they had them. While the Deans were considering student needs in how and where they set up meetings, this does not guarantee that shared spaces work for students as positively as for the adults using the spaces.

Interestingly, the views on privacy and confidentiality were similar within each school setting which suggests that attitudes of participants may reflect school policies in this regard. This is particularly evident at Tawa High where privacy and confidentiality were not seen as an issue between Deans sharing the same cohort. Madison and Taylor didn't see it as an issue if they overheard a student's conversation with the other Dean in the space as it was more than likely that they would need to know about the situation. Taylor even considered it better to have the other Dean present as it added another layer of safety. In her view, booking a different space for a meeting was more about being courteous to her deaning colleague Madison or signalling a more formal meeting, than it was about privacy or confidentiality. Blair also didn't see it as an issue for her deaning colleague to overhear anything about the student because their cohort of students was shared.

Taylor, Riley and Jordan all mentioned how using a different space for meetings could signal a shift in the levels of seriousness. Like Taylor, Jordan tended to book a different meeting space to make it "a little bit more private" and to make meetings "a little bit more official". If it was possible to use his own office, for example if neither of the other Deans were there, he would choose that space. For Riley it was about having a safe space to meet and discuss: "It's really important to have that space you can take those difficult conversations to". Part of making the meeting more formal was also the atmosphere of having everyone in the room engaged with the meeting: "If it's a formal

thing then it's nice to be in a more confined room where you're not like, someone's working in the background". All schools had designated meeting rooms specifically to be used for meetings that could not be appropriately conducted within the shared deaning space, whether due to privacy constraints, a need for greater formality, or simply to avoid distracting other colleagues.

Question Eight asked: To what extent do you think that the shared space enhances or encourages collaboration or teamwork between yourself and the people you share the space with?

Table 9: Collaboration and teamwork in the shared space

Category	Tawa High School			Kauri College		Nikau High School		Total Responses
	Blair	Madison	Taylor	Riley	Jordan	Ana	Ben	
Easier to check in with Dean colleagues	1	1	1		1			4
Better communication with Dean colleagues	1	1	1		1			4
Walking to another office would be a barrier to asking for help or checking in about work	1	1	1					3
Enhances collaboration				2			1	3
Increased consistency between deaning approaches				1	1			2
Incidental collaboration					1		1	2
More likely to intervene if someone needs help or support					1		1	2
Increased safety of another set of ears and eyes					1			1

Three of the seven participants agreed that working in a shared space enhanced collaboration and teamwork, and four of the participants associated the shared space with better communication and efficiency due to proximity and availability to help.

Participant responses indicated that sharing a space made it easier to communicate and check in with Dean colleagues, both of which could be considered important aspects of collaboration and teamwork. On top of this, all three participants from Tawa

High considered that walking to another office to ask for help was an extra barrier as opposed to being able to ask someone a question within the shared space. As Madison from Tawa High stated: "I'm probably not going to be willing to get up and walk around to somebody else's office". Taylor noted that without the shared space much more communication would have to take place via email which would be less efficient than the incidental ongoing communication she had with Madison. Riley and Ben both thought the shared space enhanced collaboration and Ben believed that there was more incidental collaboration as a result of sharing the space, as did Jordan: "If we had separate offices, just the random conversation that comes up might not happen".

The increased likelihood of intervention on a deaning colleagues' practice was identified by Ana as an aspect of this increased collaboration. For Ana, who was both a very experienced Dean and held a considerable amount of cultural competency, it seemed that there was an increased workload for her. She expressed particular frustration around incorrect pronunciation of student names: "It's those moments when I can hear what's happening behind me, I stand up and I leave, but at the same time, if I feel I need to, I intervene for the sake of the kids because everybody deserves to have their name said correctly". Ana felt that her intervention was valuable both for the other Deans and for the students as she could advocate for better name pronunciation and support those with language barriers, however she certainly felt frustration at needing to intervene. In Ana and Ben's Dean team a range of different cultures and languages were represented and those Deans with language and cultural proficiencies would contribute in the same ways in areas of their expertise. Ana considered this a huge advantage for her team, "if you line everybody up and think, wow you can speak one, two, three, four, five different languages and you can relate to five different cultural groups". It was not clear to Ana whether this diversity in the deaning team was something that had been intentionally sought out by the school in appointing roles, or whether it was a natural reflection of the demographics in the local community. Ben also considered diversity to be one of the strengths of their Dean team and appreciated the way that everyone helped and supported each other. This was especially significant to as a newer member of the team.

Like the impetus to intervene for better outcomes identified at Nikau High, at Kauri College both participants associated the shared offices with an increased consistency of practice. In particular, Riley described that in any "systematic stuff" they would work as a team - for example in the work they did with their tutor teachers they would "do that together" and in the approach they took to running assemblies they would "follow the same format". In both these examples, the three Deans took turns at leading the

meeting or assembly and, by taking turns and observing each other's practice, there was increased consistency. Riley had been new to this particular year level team and so she was happy to follow her Dean colleagues' lead but recognised that they each had "quite a different leadership style". As well as having that consistency within their year level team, Riley noted that there were efforts being made to be "really coordinated across the wider Dean team for consistency as well".

Jordan also felt that he was more likely to intervene in his deaning colleagues' practice when working in the shared space. While he framed this initially as a problem, he also considered it beneficial that they could support each other like this: "My biggest problem is that when I hear something and I think, I think I can add to this and I will turn around ... I can't help myself sometimes So that's actually another benefit, we can jump on". Like Ana, Jordan had a considerable amount of experience in working as a Dean and could draw upon this to support his deaning colleagues in their work. It seemed that his reluctance to intervene in a conversation was partially because of workload, usually he could "tune out pretty easily" if he was trying to get something done, but also not wanting to interrupt or step in if this wouldn't be helpful. Jordan stated that he would seek the other Dean's permission to add to the conversation before stepping in.

While simply working alongside each other and checking in more often is certainly collegial, whether this translated to collaborative leadership was not clear from the participants at Tawa High. At Nikau High and Kauri College there was certainly a clear sense of working together and contributing individual strengths to a collective team approach.

Question Nine asked: In what ways do you see aspects of your leadership as being influenced by the space you are in?

Table 10: Leadership in the shared space

Category	Tawa High School		Kauri College			Nikau High School		Total Responses
	Blair	Madison	Taylor	Riley	Jordan	Ana	Ben	
Leading tutor teachers and other staff members	1		1		2		1	5
Working to each other's strengths	1	1		1			1	4
Improved communication		2			1	1		4
Collaboration	1			1	1	1		4
More delegation		2						2
Leading students e.g. prefects	1						1	2
Creating a shared approach to leadership			1		1			2
Supportive team environment; strength of the collective							2	2

The shared space influenced the participants' leadership primarily in terms of working collaboratively. Much of this was linked to the relationships which formed in the shared space with their deaning colleagues. Four out of seven considered that the way they led teachers and other staff members was influenced by the shared space, and four participants considered that working in a shared space supported them to work to each other's strengths. Taylor found that having a similar personality to Madison and working closely together allowed for a shared leadership style. In her view their leadership as a team was relaxed and prioritised being approachable for teachers they worked with. Madison saw the space as increasing her likelihood to communicate and delegate in a shared work environment, which in her view was linked to increased trust in a deaning colleague to work effectively. Part of this was being able to see each other's workload, for example she described how she might pass on a task to her Dean colleague:

"You're here and you're not doing ... can you call her up?". Improved communication was also noted by Jordan and Ana. Ana considered the space "forced" collaboration and talking to other people. Jordan found that the space helped with collaboration in the way the Deans led their subgroups of tutor teachers, comparing notes regularly and sharing ideas and strategies.

Ben associated the shared space with a sense of collective authority: "We are the Deans, this is the Dean's office"; he described how if someone was to come into the Dean's office they would be perceiving you as part of a wider team and know that the other Deans "won't stand for any nonsense". In Ben's view there was a strength to the unity of all the Deans working in one space which was appropriate for their role in the school, both in dealing with serious issues on a day to day basis and in providing support and encouragement to staff and students. For Ben as a newer Dean, being a part of this collective gave him confidence in his role.

Question Ten asked: To what extent has working in a shared space influenced the way you experience your role as a Dean? How? Why?

