Career Journeys: Leadership, Identity and Gendered Careers of Female Primary School Leaders

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Acknowledgements

During my time at secondary school, I was guided towards a career as a secretary … who would have thought learning to touch type would result in such an amazing endeavour? I might not have followed their plan, but I created my own limitless world of learning new things, and I hope I always will.

This study would not have been possible without the co-operation of the women school leaders who gave their time so freely. I know they had to juggle their hectic schedules, at an extra busy time, within the school year to meet with me. It was a privilege to listen to each woman share their own individual experiences and I appreciate the trust they placed in me, their candid narrative's and sharing their career journeys, as women and school leaders.

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Special thanks should be given to my parents, who, whilst they do not understand why I enjoy learning, have always supported my decisions, encouraged me to pursue my dreams and always said '*try your best'*. I hope I have done so!

However, specific thanks must go to the most inspirational woman I know, my daughter Harriet. Her endless wise words, strength and wit has ensured I pushed on when I doubted myself. The journey has not been an easy one. She inspires me to be the woman I can be, every single day.

'Have no fear of perfection, you'll never reach it.'

Marie Curie

Abstract

School leadership has previously had a greater lens focussed upon secondary education, rather than primary education. With a critical shortage of primary headteachers, within England, this research aims to gain a deep and rich understanding regarding the career journeys of female Deputy Headteacher's and Assistant Headteacher's within primary schools. The dilemma about whether, or not to advance to the next stage and undertake a headship is an issue. Women are not progressing beyond the Deputy Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher role in the numbers required or expected. With the difficulties regarding the recruitment of headteachers, which has been evident over the last two decades, combined with the concerns of engaging with AHT/DHTs to consider Headship, there remains a real issue within the future of primary school leadership. Therefore, this thesis seeks to understand the careers of female AHT/DHTs as they consider their career progression towards headship. The main research question arose from a problem identified during a presentation at a DHT conference (section 1.3): Why are female AHT/DHTs not choosing to apply for headteacher posts? Four open and explorative research questions related to career journeys, leadership, identity, and gendered careers guide the study.

This thesis sets out an exploratory and qualitative approach to research using an epistemological approach, in which themes surrounding school leadership, identity and gendered careers are explored, through individual perspectives. Social identity theory is used as a theoretical framework for the study, with a focus upon leadership, identity, and gendered careers. The theoretical focus on social identity theory seeks to examine how individuals perceive and hence position themselves within the educational work environment and the trust they place within their headteacher to support and guide them. Rich narrative interviews with 10 female Deputy Headteacher/Assistant Headteachers working in primary schools in England were undertaken, following Wengraf's (2001) Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM). This specific rich narrative approach seeks to gain a greater understanding of how the women make sense of their career journeys, their professional and family roles and how their career ambitions have been shaped by their gender. The examination and thematic analysis of the concept of leadership, identity and gendered careers amongst women school leaders and identification of emergent themes will use an interpretive stance.

The findings of the research uncovered complex barriers and enablers for Deputy Headteachers and Assistant Headteachers becoming headteachers. The study confirms oscillating and complex elements affect the women's decision to move toward headship, including their dependence on the support of the headteacher, balancing responsibilities, identities in transition/fractured and multiple identities. The findings have implications for primary school leadership and future educational policy and practice. The study concludes with recommendations for further research.

Key words

gendered career, social identity theory, leadership, Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher, primary education.

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this research is to investigate the reasons as to why female Deputy Head Teacher/Assistant Head Teacher's (AHT/DHTs) working within the primary education sector in England, are choosing not to apply for headteacher posts. Justification for this research can be found within the number of headteacher posts in primary schools which can remain unfilled for significant periods of time (Future Leaders Trust, 2015) and the growing number of AHT/DHTs who are choosing to remain in their current role. These converging difficulties are likely to create a vacuum within the recruitment of headteachers, affecting the primary educational sector adversely.

There is a considerable amount of research regarding secondary school leadership, but a limited focus upon primary school leadership and in particular female primary school AHT/DHTs. Rhodes and Brundrett (2006) identified an ongoing and long-term difficulty with recruitment and retention within the primary education sector and Oplatka and Tamir (2009) identified negative perceptions regarding the headteacher role. Similar studies within the secondary educational sector have been undertaken by Chagger (2013) into the reasons secondary school DHTs might or might not take up a post as a headteacher. Guihen (2017) undertook research with secondary school female DHTs to gain an understanding of their perceptions and how this informed their professional aspirations. This study is, to the researcher's knowledge one of the first to focus upon AHT/DHTs working within the primary education sector.

There remains a shortfall of applicants for primary school headteachers positions in England and fewer AHT/DHTs seem ambitious to move to headship in the future. DHT/AHT posts in comparison are more readily filled. In addition, male teachers are more likely to become

successful in obtaining headteacher positions. Therefore, this research study specifically aims to identify why female AHT/DHTs are not choosing to apply for headteacher posts.

The primary school education sector is a female dominated profession (NFER, 2017), and despite changes within policy and practices continues to see a greater percentage of males attain headship in comparison to women (NFER 2017). The AHT/DHTs have, in the NPQH qualification, a direct career programme to enable them to apply for and undertake a headship. The NPQH is offered by Department for Education accredited providers. The course is targeted at headteachers or those who are aspiring to be headteachers within the next 2 years. The course lasts up to 18 months and includes coursework and school placements and is considered an established career route to headship. Therefore, this thesis specifically seeks to advance the understanding of women who attain the senior leadership roles of DHT/AHT and their progression towards headship.

This chapter outlines the problem the thesis explores and contextual information about the primary school sector in England. Thereafter, the chapter states the research aims and the questions, provides the conceptual and theoretical framework and the methodology encompassing the study. The significance and outcomes of the study and the wider context for the thesis including an overview of the thesis is also addressed. The conclusion and links to the next chapter complete chapter 1.

1.2 Identifying the problem

As stated in the introduction this study aims to identify the reasons as to why female AHT/DHTs working with the primary education sector are choosing not to apply for headteacher posts. A number of factors justify this research. Firstly, the researcher is a female AHT working within a primary school in England and considering undertaking a headship.

Secondly, research regarding AHT/DHTs within the primary education sector is limited, particularly focusing upon women.

This study came about following the researcher's attendance at a DHT/AHT conference seven years ago, an ex-headteacher working for a Local Authority posed the delegates a question: "How many of you have been DHTs/AHT's for longer than 2 years?". A large proportion of the delegates raised their hand. They were then asked how many had been in post longer than 5 years and over half the hands in the room remained up. The speaker asked a simple question: "Why...?". The subject then swiftly moved on to other matters, yet that simple question allowed for internal reflection upon the researchers own reasons for not applying for headship, but also allowed the opportunity to listen to the views of other delegates, during an informal break. Reasons given, at the time, included a need for a home/work life balance, choosing to work part time to bring up a family and being professionally satisfied within the role currently undertaken. This led to a short discussion of why headship seemed such an unattractive proposition. Reasons given by the conference delegates were the ever-growing demands placed on headteachers by various stakeholders including policy initiatives driven Government ministers; the constant changes being made to the Ofsted inspection framework; being able to balance the books at the end of each financial year; personal financial implications if they had to resign their headship post due to being deemed as ineffective, through poor results, and the perceived negative toll upon family life.

Whether the senior leaders, who were predominantly female, were reflective of the wider voice of primary school AHT/DHTs and if current research backed up or challenged their views became the catalyst for this study. This original simple question formed the basis for this study: Why are female AHT/DHTs not choosing to apply for headteacher posts?

Given the scale and shortage regarding the large numbers of teachers and headteachers leaving the profession (NFER, 2017) this study seems particularly pertinent, to gain a deeper understanding of the issue. It is likely some of these teachers would have gone into the profession with aspirations to become senior leaders. Their withdrawal from the profession causes a vacuum, both within individual schools but the wider teaching profession. Hence, it is surprising how little research has been undertaken to ascertain understand the career journeys for senior leaders as they aspire to headship.

Both Chagger's (2013) and Guihen's (2017) studies undertaken within the secondary school sector have significance for increasing the understanding of the career journeys of senior school leaders (section 2.3). Chagger's (2013) mixed sex study focused upon secondary school DHTs and the drivers and barriers to headship. Guihen's (2017) female only study was also focused within secondary school and focused upon the professional aspirations of female DHTs. Some similarities can be acknowledged within the primary and secondary school career journeys, but also some differences (section 2.3).

In 2015 the Future Leaders Trust and the Times Educational Supplement concluded from their investigation that 28% of the headteachers at that time were planning of leaving the profession within 5 years and over 50% reported being unlikely to be headteachers within the next 10 years. Negative perceptions regarding the role of the headteacher have been previously noted by Oplatka and Tamir (2009). If this declining attitude continues schools are likely to find it even more difficult to recruit and retain headships. Therefore, this research is of particular importance as it focuses upon the primary school sector and seeks to gain a deep and rich understanding regarding the career journeys of female primary school AHT/DHTs and seeks to address an area of research which has received little exploration.

The DfE (2017) noted the teaching profession is overwhelmingly dominated by women but when a percentage comparison is viewed, more males attain headship than females (section 2.3). Whilst female primary school headteachers are more common than in the secondary school sector (DfE, 2017b), the barriers to women taking up headship are, considered to be different. Women who are AHT/DHTs seem less likely to progress towards headship, despite the National Professional Qualification for Senior Leaders (NPQSL) and the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) qualification being introduced to provide a specific route to a headship role. This study seeks to gain a deeper understanding of this complex issue.