Table 11: Shared spaces and influence on Dean experiences

Category	Tawa High School		Kauri College			Nikau High School		Total Responses
	Blair	Madison	Taylor	Riley	Jordan	Ana	Ben	
New Deans access to support and knowledge			2	2			2	6
Team support/ Supportive environment to work in	2				2	1		4
Stronger relationships with Dean colleagues		1				2		3
Good communication with Dean colleagues	1			1				2
Visibility of colleague's leadership increases trust		2						2
Working to each other's strengths				2				2

All participants considered that working in the shared space had a significant influence on the way they experienced their roles as Deans. Three of the Deans considered that it was beneficial in supporting new Deans in their professional learning and a further three Deans considered the shared space to have influenced their team to have a supportive atmosphere to work within. Overall, six out of the seven participants found that their experiences of the role of Dean were positively influenced by working in a shared space because of the extra levels of support this facilitated.

Participants felt an increased sense of confidence in their professional practice through having someone to observe and be observed by in their work, a mutual system of support and collegiality. Blair considered it to be beneficial to have team support in the form of a person you could touch base with or discuss issues before having to escalate

them to a deputy principal, for example. Taylor, much like Blair, had an increased sense of confidence in the role from working closely alongside Madison and being able to observe and support each other's practice. While Madison's comments did not indicate that she found any extra support in the role, she did think that the relationship she had with her deaning colleague was built "by being in collaborative space" and through the observation of each other's work with students or parents. Working closely together influenced her leadership style to be more collaborative because of the increased trust between them.

At Riley's school she explained that the Dean teams were always organised so that there was at least one experienced Dean at each year level so that there was someone who could provide that level of support, especially for newer Deans. Riley thought that the shared space allowed for extra support for new Deans, and while she acknowledged that a shared space was not necessary for that support, having to go to "the person next door" could be a barrier as "you would feel like you are going out and asking all the time". In Riley's view, being a new Dean in a single-cell office would be "really tough". Jordan's view aligned with this, valuing the support that could be instantly found within the office space, or even in the shared corridor. Being able to have positive feedback from a colleague after dealing with an issue or having someone who could gauge whether you were struggling or needed some extra support was a great advantage of the shared space. Riley explained: "there is always someone in the dean team that can support you or has encountered an issue before, or you can just debrief with if something happens." She also explained how: "if you know you are going to have a difficult conversation then you can say, hey can you just listen in and if it starts to get loud or whatever can you come in?" For Riley, knowing there was "There's always people there to support you" was a big advantage of a shared space. The increased levels of support could be seen as beneficial for Dean wellbeing.

Ben and Ana's comments also indicated that the shared space was associated with strong support systems. Ben as a new Dean felt that the shared space affected his experience as a Dean in a positive way because of the knowledge and learning that he was able to access in the space: "You can't write a manual for it". Ana enjoyed the social support of working in the Dean team, and felt that this had kept deaning attractive for her. In fact, she preferred it to her experience working as a head of department, which she found isolating in contrast to being a part of the Dean team in the shared space. She felt confidence in the knowledge that in the Dean team there

would always be someone who would help her students if she wasn't there and vice versa. She considered this an important aspect of the supportive environment.

While increased support was the key advantage identified as influencing the participants' experiences of deaning in a shared office space, other positive aspects were stronger collegial relationships such as that identified by Riley in her work with Taylor, increased visibility of leadership practice, better communication and the ability to work to each other's strengths as a team. None of the participants felt that their experience of the role of Dean was influenced in any negative ways by working in a shared space, on the contrary their comments indicate a hugely positive experience of deaning in this way.

Summary of findings

This chapter has presented and outlined the results from the interview data collected. The interview questions and the participants' responses have been analysed and discussed and can be summarised with reference to my research questions as follows.

- In what ways are schools adopting shared workspaces for educational leadership teams?

The key finding in relation to whether schools are adopting shared workspaces for educational leadership teams in this study was that the interviewed Deans have been working from a context of shared spaces for a significant amount of time. This suggests that there is not necessarily a connection between the increased prevalence of FLE for classroom learning and the use of flexible leadership spaces. None of the participating schools identified as FLE schools and the physical spaces and structures being worked within were in most cases not new designs. It may be that due to the collaborative nature of co-deaning a cohort of students, which was the deaning model used in all three participating schools, that a shared workspace was the most logical and efficient use of space for this kind of work.

- How does the configuration of workspaces for educational leadership teams influence their experiences of their roles?

The physical and spatial design of the shared workspace was found to have a significant influence on Deans' experiences of their roles as educational leaders. While there were some stress factors associated with the increased visibility and transparency of a shared workspace, these were clearly outweighed by the advantages of working in a collaborative team environment which offers increased relational

support and professional development. Deans, especially those new to the role, found that they felt better supported in their work and had easy access to advice and guidance from experienced colleagues, as well as the ability to observe and model their own practice on that of their colleagues.

- In what ways do leadership spaces affect leadership practice?

The ways in which the spaces provided for Deans as educational leaders affected their practice were linked with increased visibility and collaborative leadership. Leadership spaces which are shared, open and transparent lead to increased visibility of leadership practice. This de-privatisation of the role opened Deans up to ongoing observation and feedback. While this may be seen as a source of added stress, the participants' emphasis was focused on the supportive nature of the feedback and it was considered beneficial to observe each other's practice and learn from it. In some cases, offering feedback could add extra stress to those with the expertise to see that changes needed to be made, such as a need for greater cultural competency. While this may have increased the workload for one individual it had the result of improving students' experiences of school and lifting the overall quality of leadership practice for the deaning team. Acknowledgement of and compensation for this extra work would be one way of addressing this issue. Ideally in a collaborative leadership environment the contributions of all Deans would balance out so that the workload was even. This may not always have been the case, such as Ana's experiences at Nikau High, and therefore raises questions about how leaders can work most effectively in a shared space. Working in the shared space was seen to be associated with a greater likelihood of working collegially and collaboratively due to development of positive and supportive relationships. Participants identified positive and supportive relationships with their Dean colleagues and increased collegiality as associated with working in the shared space. Being together in the space led to incidental collaboration and increased trust in each other's professional work. Overall, it was clear from this research that leadership spaces have the potential to significantly affect leadership practice.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Introduction

This chapter critically examines the findings from the research data in order to address the central aims of the study beyond what is shown by the literature and data analysis. Firstly, the research aims and questions are outlined. Then, key themes are identified and discussed with reference to the aims of the study and in relation to relevant literature and research.

Research aims and questions

This study set out to critically examine the lived experiences of Deans working in shared office spaces in a New Zealand secondary school context. At the time of writing I am unaware of any similar study into the workspaces of teachers or educational leaders, and the literature drawn upon as a foundation for the study was largely from research concerned with FLE classroom environments and corporate open plan workspaces. In both bodies of literature there were a range of concerns associated with increased transparency, workload, and balancing the financial demands for spatial efficiency with the wellbeing of those working within these shared spaces. Insights into this aspect of educational leadership may be useful to other Deans or those seeking to understand this important branch of middle leadership which is not often the focus of literature exploring educational leadership. It may also be useful to schools interested in FLE and how principles of FLE may translate into leadership spaces.

The research questions were:

- In what ways are schools adopting shared workspaces for educational leadership teams?
- How does the configuration of workspaces for educational leadership teams influence their experiences of their roles?
- In what ways do leadership spaces affect leadership practice?

Discussion of themes

Collaborative leadership, collegiality and relationships

One of the strongest themes which emerged in this study was that of collaborative leadership. All participants appreciated being able to work collaboratively in teams and identified this leadership approach as being at least to some degree attached to the configuration of their shared office space. Like the middle leaders in Bennett et al. (2007) and the principals in Leithwood (2011), collaboration was considered an

important aspect of leadership for Deans. The finding that working in a shared office space was associated with collaborative leadership could indicate that shared office spaces lend themselves well to this manner of leadership. This is similar to the way that Benade (2017a) shows that collaborative work is central to FLE classrooms. Open plan offices in a corporate setting were often associated with aims to improve collaboration (Morrison & Smollan, 2020) and the 'collaborative turn' in teaching suggests that schools value collaborative leadership. Whether schools are explicitly setting out to encourage collaboration through workspace design is unclear. As Macky et al. (2017) found in studying teachers in shared flexible classrooms, there are opportunities for teacher collaboration which result from the "de-privatised, shared nature" (p. 98) of these spaces in the daily work of education. The opportunities for collaboration between Deans were certainly evident in shared workspaces with 'incidental' collaboration found to be an advantage of the shared space. Much more emphasis was placed on the benefits of working collegially in a supportive manner than on working in a collaborative manner in their approach to leadership. This is similar to the "co-operative rather than collaborative" practice that is sometimes discussed in the context of teaching in FLE. Working collegially was perhaps conflated with notions of working as a collective or being part of a "Dean team".