As this thesis will show there has been growing interest in gender and educational leadership in recent years. The role of gender and the DHT/AHT role, has however, received less attention. The role of the DHT is to work in partnership with the headteacher to provide strategic leadership and management of the school. In the event of the headteacher absence they are legally entitled to deputise in all aspects of the school. The role of AHT and DHT are similar, however an AHT cannot legally deputise for the headteacher. Most headteachers assign their AHT/DHTs specific whole school responsibilities for them to lead and take responsibility for e.g., Special Educational Need (SENd) or Assessment. Beyond these specific lead responsibilities, their role is to ensure the school is running in an orderly and effective manner, in accordance with the headteachers direction. In many cases AHT/DHTs hold teaching responsibilities alongside their leadership roles. In most schools AHT/DHTs are considered crucial to the discussions pertaining to decision making and provide an alternative view for a headteacher. The DHT/AHT also can be a conduit between the headteacher and the teachers and support staff and a confidential sounding board for the headteacher. Increasingly the role of AHT has become more common place, particularly within secondary 6.6% in comparison to primary 5.6% (DfE, 2018). This is in comparison to DHTs being more prevalent

in primaries 2.4% in secondary to 5.4% in primaries (DfE, 2018). Since 2010 there has been a decrease from 85% to 83% of women undertaking AHT roles within primary schools (DfE, 2018). The percentage of women DHTs in comparison has slightly risen from 79% to 80% (DfE, 2018). The proportional representation of women and men in leadership roles shows men have a higher chance of becoming a leader even though they are a minority of teachers in the primary sector.

1.3 Positionality of the author

As an AHT working within the primary education sector, keeping up to date with new ideas and initiatives is crucial. Annual DHT/AHT conferences provide an opportunity for senior leaders to meet with other AHT/DHTs, listen to visiting educational and motivational speakers and share experiences with colleagues. Attendance at one such conference inadvertently led to this thesis, when the conference delegates were asked how long they had been working within the role of DHT/AHT.

Research whilst benefiting others should also be of benefit to the researcher (Sikes, 2004) and during the study it was hoped to clarify the researcher's thoughts regarding undertaking a headship. Whilst the research is within the South of England it is hoped there may be some wider similarities given the diverse environment's Hampshire, Berkshire, Surrey and West Sussex sits within. Following attendance at the DHT/AHT conference and the question the LA advisor posed my preliminary thoughts intrigued me enough to go away and undertake an initial dip into the literature. From this stance the researcher began to firm up ideas regarding the original question presented to the delegates at the DHT/AHT conference (section 1.2) and consider the research already published. The researcher considers herself to be a critical resource for this study given their own career journey within the primary education sector.

1.4 Research aims and questions

Why are female AHT/DHTs not choosing to apply for headteacher posts? This original and simple question forms the initial basis for the study. With four open and explorative research questions arising from the literature review (Chapter 2):

- RQ 1 - How do women DHTs and AHT's describe and make sense of their career journeys?
- RQ 2 - How do women AHT/DHTs experience 'becoming' a leader?
- RQ 3 - How do women DHTs and AHT's identify with their professional and family roles?
- RQ 4 - How do women leaders perceive their career ambitions have been shaped by their gender?

The aim was to gain a deep and rich understanding of female AHT/DHTs and why they are not choosing to apply for headteacher posts.

1.5 Conceptual and theoretical framework

This research study follows a qualitative and interpretivist approach, taking an ontological stance. A quantitative approach, which would have enabled a larger sample size, was ruled out for this study because a deeper and rich insight into what lies beneath statistical figures was sought as little qualitative research exists into AHT/DHTs in primary education.

It relies upon description and interpretative stance to seek to draw out themes and findings, whilst being aware of bias and value laden viewpoints. This constructionist perspective is particularly important given each DHT/AHT involved has shared their individual career narrative, which includes emotions and other less tangible phenomena to gain individual

perspectives. As the women's career journeys are from their own individual perspective, it follows an epistemological approach. This relies upon description and interpretation and supports an understanding of the social world around us.

This study encompasses a conceptual framework surrounding leadership, identity and gendered careers. These areas are linked to the research questions (section 1.3). A theoretical framework involving social identity theory is used as a tool for interpreting this study. As the study relies upon individual interviews, the interpretation of their memories and perceptions within their career journeys is important and is discussed further within chapter 3

1.6 Methodology

An interpretivist methodology was used as the data collected was qualitative and took an interpretivism approach. Interpretivism relies upon both the researcher and the participant as tools to measure phenomena, in this case narratives related to views and perceptions of women leaders. The qualitative study sought to gain a deep and rich understanding of the career journeys and experience, identities and perspectives on how gender has shaped the careers of women AHT/DHTs (Deputy Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher), working within the primary phase in England. 10 women were interviewed, using a narrative approach. The women leaders worked within the Local Authority or Academy primary phase, within the South of England. Wengraf's (2001) Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) was used to elicit narrative-rich career journeys as they moved towards a headship role. Data for this study was collected from 10 narrative interviews with female AHT/DHTs, between April 2018 and July 2018.

Given that this research study involved 10 participants, was conducted only within the South of England, and was undertaken with primary school staff, its breadth does not claim to be

representative of all female AHT/DHTs, within England. The narrative approach undertaken aimed to explore and gain a deep, rich understanding of 10 female AHT/DHTs experiences and perceptions, both past and present, as they consider their progression towards headship. Whilst the small sample size is considered to provide a rich narrative, it is a snapshot in time for female AHT/DHTs in England. The use of the Bio-graphical Narrative Method (BNIM) supports participants to tell their story from their own perspective in their own words, without being guided by specific researcher questions. The conceptual framework of social identity theory was chosen due to the use of the narrative interview approach, but a different conceptual framework might have identified differing findings.

1.7 Significance and outcomes of the study

This thesis is significant as it offers an original contribution to knowledge regarding female primary school leadership. The use of Wengraf's (2001) BNIM is to the researcher's knowledge, one of the first studies to explore the career journeys of AHT/DHTs using the narrative approach. Each individual woman's career journey traces their dilemmas and the tensions they face as they navigate the transition from a class teacher to a leadership role. Their identity construction as they gain a sense of self, moving forward in their career and reflecting back on their previous experiences highlights how a fragmented sense of self impacts upon both their professional and personal life. As experienced leaders the women have been shaped into the leadership role by others within their professional life, but the balancing act they achieve has an effect upon their home/work life balance. It can be seen the career paths of the AHT/DHTs are not seamless and without issue. Juggling professional and family responsibilities and acknowledging the reliance on their headteacher's support to realise future career aspirations, can leave feelings of anxiety and guilt. As the participants in this study are

female the perceptions of the women regarding gender bias are discussed in relation to their role as leaders and the gender trait's they consider necessary for effective leadership. The women are in general the main care givers within their families and as leaders this study highlights the issue of co-headship and a need for flexibility within their career path.

The outcomes of this study aim to make methodological, theoretical and empiriological contributions to previous research related to primary school leadership, in England. The strength of this study comes from shining the research light upon a subject which has had little current research, namely AHT/DHTs within primary schools. Combined with the study only being concerned with the views of women and using the BNIM narrative approach, it brings an original and fresh approach to understanding female primary school leadership journeys. The AHT/DHTs have progressed from class teachers, through middle management roles, to their current roles amid the tensions and climate surrounding further career progression to full headship, within the primary education sector in England.

Understanding the trajectories and experiences of women AHT/DHTs has important implications for developing future female headteachers and the retention and development of women from the perspective of talent management, within the primary education sector.

1.8 The thesis in context

State-funded schools in England include primary, secondary and special schools. Maintained schools make up the majority within this group and their funding is received from the Local Authority. Their local authority also oversees the education they provide. They follow the National Curriculum and follow the Local Authority term dates set. Academy controlled schools are funded by the Government, through the Department for Education. The staff are employed by the Academy. Academies have greater freedom to move away from the traditional

National Curriculum and can set their own term dates and admission criteria. This study is set within the Local Authorities of Hampshire, Berkshire, Surrey and West Sussex, and two different Academy's (Fig. 3.1) and the AHT/DHTs work with children aged from 4 – 11 years of age.

Historically, the primary sector has been dominated by women since Victorian times. In 2017 (DfE, 2017b) the work force was 75% female. Yet a disproportionate number of women obtain headships in comparison to their male colleagues (NFER, 2017). There has been a growing interest in gender and educational leadership, but generally within the secondary sector. There have been some changes to policy and attempts to develop more women, with flexible working in schools and the development of the NPQH programme. However, these policies would benefit from being reviewed as to the efficacy in encouraging women within the primary school sector to take up headships. The NPQH programme was designed to support AHT/DHTs to progress to the role of headteacher. The findings of this study highlight some of the issues identified by the AHT/DHTs from their career narratives. This is further discussed within the literature review in chapter 2.

Given the original question which ignited the idea for this study originated from the researcher's attendance at a DHT conference, a personal motivation is acknowledged. Doctoral students gain personal motivation according to Oliver (2008) by exploring their topic, with the process becoming greater than that of the end goal.

It transpires more has been written about the roles of headteacher and DHTs in secondary school than those working within primary education. Chagger (2013) undertook research into the reasons why secondary school DHTs either decided/not decided to take up headship and Guihen (2017) sought to understand the perceptions of secondary women deputy headteachers and how this informed their professional aspirations. Additionally, Rhodes and Brundrett

(2005 & 2006) drew attention to what they considered to be a long-term crisis and ongoing issue with recruitment and retention within the education sector. However, very little has been published regarding the motivational reasons that shape female primary AHT/DHTs to pursue their career ambitions.

As previously outlined in section 1.2 a decline in the likelihood of headteachers remaining in their post has been noted. Previously, Oplatka and Tamir (2009) noted negative perceptions regarding the role of headteacher. This is quantified with more recent research in 2015 which highlighted only 50% of headteachers believed they would remain in the headship role, over the next decade (FLT, 2015 & TES, 2015). Certainly, retention rates for headship have fallen since 2012, with 7% of primary headteachers and 10% of secondary headteachers leaving each year (NFER, 2017). In addition, positive attitudes towards the role of headteacher also seem to be in decline with 86.8% of school leaders viewing headship as a less attractive option than five years ago (The Key, 2015). This makes the findings from 43% of Governing Bodies who reported difficulties recruiting good candidates for senior staff positions of note (National Governors Association, 2015). Reasons for this might be considered the long working hours, accountability and performativity culture, marketisation of education, problems that can raise regarding feelings of being fit for the profession and stress undertaking the role. However, a lack of wide scale and in-depth research within this area would be needed to gain consensus.