Distinguishing between collaborative leadership and collegial support, and what allows for each to emerge, raises important questions around the ways a shared space may be influencing leadership behaviours. The shared space could be seen to enable Deans to work collegially in a supportive manner by removing barriers to accessing support; however this support likely would have still been available if sought out within a single-cell office structure. If the overall experience of working in such a way meant that Deans felt connected and supported as part of a team, and if this helped Deans to perceive their work in a more positive way, then this would be beneficial. Whether this engenders shared or collaborative leadership is more difficult to ascertain. While it could be argued that there was a link between an increased number of Deans in a shared workspace and the prominence of collaborative leadership practice in this study, the shared office space may not be the only factor influencing this leadership approach. The focus on collaborative leadership may also be linked with a school's values or with the individual leadership styles within the team of educational leaders or even the unique needs of a local school community. If educational leaders are indeed working towards creating collaborative cultures, as suggested by Leithwood (2011), then this may be an explicit goal within a school or a particular leadership team. However, Deans may not be explicitly aware of the difference between leading

collaboratively and working *collegially* as part of a team and may assume that the purpose of the shared space was more to do with convenience than to allow collaboration or collegial connections. From this it could be surmised that simply placing two educational leaders in a shared space does not result in collaborative leadership; without explicit intentions to lead in this way, it is likely that Deans may simply work alongside each other and exhibit collegial support as needed. Collegial support was found to be a highly valued benefit of working in a shared space. The goal of placing Deans in a shared office could have been to provide this collegial support rather than to implement a model of collaborative leadership. For schools interested in supporting Deans to be collaborative in their educational leadership using a shared space, it might be necessary to supplement the spatial provisions with explicit professional development in the area of collaborative leadership.

Whether or not the shared space contributed to increased collaborative leadership, it was certainly associated with strong professional relationships between Deans which was positive for their experiences of the role. This is significant in considering the indications from literature explored in Chapter Two that shared spaces could have concerning implications for employee wellbeing (Bernstein and Turban, 2018; Cross et. al., 2016; Morrison & Macky, 2017; Morrison & Smollan, 2020). The research data from this study suggest that strong professional relationships between Deans working in a shared space were a significant contributing factor in having a positive experience and contributed to greater wellbeing for Deans, as well as supporting greater collegiality and collaboration. The relationships were seen to be supported by the shared space and allowed for connection, support and increased professional trust and respect. These relationships were seen to underpin the success of Deans working collaboratively as a team which is in keeping with the findings of Kim et al. (2016), in that providing opportunities for interaction contributed positively to teamwork and collaboration. If schools are seeking to develop more collaborative practice through a shared workspace, the combination of working in a team with having a shared workspace could be an effective strategy in working towards this. The shared space helped Deans to connect in a positive way with benefits for both their leadership practice and their wellbeing. Improved understanding of deaning colleagues' strengths supported collaboration and effective teamwork. So, while simply placing Deans in a shared space without a common goal of working collectively may not result in greater collaborative leadership practice, there is much potential for developing a collaborative leadership approach through a shared space. It is also possible that the shared space 'forced' a measure of collaboration, which raises questions about whether the space

removes some of the agency Deans may have in developing their own leadership style. To return to Lefebvre's (1991) notion of space as "perceived ... conceived and lived" (p. 38), it could be argued that in this context, the conceptualisation of the space and the lived in reality may not translate exactly. Even with the intention or perception of the shared space as one which supports Deans to be collaborative, this may not be the reality which is lived by deans working within the space. Benade (2019) argues that space can both enable and facilitate educators to work in particular ways. This can be seen with Deans in their work of educational leadership in the ways in which the space allowed greater connections and support. It could be surmised that while the provision of a shared space for educational leaders may not directly result in a change in leadership approach, is likely that these shared spaces do enable and support collaborative leadership models in ways that may not occur in other spaces.

Relational support and connection were important aspects of the relationships between Deans. The shared space facilitated and even enhanced the ability for Dean colleagues to provide this to each other. As seen in Table 9, without physical barriers separating Deans while they worked, they were better able to tell when a colleague in the Dean team was struggling or in need of support and were more available or accessible to listen or provide help while working in separate rooms was an extra barrier to accessing support. This finding is contrary to that of Morrison and Macky's (2017) which associated the shared space with decreases in support from supervisors and lower levels of friendship between colleagues and instead associated co-worker friendships more with a collaborative approach than the spatial layout. Kim et al. (2016) suggest that flexible work environments can support improvements in teamwork, which may indicate that while the space may not directly lead to better relationships there may be a flow on effect where a shared space leads to better teamwork and collaboration which in turn allows for improved relationships as suggested by Morrison and Macky (2017). Supporting each other was an integral part of their professional relationships and the way the Deans functioned as a team - while this support was not necessarily from a supervisor it did stem from positive relationships. It may be that Deans in the shared space happened to be working collaboratively and connected this and the improved relationships with the space, or it may be that working collaboratively in separate offices would have a similar effect. It seems that there are connections to be made between the ways a space is set up for teams to work and the ways in which individuals relate to each other and work together within these spaces. Given the finding that Deans felt spatial barriers were likely to stop them seeking help, it seems that the shared space plays a role in allowing supportive collegial relationships to

occur. Friendships and increased relational trust were built through small connections like hearing about each other's weekends or personal lives.

The significance of the relationships and connection to the 'Dean team' was highlighted when considered alongside the disconnection Deans often felt from their curriculum teaching colleagues. Deans benefitted from the connection to their deaning team in a way that perhaps is not experienced by curriculum middle leaders such as those in the study of Bennett et al. (2011). As curriculum leaders are attached to their departmental team rather than a team made up of colleagues in the same role, it is likely that the team support they might experience as the head of a department would differ greatly to that experienced by a Dean working in a shared workspace. This highlights the advantages of Deans working in a shared team workspace. This connection was especially important for Deans who could feel disconnected from their teaching departments because of the physical separation of the workspaces across the school. It is interesting to consider given that isolation was experienced by the Deans interviewed even when working in small groups which were disconnected from other deaning groups. If this is the case, then it is significant to consider how this same feeling may be exacerbated in smaller schools where each year level or cohort is allocated only one Dean, each working in a single-cell office. Perhaps in this instance Deans might feel isolated from both their departments and their deaning colleagues. A shared workspace was valuable in mitigating some of this isolation. Which Deans are excluded or disconnected is also an important point to consider, particularly as most schools have international Deans and many employ Deans with a specific focus on Māori or Pasifika students; if these Deans are disconnected from the rest of the team then this could be an issue both for the Deans and the students and whānau they work with. The configuration of Dean workspaces within the wider school context can have a strong influence on Deans' experiences of the role as connections formed through these spaces influence their levels of support and wellbeing.

Working in a shared space may not directly lead to collaboration or collaborative leadership, but may have an indirect influence on the ways Deans work together. This is in keeping with what is suggested by Morrison and Smollan (2020) in a corporate setting. In the case of educational leaders, a shared space seemed to enable or foster a sense of collective responsibility which allowed each Dean to contribute their strengths to the wider team. As Deans worked closely together, they learned what their co-Deans had expertise in and were able to draw upon these strengths. This allowed Deans to utilise each other for support in different ways. Whatever the situation these

Deans knew who to call upon if they needed help in a specific way. The findings of Morrison and Macky (2017) in a corporate setting indicated that it was working collaboratively that facilitated co-worker friendships rather than “simply doing one’s own work nearby others in a shared environment” (p. 112). Perhaps it is this relational connection which is key to the success of collaborative leadership in a shared workspace. This is also consistent with Benade’s (2017a) argument that space actively influences human relationships. In my study the shared office space seemed to influence the relationships of the Deans inhabiting the same space resulting in increased professional trust, respect and connection. It is possible that without successful existing relationships, that a shared space would actively work against a collaborative leadership approach. In the studies of Bernstein and Turban (2018) and Morrison and Macky (2017) the shared spaces were associated with decreased interaction and collaboration, distrust, and lower levels of co-worker friendship. In a situation where these stress factors were in place there may not have been existing relationships to build on and this would likely work against efforts to work or lead collaboratively. Without specific efforts to establish a collaborative environment for educational leaders sharing an office, it is entirely possible that the same results would be found in the context of school leadership spaces. This possibility highlights the importance of the idea that provision of a shared space is not an immediate precursor of collaborative leadership practice and must be implemented alongside other measures in order to be truly effective in this manner. While Morrison and Smollan (2020), Morrison and Macky (2017) and Bernstein and Turban (2018) all raise concerns about negative outcomes of a shared space, particularly around relationships and wellbeing, the findings of this study indicate that positive relationships were the norm in shared deaning workspaces and had a positive effect in supporting collegiality and connection with a team.

Shared workspaces for Deans were associated with positive relationships, however when relational breakdown and conflict did occur, although this was not common it was a source of stress for Deans. Deans experiencing conflict of any sort in the shared space could feel trapped and unable to have space from the issues at hand. While this did not appear to be a common experience for Deans it does fit with the concerns of Morrison and Macky (2017) that shared workspaces could lead to increases in negative relationships, distrust and uncooperative behaviours. A potential reason for this not being such a strong finding in this study, as compared to the findings of Morrison and Macky, could be the educational setting as opposed to the corporate context and the associated differences in number of workers sharing a space. It may be that there is a

tipping point in the number of workers sharing an office space with these successful relational connections; the numbers of Deans sharing a space in this study were significantly lower than the numbers in a shared space in Morrison and Macky's study due to the different context. It may also be that those who work in education are more accustomed to working in a 'shared' space as the classroom environment is always shared with students, whether it is an FLE or not.

Conflicts of ideals and values, especially cultural competencies (or incompetencies) such as incorrect name pronunciation, could be a source of both extra stress and additional workload for those who would step in and challenge these practices. While this is a concern and a stress for Deans it does ultimately point to one of the advantages of shared leadership spaces in that Deans can be held more accountable in areas they may not have the expertise necessary to give students the best possible experience of their schooling. Having some members of the Dean team who had expertise in pronouncing student names correctly is effective in a shared space; but it places greater demand and responsibility on those Deans to hold their colleagues, and sometimes more senior members of staff, accountable. This illustrates the increased visibility of leadership practice in a shared space and highlights how, as suggested by Lefebvre (1991) and Benade (2017a), the space influences individuals, relationships and workload. While it seems that the shared space has benefits for leadership practice, it is important to acknowledge that there is potential for strained relationships as well as, or because of, increased pressure on individuals to uphold high levels of professionalism in significant areas such as cultural competency. For a shared office space to work well, it is clearly important that Deans are well matched with their co-Deans and that relationships are upheld.

Overall, the experiences of working in a shared office provided connection and support in relationships which served as both a contrast to experiences working in other roles, as well as mitigating some of the lack of connection Deans had with their teaching colleagues. The shared space influenced both the experiences Deans had of their roles and perhaps, more indirectly, the ways in which they practised their leadership.

Professional learning and development for middle leaders

Perhaps the most important finding of this study was the value of the shared workspace in increasing visibility of leadership practice which fostered professional development and growth through reciprocal observation. Visible leadership is an advantage of working in a shared workspace which is unique to Deans as middle

leaders, allowing the modelling of leadership practice as well as collaborative practice to support ongoing professional learning. This is an important finding and perhaps suggests that deaning can be a valuable experience for growing educational leaders in ways that curriculum middle leadership may not offer. Literature reviewed in Chapter Two from both educational and corporate settings indicated that flexible learning spaces can be linked to notions of visibility, transparency and de-privatisation (Macky et al., 2017; Ruismäki et al., 2015). My research suggests that this can also be seen in the 'flexible leading space' wherein the leadership practice of those occupying a shared space becomes 'visible' to all those in the space at any given time. The levels of visibility increase or decrease depending on the number of people sharing a workspace, as well as on the physical transparency of the space. This can have a range of benefits as well as stressors associated with it. The benefits of leadership being 'visible' include an increased ability to observe and learn from each other's practice, improved outcomes for students as other Deans lend their expertise. Additionally, it allowed an increased sense of safety for Deans as they worked with both students and families. The stressors experienced by participants were the extra workload of feeling the need to step in and the pressure of being constantly visible and observed.

Reciprocal observation within a shared space allowed for leadership growth and development to occur in an ongoing manner. This was especially helpful for those new to the role. In being able to observe or 'shadow' each other's practice, the more experienced Deans were able to model the role to the newer Deans. It was clear that it was important that new Deans have access to support and advice from more experienced Deans, and that working in a shared workspace provided this and removed barriers for Deans seeking help with their work. Literature explored in Chapter Two suggested that observation can be a source of stress. This finding from my research suggests that this is not the case for middle leaders in pastoral roles. Bennett et al. (2007) noted a tension in the observation of teachers by subject leaders. While on the one hand observation could be experienced as "collaborative learning" (Bennett et al., 2007, p. 460) it could also be experienced as more of a supervision or evaluation because of the formal accountability associated with the senior colleague observing them. For Deans working in a shared space this complication seems to be removed, allowing for Bennett et al.'s (2007) "concept of observation as collaborative learning" wherein Deans were "open to scrutiny by their colleagues" and "encouraged to seek advice and direction" (p. 460). Perhaps if a shared Deans' workspace was set up in such a way as to encourage a feeling of being observed by more senior leaders there

would be more stress associated with this transparency. Instead, my study suggests that observation of leadership practice amongst peers is beneficial for professional growth and development and associated with support rather than surveillance.

While this is not entirely different to the findings of Bennett et al., (2007), it provides an interesting contrast between mutually beneficial observations of practice for colleagues in the same role, versus evaluative observations linked with supervision and evaluation. The ability to learn and develop educational leadership practice through mutual observation of colleagues as a function of the shared space is significant in building understandings of how educational leaders learn and develop in their practice. Cardno and Bassett's (2015) study of pedagogical middle leaders found that despite receiving professional development, middle leaders felt they were not sufficiently trained for their roles and it was perceived that further support from senior leaders would be one solution to this. Like the pedagogical middle leaders in Cardno and Bassett (2015), the Deans in this study also felt that professional development courses and resourcing to prepare them for the role of Dean were inadequate. The solution that was noted for this was not linked to greater support from senior leaders as suggested by Cardno and Bassett (2015), but to collegial support from the rest of their team, in particular those more experienced in the role.

The findings of this study indicate that professional development through observation was important for both experienced and inexperienced teachers and could be significant in supporting all Deans to grow in areas where increased proficiency was required such as cultural competency. Rather than mutual observation being beneficial only within a hierarchy of experience, all members of the team possessed unique strengths to contribute, and likewise had areas to grow and develop further. While the ability for team members to hold each other accountable and encourage growth and development is certainly beneficial, there are implications around workload balance if some members of the team contribute more than others on an ongoing basis. The findings of this study suggest that in the case of Māori and Pasifika Deans the additional demands of the role may require them to perform extra labour such as challenging colleagues on their mispronunciation of 'difficult' Pasifika names or translating for students or families to help with clarity of communication. As highlighted by Cross et al. (2016), there could be increased stress associated with any imbalance of workload when working collaboratively. Cross et al. (2016) identified that there was a trend towards gender imbalance in the uneven distribution of workload in collaborative

work settings and it is interesting to note that the same may be true for Deans who identify with diverse minority groups such as Maori and Pasifika in school settings.