Given the prolonged difficulties with recruitment and retention of headteachers and the researcher attendance at a conference where the AHT/DHTs indicated the majority were unlikely to commitment to headship, it seemed a pertinent topic to pursue and one which would make an original contribution to professional knowledge.

1.9 Overview of the thesis

Following this opening chapter, chapter 2 aims to frame the key literature regarding women AHT/DHTs, using the theoretical framework of social identity theory. Identities and the theory for personal and professional personas are explored, alongside gendered careers and theory related to women as leaders, sense of identity and career progression. Leadership, identity and gendered career intersection is presented.

Chapter 3 comprises of an outline of the research and methodological design for the study. The aims, research questions and ethical considerations will be explained. To gain an in-depth understanding of the women's career journeys a qualitive interpretive data collection was favoured, with justification for the chosen method. Researcher positionality is given, alongside ontological and epistemological perspectives. The main principles of the BNIM are explained in more detail and information provided on the research sample undertaken and reasons for doing so. Furthermore, the methodological strategy of using the BNIM to uncover memories which may have been forgotten is explained and how it supports the narrative rich approach. This narrative approach requires the interview to gather an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of the participant, relying upon trust and how for the purpose of this study the researcher was able to build this. Data analysis from an inductive perspective was undertaken from the narratives obtained and thematically and manually analysed to identify key themes and subthemes from the individual story elicited from each participant. Limitations of the study are considered.

Chapter 4 sets out rich narrative descriptions from each of the 10 participants career journeys and seeks to gain and understanding of how the women described and made sense of their careers.

Chapter 5 focuses upon the theme of leadership and the subthemes of relationships learning from role models observed in the workplace, self-perceptions of AHT/DHTs as school leaders and their career aspirations are identified.

Chapter 6 focuses upon the theme of identity and how the women identify with the demands of their professional and family roles. The subthemes of multiple selves, fragmented self, identity regulation and identity insecurity are identified.

Chapter 7 seeks to gain an understanding of the theme of gendered careers. The subthemes of male v female, career women, family v professional and gender bias are identified.

Chapter 8 provides a more detailed discussion and interpretation of the findings from the four chapters and how these relate to previous empirical research and the conceptual research. Each of the four research questions will be analysed.

Chapter 9 concludes the thesis and considers the contribution to original knowledge, implications for future policy and practice and recommendations for future research.

1.10 Conclusions and links to next chapter

This chapter has sought to provide the aims of the thesis and identify the problem it is seeking to address: Why are female AHT/DHTs not choosing to apply for headteacher posts? The research aims and linked questions have been given. The rationale for the conceptual and theoretical framework has been stated, with the methodology underpinning the research process. The significance and outcomes of the study have been stated, the context of the study and an overview of the thesis given.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature surrounding this thesis and how it relates to gender, women's leadership in education and identity. In addition, social identity theory and its links to

leadership, identity and gendered careers are given. The chapter concludes with the contributions and limitations of prior research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction and rationale for the conceptual framework

A theoretical framework constructed around the key concepts of leadership, identity and gendered careers encompasses this study. The wider concept of women primary school leaders is applied. If researchers are to extend the experience and knowledge of AHT/DHTs to undertake headships roles it is likely to be important to understand their professional career journeys from the unique perspective as women primary school leaders. Hence the conceptual framework will examine what is known about women AHT/DHTs across educational settings, noting that previous research has had a greater focus upon secondary AHT/DHTs, rather than their primary school counterparts.

This chapter provides a review of the theoretical and empirical literature underpinning this study of women AHT/DHTs to gain an understanding of why female AHT/DHTs are not choosing to apply for headteacher posts? This study is an exploratory and qualitative investigation into the working lives of women DHT and AHT leaders, within primary school settings. Social identity theory is used as a theoretical framework to gain a greater understanding of how women DHT/AHTs construct their identities and how gender has, and continues to, shape their career journeys and ambitions as aspiring school leaders (Burr, 20015). The interrelationship between social identity theory and the key themes of leadership, identity and gendered careers is visited.

First, as this thesis specifically studies women, it was considered gender would become a major theme within the individual narratives, particularly as the participants work within a gendered career in education. The rationale for focusing on gendered careers is rooted within the fact that

primary school teaching is traditionally seen as a profession for women. Yet do women working in primary schools perceive their gender has shaped their career ambitions? Personally, as a woman and single mother, it seemed feasible to look for a career to enable financial stability but be able to be more available during school holidays, for my young daughter. A careers advisor suggested teaching, making it seem family friendly. Obviously, knowing now teaching requires a significant amount of holiday working. An interest regarding a greater depth of understanding, as to whether other women who held the role of DHT/AHT, perceived their career journey had been influenced by other choices or circumstances. Changes within the perceptions of gender over the last decade have encouraged less traditional demarcation of gender specific roles and in addition a greater number of women now hold full time roles.

Secondly, as the research involves women in leadership positions, leadership is a key concept explored in the study. For the purposes of this study leadership is defined by Hogg and Martin (2005) as 'the action of leading a group of people or an organisation' (p. 992). It requires a person to motivate a group of people towards a common goal. Within this study the AHT/DHTs, despite their varied roles and responsibilities, work closely alongside the headteacher to motivate and ensure teaching and non-teaching staff provide high-quality education for children. Whilst the role of DHT/AHT is to support the headteacher, they are expected to affect positive change and improvement across the whole school. Hence leadership involves relationships, learning from role models within the school and aspirations for future leadership. Third, as this research seeks to gain an understanding of women leaders and how they identify with both their professional roles as leaders alongside family roles, social identity theory provides a firm framework for understanding individual and group behaviours. The focus of social identity theory was deemed a suitable framework for this interpretivist study due, in part, to the transitional phase the participants were experiencing; with their past, current

and future ambitions and to the premise that group membership helps to provide meaning within social situations.

The relationships between the three concepts making up the analytical framework for this study is illustrated in Figure 2.1 below. The circles overlap because the themes themselves are not separate and there is similarity between the areas.

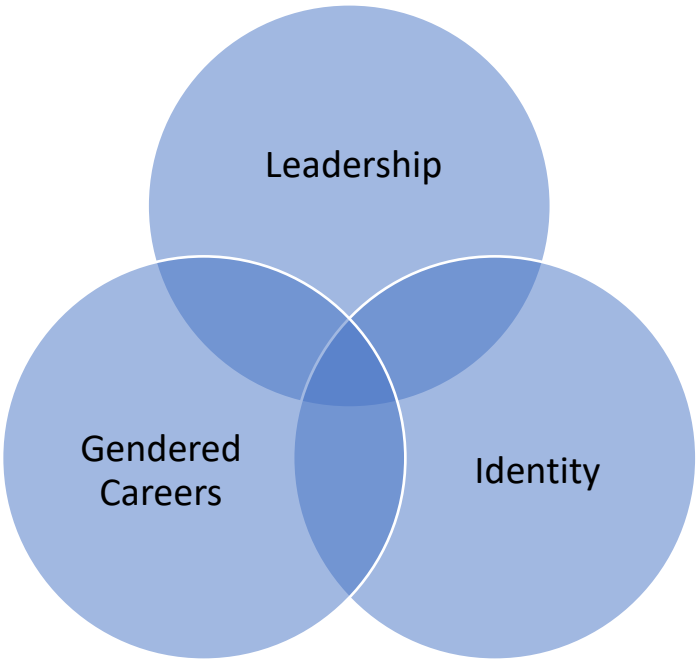

Fig. 2.1 model to demonstrate themes

This chapter explores the concepts and empirical evidence relating to gender, leadership, identity, and gendered careers.

The chapter is organised as follows: first it explores the theory and empirical evidence regarding gender (section 2.2) and women's leadership in education (section 2.3). Section 2.4 considers identity from theoretical and empirical evidence and the subthemes of multiple

selves, fragmented self, identity regulation. Section 2.5 examines social identity theory. Then section 2.6 examines social identity and leadership. Section 2.7 explores gendered careers and finally section 2.8 discusses contribution and limitations of prior research regarding AHT/DHTs.

2.2 Gender

The term gender is used within a wide range of meanings and constantly evolving and Glover and Kaplan (2000) describe gender as 'a busy term' (p. 8), with concepts related to politics and power. Bradley's (2007) definition will be used for this study: 'the division of labour and the definitions of femininity and masculinity' (p. 5). The post-modern feminist Butler (1999) argues gender is a performative social construct and is a direct result of undertaking masculine or feminine, rather than being masculine or feminine. This construct can change over time. Indeed, more recently wider discussions regarding traditional gender specific colours or types of clothing for babies has been heard, with a move away from the more commonly held view of blue for a boy and pink towards a more neutral view. Kimmel (2000) posits what may be part of a gender role is dependent upon the context it is placed and where 'definitions of masculinity and femininity vary'. Expectations of boys or girls are talked about and this in turn shapes those genders and these are culturally learned (Mikkola, 2016). For Butler (1999) the premise of gender changing over time and varying within countries, religions and class illustrates that gender is socially constructed. Bettcher (2010) states gender may not be constructed by individuals, rather that individuals are being constructed. However, Butler (1999) makes a distinction between gender performance and gender performativity. Gender performance she argues 'presupposes a pre-existing subject' (Butler, 2010, p. 45). Whilst gender performativity 'contests the very notion of the subject' (p. 45). If an act is performative

it produces a series of effects. Butler (1999) believes, ‘sex is as culturally constructed as gender’ (p. 48) and hence does not differentiate between gender and sex and argues there is no sex. From her viewpoint gender and sex are discursive effects and discursive practices enable them ‘gender is not a noun, but neither is it a set of free-floating attributes … gender is always a doing’ (p. 50). She states gender identity is a discursive element, borne from an operating framework and supports maintaining social norms. But discourse creates subject positions for self to occupy and language structures support the construction of self. The discourse of gender for Butler (1999) is demonstrated by both verbal and non-verbal means. Butler (2011) perceives repetitiveness of the acts as an important aspect of performativity and involves ‘a ritualised production’ (p. 212) and ‘gender is real only to the extent that it is performed’ (Butler, 1999, p. 213). When a gender is viewed as performative according to Butler (1999) it means that individuals are not a specific gender before they undertake gendered acts. More recently, Salih (2007) describes gender as a ‘sequence of repeated acts that harden into the appearance of something that’s been there all along.’ (Salih, 2007, p. 58.), sitting alongside Butler’s earlier views that gender is ‘a stylised repetition of acts, an imitation or miming of the dominant conventions of gender’ (p. 112). Butler (1999) believes these acts gives an illusion of gender being stabled and fixed. Bradley (2007) suggests gender is bound up with politics due to being inextricably linked with the power relations between men and women. It is also a construct which requires living in daily life and is neither specific or focused on a specific aspect or activity. Whether an individual identifies as a man or a woman it inevitably affects individuals looks, relationships with others and language. Additionally, places where people seek to make relationships with others could also be considered gendered (Bradley, 2007), such as work environments.