Deans with bilingual capabilities and cultural expertise working in diverse settings where these skills were regularly useful, could end up with a greater additional workload and expectations to support others in the team without these proficiencies. The *PPTA Workload Taskforce Report* (2016) highlights the additional workload expectations faced by Māori and Pasifika, and recognises that “Pasifika teachers are expected to carry out tasks above and beyond those in their job description because of their ethnicity and their language skills” (p. 54). Expectations on Pasifika teachers from both schools and Pasifika communities combined with “a strong sense of responsibility to go above and beyond for Pasifika students, families, and communities” (p. 54) can often lead to schools taking advantage of individuals to access “many unpaid teacher hours” (p. 54). Holding a paid position as a Dean may address this to some extent, but if this creates additional stress and adds to an already challenging workload above and beyond what is being expected from the rest of the Deans, then this is cause for concern. It is clearly beneficial to both a school’s leadership team and students for there to be educational leaders who can advocate for cultural competency and assist colleagues in upskilling in this area of their leadership practice; whether this can be accomplished without creating an imbalance of workload is another question altogether. Perhaps, as suggested by Cross et al. (2016), those who contribute significantly to collaborative practice should be compensated in some way to acknowledge the extra time and effort they dedicate to the wider team.

Deans benefit from working in a shared space in one central area of the school in ways which are not necessarily possible for curriculum middle leaders who are spatially separated from other middle leaders in silos across the school. Other staff interacting with the Dean team in the shared space in theory could be naturally exposed to a cross-curricular team of staff working collaboratively which could have benefits for mitigating the siloed effects of other aspects of a school’s spatial layout. This research suggests that Deans are uniquely placed to benefit from the leadership learning which occurs in a shared space and which cannot be replicated elsewhere. The spatial experiences of schools as workplaces can therefore be arguably a strong influencing factor on both the experiences Deans have of their roles as middle leaders as well as their development of leadership practice. Giles and Hargreaves (2006) suggest that collaborative school culture may be influenced by school layouts and suggest that

creating physical spaces where usually 'siloes' departments can work with members of other departments could support more collaborative culture. Similarly, Bennett et al. (2007) highlight the ways the physical layout of schools contributes to a fragmentation between different departments which poses a challenge for collaborative culture. The idea that spatial boundaries in a school can inhibit collaboration for middle leaders is confirmed in the findings of this research which indicates that by removing spatial boundaries and providing a centrally located shared workspace supports increased experiences of support, collegiality and collaboration. It is important to note that the nature of the leadership structure of a Dean team allows for this in ways that other middle leadership structures may not. It is likely that a team of Deans would also be made up of individuals from a range of departments within the school which could function in a similar way to the suggested cross-curricular workrooms from Giles and Hargreaves' (2006) study, mitigating some of the silo effect that is created by spatially separate department workspaces. As Giles and Hargreaves (2006) noted, having workrooms dispersed throughout the school for teachers could encourage interaction between different faculties. It may be that the design of a shared deaning space could allow a Dean team to model working collaboratively in a way which could be observed by a wide range of staff from different departments or faculties, although this may depend on the transparency of the space to outside observers.

Transparency, visibility and workload

Increased transparency, visibility and expectations for collaboration are associated with valid concerns regarding workload and stress levels for employees. This raises important questions around for whom transparency is good, and when it is appropriate in an educational environment. The issues of privacy and confidentiality must also be considered alongside the demands for increased transparency and visibility. While this study suggests that increased transparency can have positive implications for leadership practice and staff feeling safe and supported, this exists in tension with requirements of privacy and confidentiality. In order to achieve the benefits of more visible leadership practice there may be some sacrifices made to privacy and confidentiality for both educational leaders and the individuals they work with in the school community. Literature suggests that deaning spaces could be expected to reflect the principles of transparency as teacher workspaces in FLE schools (Benade, 2019; Ruismaki et al., 2015; Wall, 2016). In implementing a transparent design, consideration should be taken as to how to balance the demands for both visibility and transparency of space with the necessities of privacy and confidentiality which are naturally associated with pastoral middle leadership. Additionally, considerations of the

potential for increased workload demands linked with both visible and collaborative leadership approaches may need to be addressed as sources of stress for educational leaders in their experiences of the role of Dean.

A shared workspace could be associated with internal visibility between the colleagues working together within the shared space, as well as increased transparency and visibility from outside of the shared space. The use of transparent glass in the construction of the space allows for this. These two factors combined were seen to offer some safety for Deans working with students and their families, but also meant they were highly accessible and unable to 'hide'. Given the already demanding nature of deaning it is important to consider whether increased visibility and transparency leads to greater workload as was argued by Benade (2016), who associated this transparency with greater accountability. The findings of this study indicate that a natural side effect of sharing a space and being highly visible to colleagues was that Deans felt they had to uphold certain standards in their work and organisation. Working in a shared space meant that there were some unspoken expectations felt by participants; for example, the pressure to perform well or complete certain tasks in a timely manner or even to keep the space presented neatly. Unspoken expectations, whether perceived or actual, could be sources of stress working in a shared space. This is in keeping with literature which indicated that in corporate shared workspaces a decrease of privacy was associated with increased stress levels (Laurence et al., 2013) as well as lower productivity and worker satisfaction (Bernstein & Turban, 2018). However, the findings of my research seem to indicate that the increased stress associated with feeling watched over was not as apparent in the educational workplace, or at least not in the context of educational leadership. Perhaps this was due to the emphasis on collegial support rather than surveillance observation in the shared Deans' space. Increased visibility to students may also lead to a higher workload, or less ability to take breaks, as suggested by Wall (2006). In these ways, the increased transparency could indeed cause greater workload, as suggested by Bernstein and Turban (2018), Laurence et al. (2013), and Ruismäki et al., (2015). High standards of working and consciousness of being seen to be working may be experienced if individuals feel that they are being constantly observed. While the result may be better quality work, Deans' wellbeing, stress levels and workload may be negatively influenced which could lead to burnout and higher turnover of staffing in these crucial areas of school leadership. This turnover is cause for concern in the long-term sustainability of FLE schools (Giles & Hargreaves, 2006). Balancing high quality educational leadership with sustainable workloads in a shared office space should

therefore be considered carefully in the approaches taken by schools implementing a collaborative leadership approach in a shared office space.

While it is not a feature of this study, the ways in which the space is experienced by students and their whānau should be considered. While increased transparency could have additional benefits of modelling collaborative practice to students moving through the area as well as preparing them for the realities of open plan offices in the workplace (Benade, 2017a; Chapman et al., 2014; Nair, 2014), these benefits must be balanced with students' needs for privacy and confidentiality in working with their Deans for support. Deans are privy to confidential information and hold meetings with students and whānau of a sensitive nature. Nair (2014) notes the importance of an "acoustically secure space" (p. 1795) for teachers to make phone calls or have meetings with students or parents without colleagues listening in, and this is arguably even more important for Deans whose role requires dealing with private and confidential issues. In FLEs there is an expectation of some deprivatisation of practice for classroom teachers (Benade, 2017a). In a situation where a student or their family's privacy and confidentiality need to be upheld, such as in meeting with Deans or other educational leaders, an open plan or shared meeting space would not be appropriate. Given that meetings with students and teachers were identified as the most prevalent use of the office space, it is important that they are fit for this purpose. Shared collaborative spaces work well for several aspects of Deans' work but are not suitable for some types of meetings. While using a private office for family meetings and other more serious discussions may seem obvious, sometimes it would be more unpredictable whether a meeting with a student would require more privacy or not. Having to move mid-conversation from a highly visible space to a more private one which may be close by, or may require a short walk through a public area of the school, is unlikely to be the best case scenario for a student who is going through a difficult situation and may well be visibly upset. While a shared workspace has its advantages for many aspects of educational leadership, because the role of Dean is so multifaceted there are some aspects where it may not suit. If pursuing a shared workspace for Deans, schools could address this by planning the space in such a way as to support student privacy with a range of private meeting rooms in direct proximity to the shared space. This adds an additional consideration which should be factored into planning and implementing FLE principles in schools.

It is important to note that these issues of privacy and confidentiality, while they are especially significant in the work of Deans, are also important for other members of staff. Blackmore et al. (2011) point out the issues of privacy and confidentiality open staffrooms create for teachers, noting that perhaps “open staffrooms can raise issues of privacy, confidentiality and security for teachers” (p. 23). The findings from this study also suggest that despite transparency being seen largely as positive for the Deans in the shared space; it was not seen as necessary for all educational leaders. Based on data from the schools used in this study as well as my own experiences of schools, deputy principals (DPs) and principals often had private offices while Deans were situated in shared spaces. It may be that there was a perception that DPs needed to be able to close the door for confidential meetings, either because their meetings would be with other staff members or because there would be a higher number of confidential meetings. In corporate settings having a private office was a privilege for leadership and it may be that there is a similar hierarchy of transparency and visibility of practice in the school setting. In considering the roles of school leaders, the spaces designed for their use must balance this demand for transparency with the requirements of confidentiality and privacy which characterise many of their responsibilities.

Efficiency and convenience

Deans found that sharing an office with a colleague they collaborated with regularly was often both convenient and efficient. Working in a shared space had the advantages of more immediacy of communication and support, having shared documents and records easily available, and providing a ‘hub’ location to access Dean support. Efficient use of space is certainly associated with trends towards shared workspaces (Morrison & Smollan, 2020). This was more in the sense of floor space having a financial premium attached than to do with efficiency of time or convenience. Benade (2017a) points out that school buildings must be resourced as efficiently as possible as government assets, so it may well be in the educational sector that there is a financial component to utilising shared offices, although this was not indicated in the findings of this study. This is likely because Deans did not have any involvement with the designing and building of the shared spaces they worked within, as these had been in a shared configuration for a long time. What was clear from my study was that the shared office space allowed for efficient information sharing, more opportunities to work together collaboratively, and provided a centralised location for Deans to work from, and for other members of the school community to access their support.

It is not clear from this study whether the participating schools had ever made explicit decisions in their spatial planning of Dean workspaces to design the space to support collaborative or visible leadership practices. The experiences of the participants working in these spaces suggest that, to at least some extent, they seem to be fit for purpose when it comes to deaning, whether by design or coincidence is unknown. The provision of additional meeting rooms was an integral part of this which in some cases could have been implemented more effectively to support student privacy and confidentiality. However, as identified in the literature review, both corporate and school settings are subject to spatial constraints and must utilise buildings efficiently (Benade, 2017a; Morrison & Smollan, 2019; Nair, 2014). While more spaces to be used for confidential meetings would potentially address these concerns better, it is likely that there will always be limitations to how many of these spaces can be provided on top of a large shared workspace. The findings of Morrison and Macky (2017) suggested that despite several stressors being linked with experiences of a shared workspace in the corporate world, there would be no going back to single-cell offices due to their expense and spatial inefficiency in contrast to shared spaces. In the secondary school setting the benefits of a shared workspace for Deans seem to outweigh many of the stress factors identified. It may be that individuals who choose both teaching and deaning as their vocation are well suited to working collaboratively, and the norms of working in a shared departmental space may better prepare them for a shared deaning space. Morrison and Macky (2017) suggested that as students enter the workforce who have experienced open plan learning environments as the norm it may be that some of the stress factors identified in their study may be reduced. Brown (2009) also thought that the transition to shared spaces from non-shared or single-cell offices would mean that adaption to a new collaborative approach would be challenging. None of the participants in this study had experienced deaning from a single-cell office context and therefore this may have supported a more positive experience of working collaboratively from the beginning.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored themes which emerged from the study with reference to the literature discussed in Chapter Two. In exploring the question of the ways in which schools are adopting shared workspaces for educational leadership teams it seems that there does not seem to be a shift towards shared office spaces for educational leaders in the same way that there is one towards FLE and open plan corporate offices. It may be that this is because educational leaders have been working in shared

spaces for some time already, perhaps to economise on both space and time. With regard to the question of how the configuration of workspaces for educational leadership teams influences their experiences of the roles, it was shown that Deans working in a shared space with a culture of collegiality and teamwork had positive experiences of working in this way and felt that the shared space contributed to this. In addressing the question of how the configuration of the leadership space influenced leadership practice, shared workspaces for educational leaders were shown to be conducive towards increased collegiality and collaborative leadership practice. However, these spaces could not be guaranteed to create this climate without other measures involved. Additionally, the increased visibility of leadership practice was well suited to a group of Deans working in a team and was a source of professional support and development. Key findings of this research in relation to the literature reviewed indicate that shared workspaces in an educational leadership setting do not always have the same outcomes or drawbacks as in FLE or corporate open plan offices. Of note is the increase of positive relationships and support afforded by a shared workspace for educational leaders which was contrary to findings in the corporate shared office environment. FLE literature purports that space actively influences humans and the way they interact within them and can therefore be drawn upon as a tool or design feature to support aims such as greater collaborative practice. This is supported in the findings of this study as the shared space indeed influenced the relationships between Deans working within it, and this was overall a positive factor. It seems that the full potential of spatial influence has not yet been realised for educational leadership.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and recommendations

Overview of the research

This research aimed to explore the lived experiences of Deans working in a shared space in order to learn more about three key aspects of working in this way. The first was to explore the ways in which schools were adopting shared workspaces for educational leadership teams. The second was to investigate the ways in which the configuration of workspaces for educational leadership teams influenced their experiences of their roles. Finally, the research aimed to explore the ways in which leadership spaces affect leadership practice. This study employed an ontological stance of qualitative research in which people's experiences were valued as rich data for insights into their lived experiences. Seven participants were interviewed from three different schools with varying numbers of Deans working together in a shared office space, ranging from two co-Deans right through to eight Deans in the one space. Ten interview questions were used as the basis for semi-structured interviews with each Dean about their experiences of working in this shared environment. The following section will examine the conclusions which can be drawn from this research.

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusion One: A flexible leadership space may exist within a fixed architectural design. The flexibility arises from a space which caters for a range of uses by providing spaces which Deans can move between as needed.

Recommendation One: A flexible leading space should be characterised by a mixture of spaces designed for the purposes of the educational leaders working within it. While FLE classrooms are often characterised by moveable and changeable structures, this is not a necessary element for educational leaders' workspaces. Deans require individual workspaces within the shared office to complete their day to day administrative work associated with deaning as well as teaching and learning, a communal space for meetings with the wider Dean team, and private spaces with varied levels of transparency for meetings of a more serious or confidential nature. Having some measure of transparency such as frosted glass or blinds which can be adjusted would ensure Deans are able to be supported with regards to safety while also ensuring that the privacy and confidentiality of individuals they meet with is upheld. There is an optimal number of educational leaders to work together in a shared space – larger schools with multiple Deans per year level could consider grouping into senior

and junior Dean teams, while smaller teams may benefit from having each year level Dean in the same space. For example, five–ten Deans in a space would be appropriate but 10-20 would likely begin to exhibit some of the stressors reported in corporate shared office environments. Schools looking to implement flexible leadership spaces should design them with these factors in mind.

Conclusion Two: Shared spaces enable leadership learning of a kind not easily replicated elsewhere. Research suggests that Deans are uniquely placed to learn from each other in a shared environment. The visibility of leadership practice and the mutually beneficial observation associated with this is a benefit which Deans experience as middle leaders. This is an advantage for Deans which may not be experienced by middle leaders in curriculum roles.

Recommendation Two: Schools seeking to grow and develop strong collaborative leaders could benefit from utilising shared workspaces for Deans and encourage staff members wanting to grow and develop their leadership practice to consider deaning in a shared workspace as an opportunity for professional development and growth in their careers as educational leaders. Deans working in this environment should be encouraged and supported to share their strengths with the team as well as to take on board any feedback or advice received from deaning colleagues. Team members from diverse ethnicities or minority groups can provide valuable insight to improve the approach to supporting these groups within the school, for example with language support and upholding cultural competencies. The additional workload of these individuals must be acknowledged and supported for the collaborative workload to stay balanced. Imbalances of workload can lead to relational breakdown in the team and therefore should be avoided for a shared workspace to function effectively. A diverse team with members who all can contribute their unique strengths and develop each other's practice in a supportive way could be greatly beneficial to both the members of the team and the experiences of the wider school community.

Conclusion Three: While space cannot dictate leadership practice it can be a useful tool in supporting educational leaders to work in collegial and collaborative ways.

Recommendation Three: Schools looking to support greater visibility and transparency of leadership practice and aiming to grow a more collaborative leadership approach could consider implementing a shared workspace for educational leaders. It is important to also note that while the shared space can influence relationships and

foster teamwork and collegiality, this change alone would not be sufficient for collaborative leadership to happen. Depending on the size of the school and number of Deans per cohort, it may be that implementing smaller shared workspaces for teams grouped by year level or house could also support this change. For schools moving their educational leaders into a shared workspace, the purpose behind this move should be made clear. If one of the aims is to shift towards more collaborative leadership practice, then explicit professional development should be implemented concurrently to the change of spatial organisation. If the goal is to save space and provide a more collegial environment then this would not be necessary, however the secondary literature indicates that the change from one kind of workplace to another is especially stressful. Given the potential benefits of structuring a leadership team and their associated workspace as one focused towards collaborative leadership, investing the necessary steps to make this work effectively would be worthwhile.