From this perspective gender is a social construct; categorised to enable humans to make sense of the world around them. It should however be noted that use of the term gender can change over time and in diverse school cultures.

2.3 Women's leadership in education

This study is concerned with female AHT/DHTs only. Hence it is pertinent to view leadership from a woman's perspective. Leadership is generally considered a socially influenced process of moving people towards a shared goal. For the purpose of this thesis the term leadership is defined by Hogg and Martin (2005) as 'the action of leading a group of people or an organisation' (p. 998).

Historically gender has been viewed as a barrier for women within leadership roles. Certainly, the first formal schools for boys were led by schoolmasters, moving on to Victorian village schools run by unmarried women, overseen by men. Yet, still by 2017 (DfE, 2017b) 3 in 10 headteachers in England were male, despite the workforce being 75% female. The number of women leaders within primary schools in England is certainly higher than that seen in secondary: 71% primary and 36% secondary (DfE, 2017b) but the barriers to headship are considered by many to be different between women and men. In 2017 there were 24,200 AHT/DHTs working within primary schools in England and 75% of the teaching profession is comprised of women (DfE, 2018).

Societal changes over the last three decades have resulted in a range of theoretical discourses, viewing women either as a gauge for leadership, using the traditional parameters of male leadership or within their own right (Jones, 2016). Leadership has in the past been considered at odds with feminine stereotypes (Biernat & Fuegan, 2001; Foschi, 2000). Over thirty years ago, research from Reskin and Roos (1990) and more recently England (2010) agree

occupational gender segregation creates inequality and most likely occurs, according to Ridgeway (1997, 2011), due to social interactions. She considers during these social interactions that individuals are likely to use a person's sex to categorise them, causing a change within their interactions based upon that person's perception of their gender. This process creates gender stereotypes attached to the individual, affecting their occupational role and their behaviours. Heilman (2001), Ridgeway (2011) and Doering and Thébaud (2017) concur the beliefs held by both males and females, regarding the behaviours of how each sex should behave affects a female leader's ability to assert their influence and authority, with those they lead. This assertion has been historically supported by the findings of Spence and Buckner (2000), Ridgeway and Correll (2004), Lueptow, Garovich-Szabo and Lueptow (2001) and Koenig and Eagly (2014). Their findings indicate that men are considered more competent and agentic than women and given greater status in comparison to women. Prentice and Carranza (2002) support the theory that males are perceived to have greater social dominance if they demonstrate traits considered to be more socially dominant. These traits of aggressiveness and forcefulness Prentice and Carranza (2002) argue, are viewed as less desirable within women. Where the occupation features a greater predominance of women few gender differences were noted. However, women had a slightly greater tendency to be viewed as effective leaders than men, but this tendency was not of significant statistical difference. Gender status beliefs remain in place, regarding men as more competent and status-worthy in comparison to women according to Ridgeway (2011).

However, negative perceptions of women's dual roles and the realities of combining a career with caring responsibilities were previously commonly cited as reasons for the deficit of women in senior leadership roles. Today the challenges women leaders face combining a career with family responsibilities, can lead to work-life balance issues, exhaustion, and stress. For the purposes of this study work-life balance is defined as 'attention and energy that can be spent

on both work and personal domains' (Gregory & Milner, 2009, p. 112). The subject of work-life balance became more widely known in the 1960's and the emergence of more women in the work force has increased the spotlight upon the area. A work-life balance helps to ensure productivity, better health and socialisation (Brasdovich, 2016). Following alongside the theme of work-life balance, sits the area of greedy institutions, of which schools are considered so. This term was defined by Lewis Coser as: 'a social institution that total commitment from those working within it through the dominance of social life into different spheres' (Coser, 1974, p. 19). This subtle pressure of voluntary compliance to dominate a daily timetable of family life can for some become all consuming, to the detriment of other wider activities. School staff can place, and be placed, under enormous strain to complete a multitude of tasks in an extended day. This can impact upon opportunities to spend time with their own children or indulge hobbies. Sullivan (2014) argues that workplaces are becoming greedier due to factors such as cost-cutting and constant connectivity. Within schools the wide use of technology has given greater connectivity to tasks, with teachers leaving the school to continue to connect with the school via their computers. Whilst this might be helpful to the staff it might also be considered helpful to the greedy school, with staff continuing to work in their unpaid days because they have tasks which are unfinished. Gronn (1999) described schools as 'rather than diminishing servility the creation of an enterprise culture breeds their own new and unique forms of exploitation and serfdom, which I term greedy work practices' (p.147). Indeed Thomson (2009) identifies a correlation between greedy institution and promotion.

Promotion to a role which encompasses leadership responsibilities might be considered to require changes with how an individual presents their professional identity. Rudman et al. (2012) state professional women need to portray an agentic identity if they are to be perceived as qualified for the role of leader. Agentic is described as competent, confident and assertive (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This view of women from a masculine perspective results according

to Hoyt and Simon (2011), in prejudice against women. They perceive women face negative stereotypes and prejudice which in turn affects their self-perception of themselves as leaders, which contrasts with the views of Ridgeway (2011). To ensure they are viewed as leaders, professional women might behave with untypical gender behaviour and therefore face backlash from others. Their competency is more likely to be negatively judged than similar behaviour displayed by a man. This counter stereotypical behaviour can cause women to have to choose between being liked and being respected (Rudman & Phelan, 2010; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman et al., 2004). This can have an adverse effect upon women gaining leadership roles within school and hence achieving the status of headteacher. Role congruity theory developed by Eagly and Karau (2002) states when the expectations for being a leader are incongruent with that of the female gender (agentic), then women are less likely to be considered as leaders (Ritter & Yoder, 2004) and will be judged more harshly. Heilman et al.'s (2004) considers that when staff interact with counter stereotypical women it can cause discomfort and affect staff reactions in an adverse manner (Eagly and Karau, 2002; Heilman et al., 2004). Certainly, Eagly and Karau (2002) undertook a meta-analysis of 58 studies and identified a pattern of more men emerging as leaders, rather than women. Ritter and Yoder (2004) stated that whilst the Eagly and Karau (2002) study was consistent with role congruity theory, they would not consider it to be discriminatory to women, unless the men involved possessed less agentic traits than the women and they were given the role. Eagly and Karau (2002) in their role congruity theory of prejudice, towards female leaders, stated the hurdles of professional women to combat gender stereotyping and avoiding backlash associated with behaviours more associated with their male colleagues, came from the conflict between the role of leadership and that of gender. Rudman et al. (2012) believed the application of role congruity theory was flawed in several ways. Firstly, backlash in their view was experienced by women, and indeed men, in the workplace even if they were not leaders (Rudman & Glick, 2001). Secondly, Rudman et al. (2012)

considered Eagly and Karau (2002) did not ascribe which gender roles were culpable when identifying backlash and the motives for those providing backlash were not identified.

Being a leader requires having followers. The role of DHT/AHT brings some autonomy through independence and self-direction. Yet the AHT/DHTs role requires that they follow the headteacher. This might require a sacrifice of their autonomy and accept their headteachers direction and influence. Keltner, Van Kleef, Chen & Krause (2008) consider this is due to adaptive behavioural responses. Members of a school SLT come together to achieve improved educational outcomes for the children. Individuals guide the group members towards the given goal and the other group members accept that guidance. To ensure efficacy the leaders apply both direct and indirect influence, ranging from direct instruction to the more indirect and subtle positive acknowledgements to motive a team towards the chosen collective goal.

As mentioned previously there is a paucity of research regarding the role of AHT/DHTs, regardless of sex, within primary school. Indeed, Ribbens' (1994) earlier research remarked upon the plethora of literature regarding headteachers but how little has been written about deputies. His research examined three themes regarding DHTs: what they felt about their experiences as DHT; what they regarded as their role as DHT; and how they compared headship with the role of being a DHT. The study was undertaken across primary, secondary and special schools with thirty-four individual interviews undertaken, both with heads and deputies. It should be noted the research did not show the role of DHT in a positive light and was suggestive that the role was only something to be conquered as soon as possible to enable the progression to headship.

The National College for School Leadership (NCSL, 2012) undertook a review of the role of AHT/DHTs as an important leadership group. The review acknowledged increased pressure on AHT/DHTs, both from internal and external sources. The lack of leadership training was

highlighted, but since then the introduction of the NPQSL and the NPQH has become established. However, it should be noted that the review was undertaken across secondary, primary and special school settings.

Muijs and Harris (2003) reviewed the literature on school leadership and acknowledged the paucity of knowledge regarding DHTs and AHT's. They believed AHT/DHTs had a great deal to contribute to senior leaderships teams but were often not utilised to their full potential. Sharing similarity with the NCSL findings of the same year, Muijs and Harris (2003) conclude a training programme for school leaders who see leadership as an aspirational career choice, if AHT/DHTs roles are to be sustained within the future of schools.