Conclusion Four: Shared workspaces, when implemented successfully, can provide a supportive environment which has benefits for wellbeing of educational leaders.

Recommendation Four: It would be helpful for schools to invest in well implemented shared workspaces for their educational leadership teams. Given the demanding nature of the role of Deans as educational leaders, as well as the disconnection and isolation which can be experienced by middle leaders in these roles, this could be a supportive measure towards upholding and prioritising the wellbeing of their staff. This could have positive benefits for staffing turnover in these positions. If this is or has been a concern for schools then shared workspaces could be one part of a solution to this end.

Conclusion Five: In a flexible leading space there are tensions between transparency, privacy and confidentiality.

Recommendation Five: Shared workspaces for Deans working as educational leaders should aim to provide an environment where there is a balance between transparency and privacy. This could involve levels of flexibility of transparency using blinds, or a variety of spaces with frosted glass or use of plants as natural screens. These meeting rooms should still have some level of transparency for staff to feel safe and supported but should be sufficiently private to create a safe space for students and confidential

meetings while also relieving pressures within the shared space. These should be adjacent to the Deans' workspace so that any meetings taking place in the shared environment could be quickly relocated if needed without any additional invasions of privacy such as an upset student having to walk through a busy area of the school. A further provision which would support the flexibility of this leadership space would be the ability to make phone calls outside of the shared space. This could be through use of non-corded phones or phones located in the meeting rooms. Schools looking to increase the transparency of their leadership practice should consider the implications of this for educational leaders and whether this will place extra strain on individuals. The same question must be asked of collaborative leadership approaches. If there is an imbalance of workload which results from these then measures should be considered to mitigate them. A movement towards flexible leadership spaces should be carefully planned and considered for the best outcomes to be had for both staff and students.

Areas for further research

The focus of this study has been the lived experiences of Deans in shared workspaces but highlighted common themes which could all be investigated further in and of themselves. This research has concluded that shared workspaces, when implemented effectively, have strong potential to positively influence the experiences of Deans in their work as educational leaders and support growth and development of collaborative leadership practice. Further research should be undertaken to explore the implications of this kind of workspace for other members of the school community such as classroom teachers, students, whānau or caregivers. Additionally, the experiences and workload of Deans who represent minority groups within a shared workspace could be investigated further. This study has included discussion on visible and collaborative leadership practice in the context of educational leadership but does not address how increased visibility of leadership practice might improve outcomes for student learning. Student experiences of a shared space were not included due to constraints both on the size and scale of this study as well as challenges of attaining ethics approval. The perspectives of students on this topic would be valuable for anyone seeking to implement this structure within their school. The participants in this study were all from schools where shared workspaces were the norm; the perspectives of individuals with experience working in a single-cell office would provide a useful contrast, and perhaps any who have worked in both environments would give valuable insights into the benefits and demands arising from each workspace configuration.

Strengths and limitations

A major strength of this study was the range of shared space scenarios represented by the three schools which participated in the study. Having one school with a shared workspace used by two people, another used by three as well as the school with all eight Deans in the shared space indicates that there are benefits to sharing a workspace with even just one other person. However, none of the schools who participated identified as FLE schools. This did not preclude them from being included in the study. It is significant that there is not necessarily an association between FLE and provision of flexible leadership spaces. It would be interesting to see what characteristics are prioritised in leadership spaces by schools which are either being purpose built in keeping with FLE principles or transitioning to become an FLE school.

One limitation of the study was that there were not any Deans included who had experienced working in a single-cell office to serve as a point of contrast with their present experiences, or even other Deans' experiences in a shared workspace. My own experiences of deaning have been in a semi-shared space with one other person, and a single-cell office in close proximity to other Deans in a corridor; the lens through which I have conducted this study as a researcher could have skewed the data collected. Whether there would be stress associated with the change to a shared space is something which should be considered for schools considering this shift, and further data on the topic would be beneficial. Additionally, no participants had insight into school planners' intentions behind the design of school buildings and therefore it remains unclear whether this structure was implemented with the intent to foster collaborative leadership or whether it was intended as a financial space saver.

Another significant limitation of this study was the lack of student and community voice included in the research data. Students and their experiences of working with Deans in a shared space would be important to gain a fuller picture of what the value of implementing a flexible leadership space for Deans would be for the school. Given that Deans spend a large portion of their time meeting with students as well as with family members and other staff, the perspectives of these individuals should be considered.

This research was relatively small in sample size with only seven participants in total from three participating schools. This limited number was necessary for the nature of the study as a dissertation project. Because of this, this research provides a small

insight into the ways in which Deans are experiencing shared and flexible leadership spaces. Additionally, because the findings of this research are drawn from relatively large Auckland based secondary schools it may be that the snapshot provided would not resonate with smaller secondary schools around New Zealand. This could be a limitation of the study as some schools may have far fewer Deans to accommodate and may not require them to have an office at all, let alone a shared workspace. However, the principles and ideas from this study regarding the benefits of a shared space for collaboration and wellbeing as well as leadership development could be used to implement other strategies towards similar outcomes.

Final conclusion

This research acknowledges some of the complexities faced in middle leadership and the multifaceted demands of deaning in a secondary school context. The findings of this study also point towards some valuable insights into ways that schools can support and provide for Deans as educational leaders through developing a collaborative leadership culture in a flexible leadership space. The concerns and stress factors linked with increased visibility and transparency could be largely mitigated by positive collegial relationships which flourish in a shared team environment where all members are valued contributors. Spatial provisions were shown to influence the relationships between Deans which had a flow on effect of supporting a collegial culture open to collaborative leadership. However, leading collaboratively would not work without explicit intentions being made clear. This study adds to the small body of educational research into experiences of middle leadership and provides useful information for New Zealand Secondary schools investigating the prospects of restructuring the spatial configuration of workspaces for Deans and other educational leaders.

The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of Deans working in shared spaces in an educational setting in order to discover how working in this way influenced their experiences of the role of Dean as well as the ways in which they worked as educational leaders. These topics were explored within the context of increasingly prevalent FLE trends in New Zealand schools, so understanding how the workspaces provided for educational leaders might reflect the principles of FLE such as transparency, visible leadership and collaborative leadership was an important component of the study. This research highlights the importance of careful planning and implementation of a shared leadership space in order to best support the needs of the educational leaders working within it, and significantly emphasises the benefits

possible for Deans' experiences of leadership, support and wellbeing in a well implemented shared workspace.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics

Ethics approval



Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

8 October 2019

Alison Smith
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Alison

Re Ethics Application: 19/358 Flexible leading spaces: An exploration of leader experiences of shared office spaces

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 8 October 2022.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the [Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research](#) and as approved by AUTEC in this application.
2. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using the EA2 form.
3. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using the EA3 form.
4. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form.
5. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
6. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
7. It is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management approval for access for your research from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted. When the research is undertaken outside New Zealand, you need to meet all ethical, legal, and locality obligations or requirements for those jurisdictions.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

For any enquiries please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz. The forms mentioned above are available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>

Yours sincerely,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Manager
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Appendix B: Tools

Interview questions

Interview Questions – Indicative

1. To start with could you please describe your workspace for me? (layout, number of people, windows/lighting, etc)
2. Are you aware of the reasons behind your school putting you in a shared office? And if so, what are these reasons?
3. How long has your school utilised shared workspaces for educational leaders? Are they used for both deans and DPs?
4. Use of the workspace:
 - a. In what ways do you use this shared space?
 - b. In what ways do other members of your team use this shared space?
 - c. In what ways do others use this shared space?
5. What is it like working in a shared office space?
6. Are there any aspects of the shared space which are especially challenging or helpful? (To you, to your team?)
 - a. Can you share an example of a time when the shared space was challenging? (To you, to your team?)
 - b. Can you share an example of a time when you found it helpful being in the shared space? (To you, to your team?)
7. When you meet with students, whānau, or teachers do they come into the shared space or is there another space used for meetings? How is privacy and confidentiality for sensitive information and discussions managed in a shared environment?
8. To what extent do you think that the shared space enhances or encourages collaboration or teamwork between yourself and the people you share the space with?