Cubillo and Brown's (2003) study identified both similarities and differences for career aspirations, for those within educational leadership. Their exploratory study involved nine women from different countries, cultures and societies and working internationally within education. Insights into the influences that had shaped their career paths were gained, including familial and cultural barriers. Most of the women within the study were motivated to leadership through self-actualisation and a belief that they could improve the future for working women.

Cranston, Tromans and Reugebrink (2004) study was undertaken within the Australian secondary school system. It involved a qualitative data method using questionnaires from 204 participants, both male and female. Their research acknowledged the dearth of knowledge in to the DHT/AHT role within school leadership, both within Australia but also around the world. They recognised the challenging role of AHT/DHTs and suggested the roles and responsibilities needed to be better aligned within school systems. Additionally, they suggested issues relating to trust, common purpose and collaboration needed to be investigated, if the role of DHT/AHT was going to be impactful and sustainable moving forward.

Oplatka and Tamir (2009) studied the career stories of 25 female DHTs in Israel. The qualitative research involved 25 interviews with female DHTs, in secondary schools. The motives for the DHTs not to apply for headship was concerned with issues surrounding well-being, job satisfaction and a sense of self-fulfilment. As the study was conducted within Israel and additionally a secondary school environment the findings support the research regarding women school leaders.

The study by Chagger (2013) involved qualitative data, for fourteen deputy heads and five mixed sex headteachers, working within secondary schools in Birmingham. This research focussed upon the reasons secondary school DHTs either accepted or declined to take up headship, with a focus upon the drivers and barriers for progression to headship. Chagger's (2013) findings highlighted barriers for the DHT/'s included work-life balance, accountability and pay. Drivers included positive role models such as the headteacher and individual ambition to succeed. Headteachers were identified by the participants as the gatekeepers to professional development. A good working relationship between a deputy and the headteacher, who is aware and supportive of the participants career aspirations, was also identified.

Research undertaken by Guihen's (2017) consisted of an in-depth idiographic analysis of the lived experiences and analysis of twelve secondary school women DHTs in England, using Margaret Archers' theory of reflexivity. Guihen (2017) proposed three types of aspirant headteachers: strategic and decisive, values-orientated and person centred. She concluded that a greater study needed to be undertaken on career narratives of aspirant headteachers, if, strategic change was to be implemented within the headteacher recruitment process.

The latest study regarding AHT/DHTs was undertaken by Bruce-Golding (2019). The mixed method study sought to investigate the career trajectories and experiences of secondary school AHT/DHTs, moving towards headship within England. The narrative study focused upon

fourteen mixed-sex participants. The study provided greater insight into the senior leadership role, the leader's perception of headship and how the participants utilised social capital within their career journeys. Five out of the fourteen participants were interested in taking up a headship role in the future, with additional responsibilities and expectations being cited as reasons for not wishing to move towards their own headship.

In summation the key themes discussed in this section was gender and discussions regarding barriers for women working in schools today and the impact of professional and family responsibilities upon women. Gaps within the current literature include: the role of AHT/DHTs in school and the lack of AHT/DHTs moving to headship.

Given what is known currently regarding women leaders in education it is pertinent to have a greater understanding regarding identity and how it might impact upon AHT/DHTs today.

2.4 Identity

For the purposes of this study identity is described as 'the behaviours, qualities, beliefs and characteristics which distinguish individuals from each other' (Jones, 2016, p. 910). Whilst social identity theories tend to view identities as static, a common theme is that identity development is a social, processual process, shaped over time through lived experiences and interactions with others. Reay and Ball (2000), Townsend and Weiner (2011) and Jones (2016) posit identity is fluid and constantly evolving. Jones (2016) describes identity as 'fragmented, multi-faceted and conflicting' (p. 914), which is constantly changing. Ibarra (2003) states that whilst identities are changing it is possible to be moving and hence sifting and sorting thoughts and reflections, whilst looking forward to new possibilities. Ibarra's work (1993, 1999, 2003) seemed particularly pertinent, given the women's career journeys, within this study, encompass a myriad of identity roles: leader, professional and family. Ibarra's (2003) in-depth research

reflects heavily upon working identity and the career re-invention professionals experience, as they interact within others in their profession and supports individuals making sense of their career and possibilities within. Burr (2015) suggests identity does not exist from within a person but bound by the relationships made and the environment surrounding it. Burr (2015) concurs with Ibarra's (2003) earlier point that identity needs to be viewed as something individuals undertake, rather than something which they individually have. Doing new things enables a person to make new meanings regarding a role or relationships and this can enable new possibilities to emerge and shape identity.

Identity remains a contested concept within the social sciences and perspectives on identity have developed over time. Lachman, (2004), Ibarra (2007), Kempster and Cope (2010) agree that whilst history shape's identity; an individual's identity is also their future. As individuals consider changing careers or moving within a current organisation the new role offers opportunities to interact with new people and this interaction and possible role changes lead to a shift in individuals identity moving forward. More recently, Van De Mieroop and Clifton (2016) view identity as that which can be influenced by historical, societal, cultural, and institutional factors. Burke (2006) draw upon historical literature and concludes that identities change but the theoretical processes behind the reasons for change ensure a likelihood of ongoing discussion according to people, context and adapting in the moment. This view supports Ibarra's (2007) position regarding identity being something individuals undertake rather than that which they have.

Poststructuralist researchers do not disagree with social theories of identity but, whilst individuals have a certain amount of freedom to construct their identity; individuals are not completely separated from society and from the structures which surround them. This places limits on individual identity, as mentioned. Carroll and Levy (2010) consider the approaches

within identity have had a greater focus upon functionalist (Lord & Hall, 2005) or constructivist (Velsor & Drath, 2003), than social constructionist. Social construction can, in wider terms, be viewed as the interpretation of social worlds and phenomena (Pye, 2005) and the interpersonal construction of meaning (Hosking, 2008) but can seek to challenge an understanding of leadership development according to Carroll and Levy (2010). Constructionists view identity as 'an exercise of social power' (Thomas & Linstead, 2002, p. 79) and their views are supported by Ford, Harding and Learmouth's (2008) suggestion that leaders need to focus away from what constitutes being a good leader but to focus on the demands on placed upon them and how those demands sways who they are as leaders. This leads to the individual gaining a sense of identity regulation, which Alvesson (2002) describes as 'impression management' (p.121), within organisations. Hence, individuals present in a manner which is convincing to an audience and is shaped and constrained by social norms and environment e.g., schools, traditions etc.

2.4.1 Identity and Self

Identity is considered a key component of self and has been discussed extensively over the last 50 years. Self has helped to provide an organisational construct for identity (Leary and Tangney, 2003). A fragmented self for the purpose of this study is defined as 'when the structure of self becomes unstable, the self is said to be fragmented' (Mollon, 2001, p. 20). Oysermann (2001) believes self and identity may be viewed as similar; yet describes self, more as 'the theory about who one was, is and may become' (p. 847). When individuals think of themselves it is common to be within the confines of self and identity (Tajfel, 1981 & Stryker, 2000). Agency can be described as 'an intention and action which leads to making things happen' and is often viewed as central to the experience of self (Wilson & Deaney, 2010, p. 54). It supports an individual in exercising the control over their own lives and shapes and drives where they head and what they choose to do along the course of a life journey. Billet

(2008) and Wilson and Deaney (2010) state personal agency is necessary to enact and transform changes, which is continuously occurring and provides constant feedback on an endless loop. This constant feedback loop enables us to adjust behaviours to expectations and environments. This point is of note, as the women within this study move towards their new role of headship. Ibarra (2003) views this period as a time of identity transition. From the perspective of Alvesson, Lee Ashcraft and Thomas' (2008) theory defining oneself as DHT/AHT or even aspiring headteacher, is not as simple as reaching for a particular trait or behaviours. Rather it involves sifting and sorting a myriad of simultaneously held identities and supporting specific meanings within group interactions with others and the systems around us (Alvesson, Ashcraft and Thomas, 2008), linking to the work of Ibarra (2007). This group interaction can cause individuals to question their identity, resulting in the individual choosing to self-craft a narrative (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). Collinson (2003) consider this uncertain period can lead to individuals experiencing insecurity and altering the routine reflection of self-identity usually experienced (Collinson, 2003), as they oscillate between their old and new self (Ibarra, 2003).

Collinson (2003) discusses the shift from self-confirmation of identity being gained from family status, gender and religion, towards more self-validation from career and material success. This he argues, has led from ascriptive towards a more achievement based and open identity. Whilst this has provided greater freedom and choice for individuals it has led towards greater insecurities, uncertainty, and vulnerability. This can result in individuals seeking to remain within an environment where they are told what to do, because this is seen as a less precarious choice than taking responsibility for their choices and decisions. Ibarra (2003) views this state as 'lingering between identities' (p. 54).

An individual can have multiple selves throughout their life and related to their roles, both professional and personal (Collinson, 2003; Alvesson et al. 2008). These multiple identities can reinforce a co-existing identity, whilst others lead to insecurity or misunderstandings shaping a person's identities. Stets & Burke (2000) consider an individual's multiple selves are a key element of the social structure they find themselves within and as such are shaped according to the relationships within that group. Belonging to more than one group is considered by many to be beneficial to individuals. Indeed, during times of crisis or conflict individuals rely upon various strategies to cope, choosing to discard a specific identity, vacillate between differing identities or combine identities (Roccas & Brewer, 2002; Deaux, 2008; Shields, 2008 & Berry and Sabatier, 2011). These strategies can seek to reduce dissention and disagreements. This movement between identities supports identity within the specific groups (Ibarra, 2003; Leicht, Goclowska, Van Breen, de Lemus & Randsley de Moura, 2017).

2.4.2 Identity and Leadership

Leadership identity exists where an individual enacts or experiences personas that emulate leadership traits. Sinclair (2011) believes leaders are under even greater strains to demonstrate to others a leadership persona, which will convince both followers and other leaders that they are in control. Indeed Alvesson (2002), Ford & Harding (2007) and Gabriel (2005) point out individuals working in schools have, in the last twenty years, been encouraged to become leaders. Alvesson and Wilmott (2002) consider leaders are both their own authors and objects within their identity production. Within social identity theory individuals are encouraged to acknowledge and shape their identities to groups of followers, with the premise of increasing motivation (Sinclair 2011). This might be viewed in altering the leader's appearance or creating a narrative regarding a personal career journey. This aims to increase and inspire confidence among those associated within the leader's professional role. For women leaders working within male dominated environs the pressures might, following analysis by Sinclair (2011),

result in an individual seeking to obscure elements of their identity, such as their family circumstance or their gender. For some women this can be seen within the expectation of wearing suits for school leadership or not considering it appropriate to discuss their own children within the wider environment. However, it should be noted that males feel under similar pressure (Connell, 2000). This enactment takes place within the juxtaposed expectation that an individual should seek to be themselves, rather than attempt to project a different persona (Sinclair, 2009).

Within organisations men can ascribe to a more masculine identity, particularly in front of other men (Hodgson, 2003). Collinson (2003) builds upon this knowledge positing it can reinforce identity insecurities, rather than overcome them and continue to perpetuate the differences between the sexes, rather than overcoming them. Yet what processes occur when females are the majority sex within an environment? Leicht et al. (2017) contest stereotyping threats are more likely to affect women who highly identify with other women. Watson (2008) states within organisations individuals incorporate elements of their organisation's personas (external social identity), these personas are in general different to the ones that the individual might demonstrate within their home or other areas of their life. This results in leaders being less likely to be able to be themselves within their work environment, shaping their identity to suit the environment they are working within.

Organisational control is partly accomplished through identity regulation. Manager identity work is structured through performance management, socialisation and professional development training opportunities, which Alvesson and Wilmott (2002b) define as 'regulated' (p. 621). Identity regulation may be achieved through purposeful means or as a by-product of another activity. Alvesson and Wilmott (2002b) provide an overview as to how identity regulation may be enacted, but they make it clear this is only their preliminary views. They

consider individuals are defined by the characteristics of their professional definition e.g., senior leader. This has implications for this current study. They posit defining the individual directly increases expectations for them.

Alvesson (2010) considers identity is formed around insecurity. Self-doubt can bring insecurity, as individuals reflect upon life choices. For leaders, self-doubt and insecurity can negatively affecting leadership outcomes. For the purposes of this study the definition of identity insecurity will be 'the non-identification within a group' (Jetten, Branscombe & Spears, 2002, p. 115). Identity insecurity can be magnified when making a change within a career path. Times of identity transition can, according to Ibarra (2003), leave an individual feeling unsettled as they seek to fit in with an established group. Jetten, Branscombe and Spears, (2002) state individuals who feel unsettled and as though they are on the outskirts of a group do not feel fully accepted, leading to identity insecurities.

For the women within this study, they are contemplating making a further transition from DHT/AHT to headship. Ibarra (2003) posits that whilst the future is of an individual's making, they are still likely to look backwards and oscillate between the old role and the new role. For some this might involve a role an individual considers is no longer viable, but that image is inextricably tied into a possible self and a role, which was once coveted. Leaving that role to move towards a new role, can be an emotional journey and for some might present as a significant loss and hence anxiousness. During this period, an individual slowly disconnects from groups, both socially and from a psychological perspective. This can include identifying with an alternative dress code, seeking out others perceived to have a status similar, to the one moving towards or reviewing the expectations of others. These new activities lessen engagement within their old role and can lead to others becoming more distant, which in turn can unconsciously support an individual's thoughts regarding their decision to leave. Moving

from the ‘in-between’ stage to the ‘new beginning’ (Ibarra, 2003, p. 112) stage requires a reflection upon loss, but also the creation of new possibilities.

Working identity is proposed by Sutherland, Howard and Markauskaite (2010) to be concerned with self-perception and legitimisation by others. They describe professional identity as both self-perception and legitimisation by others (Rodgers and Scott, 2008; Sutherland et al. 2010). Indeed, it shapes their individual position with society, how they interact with others and how this is interpreted and shared with others (Gee, 2000).

Little research, in comparison to that within secondary school leadership, has been undertaken regarding identity of leaders within primary schools in England. Nyberg and Sveningsson (2014) undertook an investigation regarding leader construction of self and how they made sense of their role as leaders. Whilst the study was based upon three company managers in the UK, who all considered themselves to be good leaders, the findings might be considered to align with wider leadership roles. Their findings suggest the leaders believe it is their true and natural selves, which have shaped them into their perception of good leaders. However, Nyberg and Sveningsson (2014) identified the managers restrained their construction of self, to be perceived as good leaders. This process identified leadership as being constructed and situational, resulting in leaders demonstrating fragmented and conflicted selves. Jones (2016) acknowledged women leaders may have different or multiple selves, with work identity and home being demarcated as a coping strategy.

Looking further afield Moorosi’s (2014) research explored identity construction through a leadership programme, within South Africa. The longitudinal, mixed-method approach involved an initial survey of 287 headteachers, deputy head or heads of department from both primary and secondary education. The surveys were followed by 24 case studies by participants of mixed genders and findings suggested women appeared to benefit more from a leadership

programme than males. The limitations of this study lie with it being undertaken outside of the UK, so it is more difficult to generalise the findings due to the differing career journeys and expectations of leaders from South Africa compared with England. In addition, the leadership programme within South Africa is not comparable to that within England.

Murakami and Törnsen (2017) examined two female principles within secondary schools, in Sweden and the USA. The study formed part of a larger international research project. The aim was to examine professional identities and identify what successful leadership means and how it might influence recruitment. The findings identified successful female principles were evaluated negatively and hence this has a detrimental effect upon recruitment of female educational leaders.

Dunlop's (2018) study explored how women form a leader identity. The narrative interviews undertaken explored the lived experiences of four women leaders, within secondary schools in New Zealand. Dunlop's (2018) findings indicate teaching leaders about critical elements of leadership development when they are beginning their careers, provides positive future choices.

So, this section has reviewed identity from the theoretical positions. In addition, contemporary theories about identity work, regulation, adaptation in careers and how they relate to women has been reviewed. The section concluded with a focus on current empirical research within education. Section 2.5 considers social identity theory.

2.5 Social identity theory

Tajfel's (1972) introduction of a theory about how people conceptualised themselves within groups contexts resulted in social identity theory. He perceived social identity theory as:

> '*The individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership'*. (p. 292.).

Tajfel's theory has limitations regarding its ability to capture the complex relationships, within identity. This led to conflict regarding the validity of data but prompted further research within social identity theory focussing more on internal group data, rather than between groups. Following research relating to social identity theory during the 1980's and 1990's the paradigm became a means to understand inter-group relations.

More contemporary critical scholars have viewed the identity work people undertake within organisational settings, to gain acceptance. Hence social identity theory premises that individuals define their identities according to social groups (Burr, 2015). For this study, a working definition for social identity remains as 'an individual's knowledge of belonging, by emotion and value, to a certain social group' (Burr, 2015, p. 25.). The social group in question within this study, is found within a school environment and those individuals or groups, the participants work alongside. Social groups seek to protect and support self-identity through a sense of belonging. Hogg, (2001) described the significant role social identity theory exerts upon the way individuals construct meanings to describe themselves by self-categorisation. This self-categorisation process enables the formation of an identity according to Stets and Burke (2000), which highlights similarities between an individual and others within the group. An individual's self-categorisation remains bespoke to them. Yet when within a group an individual is less likely to align with other individual views but, make a commitment to the group's whole view (Hogg & Hardie, 1992).

Stets and Burke (2000) suggest the need to gain a general theory of the self through the integration of identity and social identity theories, in contrast to the earlier separate theories

proposed by Hogg, Terry & White, (1995). Stets and Burke (2000) seek to show how a merger between the two theories was possible and addressed three areas: categories/groups within social identity theory and roles with identity theory; salience used in both theories; and the core processes which occurred once an identity was activated. Hence the concepts of the group, the role and the person could be strengthened. Indeed, whilst group, role and person identities can result in different outcomes they are likely to overlap and are unlikely to sit alone within identity theory.

Social identity theory involves examining how individuals perceive and hence position themselves within social grouping categories (Alvesson, Ashcraft, and Thomas, 2008). Social identity theory helps to explain inter-group phenomena (Brown, 2000) and this makes it relevant for research involving AHT/DHTs. Social identification occurs where an individual identifies as a group member, to form a social group. A social group is defined by Hogg, Abrams, Otten and Hinkle (2005) as 'a collection of more than two people who have the same social identity' (p. 47). Hence these people share the same descriptions of who they are, their attributes and their relationships with specific groups. This should not be confused with personal identity, where individual attributes are not shared with others and are not linked to group process. However, a social group can support the forming of personal identities and impact upon self-esteem of an individual. Group distinctiveness occurs when people seek to protect or promote what they consider to be the status or power of their own group, in comparison to other groups. This group evaluation is according to Hogg (2001) a self-evaluation, forming from a deep-seated need for self-enhancement and self-esteem.

The conceptual components of social identity perspective could be said to dovetail together to support the relationship between self-conception and that of the group. This view of social

identity theory supports Tajfel's initial thoughts regarding the processes of the individual, social interaction, and wider society.