9. In what ways do you see aspects of your leadership as being influenced by the space you are in?
10. To what extent has working in a shared space influenced the way you experience your role as a dean? How? Why?
- Do you think that some of the benefits of working in a shared space and having the kind of collaborative and collegial relationships that can arise from that are linked to reduced stress and feeling supported?
 - Do you think that the 'type' of people who become deans are more likely to work well together collaboratively in a shared space? Would it work well for other educational leaders?
11. What would your ideal workspace look like if you could make any changes?

Participant information sheet



Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

25 September 2019

Project Title:

Flexible leading spaces: An exploration of school leaders' experiences of shared office spaces

An Invitation

Kia ora, my name is Rebekah Bissett and I am a postgraduate student at AUT conducting research on the experiences of educational leaders working in a shared space. I would like to invite you to be a participant in my research. Your involvement would involve participating in a one-to-one semi structured interview with me. This research will be formalised in a dissertation and will contribute to my completion of a Master of Educational Leadership degree.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to find out more about the experiences of educational leaders who are working as a part of a team in a shared office space. The focus will be on secondary school deans. Insights into the way that working in a shared space influences leadership practice and the way that leaders within educational leadership teams function may be useful for institutions that are reviewing or planning the design of offices for their leadership teams.

The key questions which I will be exploring are:

- How does the configuration of workspaces for educational leadership teams influence their experience?
- In what ways do leadership spaces impact on leadership practice?

The findings of this research may be used for academic publications and presentations.

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

You have received this Information Sheet because you are believed to fit the criteria that I am using to select my research participants - that is, you are working as a dean in a shared office space in an Auckland secondary school.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you would like to take part in this research process or would like further information please contact me at nkg1896@aut.ac.nz. If you agree to participate, I will ask you to sign a Consent Form at the beginning of our interview meeting. The Consent Form is attached for you to look at beforehand.

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.

What will happen in this research?

This project is a small-scale study in which I will be interviewing eight participants, with two to three each from three different secondary schools in Auckland. The interviews will be 'semi-structured', which means that I will have some set questions that I will ask, but we will also be able to discuss other relevant topics that come up in the course of the interview. The interview will be recorded using my phone and the audio file from this will be transcribed by a transcription service approved by AUT (the transcriber will have signed a Confidentiality Agreement, so your participation remains confidential). This transcript will then be analysed to identify common themes which will form the basis of my written findings. In my writing, pseudonyms will be used for your name, your school's name, and for any other people or places to which you may refer in your interview. If you do not wish your colleagues who may also have been invited to participate to know that you are involved in the study, then please inform me of this preference.

What are the discomforts and risks?

Your participation in this study should not expose you to any discomfort or risk as everything we discuss will be kept confidential. If you do feel uncomfortable with any topics discussed during our interview, you are free to ask me to move on to the next question. You do not have to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable and we can stop the interview at any time.

What are the benefits?

For participants, the benefits of this research are envisaged as being the opportunity to reflect, discuss and explore an aspect of their work which is not often given attention and to contribute to a bigger conversation about flexible workspaces for educational leaders.

The benefits of this research for me are that it will produce findings for a dissertation which will be partial fulfilment of a Master of Educational Leadership, as well as allowing me to engage with deeper understanding of an issue relevant to the role of deanning through qualitative research into the lived experiences of educational leaders working in this context.

For the wider community, it is hoped that this research would give useful insights to those who may be involved in planning school office layouts and prompt thought and discussion into how a leadership team should work and examine the best ways to provide for their needs through physical spaces. This is especially important in the context of New Zealand secondary schools where the shift to FLE has become a policy expectation – decisions are and will continue to be made on how to design the work spaces for educational leaders, and it is important to the sustainability of the school community that these decisions are not made without adequate information.

How will my privacy be protected?

Your privacy will be protected through the use of pseudonyms for your name, your school's name, and for any other people or places to which you may refer in your interview. You will also have the opportunity to review your interview transcript to ensure its accuracy and that you agree to the data being used in my dissertation.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There is no financial cost to your participation in this research. The time that you are likely to input into this process is expected to be between one and two hours: one hour for the interview, including informal discussion and overview of the process and wrap up at the end, and another hour for any correspondence by email or phone, including the review of your interview transcript.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Please take one week to consider this invitation. During this time, you are welcome to discuss details with myself via email.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

At the end of the research process I will send you a short summary of the findings of the study.

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, Alison Smith, alison.smith@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9999, ext. 7363.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz, 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:

Rebekah Bissett, nkg1896@aut.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Alison Smith, alison.smith@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9999, ext. 7363

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date final ethics approval was granted*, AUTEK Reference number *type the reference number*.

Principal consent form



Principal's permission for researchers to access the school staff / students.

Project title: *Flexible leading spaces: An exploration of leader experiences of shared office spaces*

Project Supervisor: *Alison Smith*

Researcher: *Rebekah Bissett*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 25 September 2019
- ☐ I agree for this research to take place in School .

Principal's signature:

Principal's name:

Principal's Contact Details (if appropriate):

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

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on type the date on which the final approval was granted AUTEK Reference number type the AUTEK reference number

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

Participant consent form



Consent Form

Project title: *Flexible leading spaces: An exploration of school leaders' experiences of shared office spaces*

Project Supervisor: *Alison Smith*

Researcher: *Rebekah Bissett*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 25 September 2019
- ☐ 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 type the date on which the final approval was granted AUTEK Reference number type the AUTEK reference number

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

Letter requesting access



Initial contact email – indicative

Email A: to be sent to school principal

Kia ora _____,

My name is Rebekah Bissett and I am a Master of Educational Leadership (MEdL) student at AUT. I am on study leave this year from my position as a year level dean at Onehunga College.

I am emailing you to seek your participation in my dissertation research project, which is concerned with Deans' experiences of working in shared office spaces. Completing this research will enable me to finish my MEdL by the end of this year.

The purpose of this research is to find out more about the experiences of educational leaders who are working as a part of a team in a shared office space. The focus will be on secondary school Deans. Insights into the way that working in a shared space influences leadership practice and the way that leaders within educational leadership teams function may be useful for institutions who are reviewing or planning the design of offices for their leadership teams.

The key questions that I will be exploring are:

- In what ways are schools adopting shared office/workspaces for educational leadership teams?
- How do shared office/workspaces influence educational leaders' experiences of their roles?
- In what ways do shared leadership workspaces impact on leadership practice?

I would be very grateful if you would be grant permission for me to conduct research in your school. Attached is a Permission Form, along with documents that give more information about the research project.

Nga mihi nui,

Rebekah Bissett



Email B: to be sent to contacts in school

Kia ora _____,

I am currently working on a research project about deans' experiences of working in shared office spaces. This research is towards completing my dissertation at AUT. The purpose of this research is to find out more about the experiences of educational leaders who are working as a part of a team in a shared office space. The focus will be on secondary school deans. Insights into the way that working in a shared space influences leadership practice and the way that leaders within educational leadership teams function may be useful for institutions who are reviewing or planning the design of offices for their leadership teams.

I would be very grateful if you would be willing to forward this email and the attached information sheets to the deans at your school to consider participating in my research.

Nga mihi nui,

Rebekah Bissett

Transcriber confidentiality agreement



Confidentiality Agreement

Project title: Flexible leading spaces: An exploration of leader experiences of shared office spaces
Project Supervisor: Alison Smith
Researcher: Rebekah Bissett

- ☐ I understand that all the material I will be asked to transcribe is confidential.
- ☐ I understand that the contents of the tapes or recordings can only be discussed with the researchers.
- ☐ I will not keep any copies of the transcripts nor allow third parties access to them.

Transcriber's signature:

Transcriber's name:

Transcriber's Contact Details (if appropriate):

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

Date:

Project Supervisor's Contact Details (if appropriate):

Alison Smith alison.smith@aut.ac.nz Phone: 921 9999 ext 7363

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on type the date on which the final approval was granted AUTEK Reference number type the AUTEK reference number

Note: The Transcriber should retain a copy of this form