2.6 Social identity and leadership

The women within this study are AHT/DHTs and hence senior leaders within their own school environment and the wider educational spheres. Hogg (2001) identified individuals self-categorise their social identity. Social identity theory of leadership suggests prototypicality is a significant basis for leader trust in groups (Giessner & Knippenberg, 2008; Giessner, Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2009; Hogg, 2001). However, pro-typicality within the group is most likely to result in greater identification with the group. Hogg (2001) examined social identity theory of group leadership from a constructionist viewpoint, as leadership is viewed as a group process. His study was to show social identity analysis can give a new, group membership oriented, analysis of the leadership processes. Hogg (2001) reviewed social identity and self-categorisation observing the same people, over time and then moved on to describe the proposed leadership theory and its inherent links. Self- categorisation theory and social identity theory were considered to share some similarities. Furthermore, he questioned what caused social identity as opposed to personal identity and its inherent links to perception, thought and behaviour, providing empirical support for the core components of leadership theory and tests used. Social identity processes are reputed, by Hogg (2001), to be linked to leadership and leadership was a group process and was certainly reflected with in Sinha's (2012) views. However, Hogg (2001) was quoted quite extensively within Sinha's writing (2012), which might be expected given Hogg's prolific research within the area of social identity. Platow and Knippenberg (2001) suggested social identity theory and self-categorisation theory were both an essential element of social identity leadership analysis. A key component of both theories

was the understanding that behaviours within a group do not come from individuals or relationships but from changes in self-perception from personal to social identity. Both Hogg (2001) and Steffens et al. (2014) state it is inaccurate to suggest leader pro-typicality simply with being marginally similar with others within the group they lead. This according to Sinha (2012), was because whilst the leader is part of the structure of the group, they are also part of the wider society and therefore social reality has greater influence.

Rast, Hogg and Giessner's (2013) research sought to build upon uncertainty-identity theory and social identity theory of leadership. They hypothesised that self-uncertainty would be associated with greater support for autocratic leadership. During challenging times group members look to their leaders to provide a strong and direct agenda to follow and this can also incline people towards a more autocratic style of leadership. Their study explored support for autocratic leaders in times of uncertainty through uncertainty-identity theory and the social identity theory of leadership. Progress from much earlier works by Lewin, Lippitt and White (1939) were discussed, showing in general people prefer a democratic and inclusive leader rather than an autocrat, with a democratic leader generally being more effective. These findings have been confirmed by further empirical studies over time. Rast et al. (2013) suggested the key fact of leadership is as a group process and that followers play a key role within leadership. This idea has been explored within social identity theory of leadership by Hogg (2001) and Hogg and Knippenburg (2003), stated that when people identify strongly with a group, they evaluate leadership effectiveness and support by how well the leader is perceived to identify with the group's pro-typicality.

Rast et al. (2013) study investigated how self-uncertainty might influence support for leaders who have a more autocratic leadership style. They surveyed 215 organisational employees, measuring self-uncertainty and perceptions of how autocratic a leadership style they felt their

leader had and how much they trusted their leader. Additionally, they measured how group prototypical, they considered their leader to be. Rast et al. (2013) findings confirmed that people supported leaders who were group prototypical more strongly than less prototypical leaders, with the study showing trust in and support for the leader, as significant. Additionally, uncertainty increased support for and trust in an autocratic leader and weakened support for and trust in a non-autocratic leader. They concluded strong autocratic leadership in times of political, economic and social uncertainty can be more appealing and reversed their original preferences of leadership style.

Jones (2016) suggests leadership styles and qualities are generally reviewed within a male perspective and this in turn has resulted in the discourse of leadership being perceived as a masculine construction. As this current study is viewed from a female perspective it seeks to support a greater understanding of female leadership and the role which working identity plays within the school environment.

2.7 Gendered careers

Within the last twenty years, a paradigm shift has altered the creation of careers and how they are developed and utilised, for both men and women. Traditionally, the term 'career' was defined by a relationship with the worker to an employing organisation. The individual then followed a linear path through the progression structures to gain specific rewards and this often, provided job security for the employee and worker loyalty for the employer. Periods of economic decline and environmental designs have seen changes within family structures, rise of dual-career couples, single working parents and a growth within the number of working women. 15.61 million women, in the UK, aged 16 or over were in employment in December 2019 (Devine & Foley, 2020). Of these 9.31 million of the women were working full time and

40% of the women were working part time, in comparison to 13% of men. Ibarra (2003) and Power (2009) note a rise in dramatic career changes linked to a re-evaluation of changing life needs and family commitments. The decline of women aspiring to leadership roles is highlighted by Maniero and Sullivan (2005). They acknowledge the changes in the role of working women within the last twenty years and the challenges of being a woman who works, whilst balancing the demands of family commitments. Maniero and Sullivan (2005) argue women shift their career patterns by rotating their varied work and home roles in a constantly shifting model, to better suit their needs at the time. Increasingly a change towards individuals fulfilling their own needs, rather than following traditional organisational career practices according to Sullivan and Baruch (2009) have altered working hours and career trajectories. They define a career as 'an individual's work-related and other relevant experiences, both inside and out of organisations, that form a unique pattern of the individual's life span' (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009, p. 1543).

It is generally acknowledged that occupations are gendered. A gendered career is defined for the purposes of this study as: 'an occupation which disproportionately attracts women or men' (Blackman and Jarman, 2006, p 295). Becoming a primary school teacher is considered by many to be a gendered occupation. Data for 2016 to 2017 (DfE, 2017b) backs up this view as the primary phase within England had approximately 30,900 male teachers in comparison to 146,600 females.

Studies have been written about career progression for headship (Cranston, Tromans, & Reugebrink, 2004; Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011; Chagger, 2013; Gould, 2016; Guihen, 2017 & Bruce-Golding, 2019). These studies discussed the complex processes involved in career progression to headship, including the personal and professional elements. The challenge of ensuring the educational sector can retain and promote teachers to senior leadership posts and

hence on to headship, has been highlighted within the last 10 years. The lack of AHT/DHTs seeking to apply for headship has seen an increase in vacant headship posts (Rhodes, Brundrett & Nevill, 2009; Howson, 2011). If a school is unable to recruit a headteacher there is an inevitable detrimental impact upon the education for the children who attend (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). Annual trends from the DfE highlight 40,000 teachers left the profession in 2016 (DfE, 2017a). Headship as a career seems less aspirational for many teachers (Chagger, 2013; Denholm, 2017 and Oplatka & Tamir 2009), with a rise of 28% of headteachers being re-advertised (Howson, 2011).

Research by Jones (2016) focused upon exploring female leader's perceptions and experiences of leading a primary school. The study involved individual semi-structured interviews with 10 female, primary headteachers, in England. Women it seems, according to empirical research, consider the impact of the wider role of being a headteacher with managing the personal role of being a mother, often with additional family responsibilities. According to Jones (2016) a woman has 1 in 14 chance of becoming a headteacher and a man has a 1 in 6. Jones's research (2016) agrees with the earlier research undertaken by Thornton and Bricheno (2000). They noted that whilst the primary teaching profession has more women teachers employed within it, the more senior leadership posts were held by men. This anomaly was also viewed within other countries including the USA and the Nordic area. Whilst the area of leadership was interesting it was also of concern for Thornton and Bricheno (2006). Their study explored gender differences through the perceptions of primary school teachers in the UK. Two hundred and seven teachers completed a questionnaire, and a further fifty-four teachers were interviewed, consisting of mixed sex. The interviews were open-ended, with the view of gaining depth of data regarding career aspirations. Both male and females indicated that men were more likely to hold subject responsibilities of maths, science and information technology and more likely to teach children within years 5 and 6, the oldest children within the primary

age range. In turn men saw the progression towards headship as their next logical career step, with more men than women seeking the power and status they considered headship would provide. Additionally, women tended to reflect upon specialising within an area of interest and perceived the role of headship as liable to have a more negative impact upon their family circumstances. For some women, they stated it would be easier for men to forge a career as a headteacher because they were likely to have greater home support with family, due to a wife or partner taking those roles on. This is also a concern which is discussed within Jones' research (2016) With more women seeking to continue working, taking career breaks to have children, or taking time off for caring for family members it seems likely that might be a barrier towards becoming a senior leader for some women. Yet some men according to Thornton and Bricheno (2006) are aware that gender might be an issue to women seeking headship. However, their findings concluded gender inequality affected the promotional chances of females within primary schools, due to stereotypical patterns of masculinity.

2.8 Contribution and limitations of prior research

As discussed within section 2.3 relatively little has been written within the last decade regarding the role of AHT/DHTs in primary schools in England, but even less is understood about women leaders. Their role does not seem to resonate strongly with researchers. This has led to the researcher's interest to contribute up-to-date relevant research, using a narrative approach, and identifying areas for future researchers to study.

As discussed within section 2.3, Chagger (2013) contributed to the knowledge of secondary school leaders in England. He identified support structures needed for DHTs to make their own judgements regarding confidence and self-belief and how training and policy changes need to

be made. Limitations of his study remain, as it involved secondary school leaders and the study (2013) involved both women and men.

Gould's study in 2016 (section 2.3) took place within Catholic primary schools, with a focus on headteacher recruitment. The research contributed towards an understanding of workload of senior leaders and how this can create negative perceptions of the role of headteachers. A limitation of the study was that it was undertaken within Catholic schools, and hence it might not be able to be generalised within other types of schools. In addition, it was also a mixed-sex study.

Guihen's study (2017) focused upon women leaders within secondary schools in England. The lived experiences of the women enabled a deeper understanding of secondary school DHTs and enabled an element of similarity to be gained between this current study and her research and is discussed with chapter 8. The limitation remained that the study was undertaken within a secondary school perspective, rather than primary.

A study in New Zealand by Dunlop (2018) explores women leader's identity, within secondary schools. As the education system is different to England only a generalised comparison might be drawn. In addition, the research involved four women and would need to be given a wider participant scope to enable a clear outcome to be drawn.

Bruce-Golding's study (2019) contributed towards the perception of secondary headship and how AHT/DHTs had utilised social capital within their career journeys. Limitations of the study remain that the focus is firmly within the secondary phase and involved both male and females. Bruce-Golding's study shares similarities with this current study being concerned with career journeys of AHT/DHTs. However, this current study concerns females and is applicable to primary schools, which addresses a distinct gap within the published literature.

This literature review has considered the theoretical framework around the key concepts of leadership, identity and gender. Social identity theory was examined, with pertinence to social identity and leadership. The literature review illustrates gender is a social construct and is constantly evolving, which is pertinent for the women's narratives within this study. As the AHT/DHTs and leading schools it was important to gain a women's perspective of leadership. Despite primary schools employing more women in comparison to males, a male is more likely to be a headteacher than a female. Gender and educational leadership have had a greater lens focus, but the challenges of combining a career with family responsibilities can lead to work-life balance issues. Identity is shaped by historical, societal, cultural and institutional factors and hence identity can change over time. Identity involves a process of sifting and sorting identities, to gain meaning. This process can lead to uncertainty and anxiety as an individual strives to consider their multiple identities, within groups or relationships, as they lead. Social identity theory was considered regarding how individuals construct meaning to self-categorise to support identity and position themselves within social groups. This was pertinent as the research is within a school and the AHT/DHTs work within groups, with the headteacher and other staff. Whilst leadership, identity and gender have been written about, there remains little research undertaken regarding women AHT/DHTs working in primary schools. This study aims to address this and hence the following research questions frame this study:

- How do women who are primary school DHTs and AHT's describe and make sense of their career journeys? – Research Question 1 **(RQ 1)**
- How do women AHT/DHTs experience 'becoming' a leader? – Research Question 2 **(RQ2)**
- How do women who are primary school DHTs and AHT's identify with their professional and family roles? – Research Question 3 (**RQ 3**)

- How do women leaders perceive their career ambitions have been shaped by their gender? – Research Question 4 (**RQ 4**).

Chapter 3 explores the methodology behind this study, the paradigm rationale and a background to the Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method. Participant information, data collection and then data analysis is set out.

Chapter 3

Methodology and Ethics

3.1 Introduction

Within chapter 2 the literature regarding key theories and empirical evidence was explored in relation to leadership, identity, and gendered careers and how these themes are linked.

The previous chapter demonstrated that whilst the primary phase in England is dominated by women teachers, they are under-represented within headship roles. This study seeks to address this gap within previous research and examines individual women's career narratives to understand why female AHT/DHTs not choosing to apply for headteacher posts?

Four open and exploratory research questions (RQ) were formulated to address the following key areas: RQ 1 - How do women DHTs and AHT's describe and make sense of their career journeys? RQ 2 - How do women AHT/DHTs experience 'becoming' a leader? RQ 3 - How do women DHTs and AHT's identify with their professional and family roles? RQ 4 - How do women leaders perceive their career ambitions have been shaped by their gender?

This chapter will consider the paradigm design and rationale chosen for the study (section 3.2) addressing the ontological and epistemological perspectives, justifying researcher position and outlining the strengths and weaknesses. The methodological approach used in this study is outlined within section 3.3. The research methods used (section 3.4), including background information regarding interviews, the BNIM approach (section 3.4.1) the importance of telling stories (section 3.4.2) and building trust (section 3.4.3) can be seen within section 3.4. The positionality of the research is given (section 3.5), and the research sample given (section 3.6). Details regarding piloting the research instruments is given (section 3.7), with data collection)

and data analysis (section 3.9). Ethical issues are provided (section 3.10) and trust, reliability and validity considerations (section 3.11) are given. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main points covered (section 3.12).

3.2 Paradigm design and rationale

The study takes a qualitative and interpretive position, which relies upon description and interpretation instead of measurement and prediction (objectivist/positivist). As mentioned earlier, this study could have followed a mixed-method approach. Whilst a quantifiable and scientific approach might have proved valuable, as a researcher the belief is this study is best served by an interpretivist paradigm. An interpretive stance draws out themes and findings, whilst acknowledging the inherent bias and value laden viewpoint, of the participants. It would be virtually impossible to have a completely neutral stance and be impartial within this study given the researcher's involvement, within education. However, due to the fact of being unfamiliar with any of the participants or their schools, this provides professional distance and seeks to reduce power from a researcher. The epistemological and ontological position of the researcher has shaped this study.

3.2.1 Ontological approach

The ontological stance of seeing the social world as being socially constructed and experienced subjectively from multiple realities, is in direct contrast to a given reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Constructionism as a paradigm within qualitative research is well known (Burr, 2015) and it sits within the reflection upon the truth as an individual constructs meaning from the experiences around them (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). Each connection and activity undertaken supports how individuals make sense of them. Constructionists consider emotions and other less tangible phenomena are socially constructed; dependent upon where the

exchange occurs and how it occurs (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). Constructionist researchers aim to understand both shared and co-created realities, which given each of the women's narratives is from their own perceptions and reflections, without interaction with others, seemed pertinent as a paradigm. This, Savin-Baden & Howell Major (2013) state enables both the researcher and participant to be co-constructors of knowledge as it emerges from the narrative. Etherington (2009) considers the construction of the knowledge can be viewed as transformative, as it seeks to obtain individual perspectives.

3.2.2 Epistemological approach

This study follows an epistemological approach concerning the nature of knowledge and how individuals can come to know multiple realities, and takes a qualitative and interpretive position, as each woman will view their career narrative from their own individual perspective. It relies upon description and interpretation instead of measurement and prediction (objectivist/positivist). Epistemology concerns the nature of knowledge and claims and is linked to ontology. Epistemology is a philosophical theory of knowledge and seeks to enable us to think about the social world around us. To reach an epistemological perspective Willis (2008) describes the journey as 'thinking about the nature of knowledge itself, about its scope and about its validity and reliability of claims to knowledge' (p. 7.).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) consider ontology and epistemology to be a moveable state but constructionism lies beneath both processes to capture and interpret individual perspectives (Burr, 2015).

3.2.3 Paradigm adopted in this study

This study relies upon the collection of narrative data obtained from individual interviews and interpreting those views and memories, to gain a deep and rich understanding of women AHT/DHTs, working in primary schools. Interpretivism (anti-positivism), sees the world as it

is constructed and interpreted by each individual person. Reality exists outside of numerical data or physical facts. Every event, nuance or action means a different thing to each individual and is largely based upon qualitative data methods; and positivism, adopting a more scientific and quantitative approach to explain and predict patterns and trends. The positivist approach views reality as objective, measurable and, through a neutral process of research, the researcher can uncover and understand phenomena (Lichtman, 2006). However, socially constructed beliefs and values give greater status to some views of the reality whilst under stating others (Cohen et al., 2011). Subjectivist epistemology supposes reality is demonstrated in a variety of ranges, which are shaped to fit an individual's purpose. This supports meaning, enabling individual interpretation. Interpretivist research provides an opportunity for shedding light on individual's experiences and how this supports and shapes their perception of the world around them. The aim is to gain new knowledge regarding the experiences, perceptions and ambitions of women AHT/DHTs and how this has shaped their career journey, as primary school leaders.

3.3 Methodological approach

Whilst a quantifiable and scientific approach might have proved valuable, as the researcher the belief is this study is best served by an interpretivist paradigm. An interpretive stance draws out themes and findings, whilst acknowledging the inherent bias and value-laden views of participants. As this study is concerned with individual's views and perceptions an interpretivist epistemology method was most appropriate. An interpretivist methodology was chosen as qualitative data is used for this research study which is related to the interpretivism approach. Interpretivism relies upon both the researcher and the participant as tools to measure phenomena, in this case narratives related to views and perceptions of women leaders. This method was important personally, as a current educator who considers the women's career

journeys are not about the number of schools or the headteachers they have experienced, but their unique personal stories, full of rich experiences and perceptions. Their views and perceptions regarding their headteachers and other staff require a paradigm to enable an open sharing of their thoughts, unfettered by a specific set of questions and drawing out their views using a more unconscious thought process to uncover individual meaning through social constructs and hence gain an understanding of the how women consider their career journeys have been shaped by leadership, identity, and gender.

During the initial thoughts regarding this study a quantitative approach was considered, but this would not provide sufficiently deep and rich details about the participants experiences. Saldana (2016) suggests a qualitative approach gives a richer picture to enable the gathering and assessing of the participants beliefs, thoughts, and feelings. A mixed-method approach might have proved more effective than quantitative alone, but the aim of the study was to gain a deep and rich collection of the women's career journeys and experiences, which is best suited to narrative interview (Burr, 2015). the next decision focused upon the style of interview e.g., structured, semi-structured or un-structured.

3.4 Research methods

Structured and semi-structured interviews rely upon the interviewer having a preordained set of questions and each interviewee would be asked these questions. This question-and-answer style can support the interviewer to have greater control of the information gathered (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). Asking each interviewee, a standardised question, provides the opportunity to secure commonality between interviewees answers and this can make it simpler for the study to be replicated in a wider study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). As the question asked is the same to each interviewee it does not rely upon the interviewer being highly skilled as they

are only required to follow the question sheet (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). This supports consistency as the question wording will be identical. On the other hand, the opportunity for the interviewer to use their explorative skills to gain deeper views of the participant is reduced and structured interviews do not provide opportunities to follow up on themes or provide participants with opportunities to share own experiences and perceptions (Cohen et al., 2011).

Unstructured interviews hinge upon a set of pre-chosen questions following upon a chosen context. Broad responses are usually gained from open ended questions which can allow for a broader response from the interviewee (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). A wealth of information can be gained during the unstructured interviews, due to the interviewee being able to speak freely without questions providing hinges for conversational discussion, but they rely upon the interviewer having a specific topic in mind and initiating a conversation to take place around the chosen topic (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). The disadvantage is the amount of data which can be collected is likely to prove time consuming to collate and this can then be difficult to organise into themes or patterns (Cohen et al., 2011).

Semi-structured interviews rely upon pre-chosen questions but allows for further questions to be included based upon the interviewee, but can move away to gain wider information, but returns to the original questions. Semi-structured interviews can be useful if the interviewer is likely to only be interviewing someone once and it ensure a focus is maintained during the process (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). Questions are usually open ended and allow for the interviewee to express their opinion and feelings and these can then be compared with the thoughts and feelings of the other interviewees involved within the study. However, this type of interview does not provide the interviewer with the opportunity to gain an in-depth perspective from the interviewee (Cohen et al., 2011).

Narratives according to Ibarra (2003) help us as try out the new possibilities before us. Enabling participants to tell their leadership story provides an opportunity to gain new knowledge on their leadership narrative, without being fettered by prescriptive methods. Elliott (2005) and Reissman (2008) consider narrative not merely providing participants an opportunity to share their story but the deeper meanings within and behind the story. Asking questions about identity through the interviewing approach has, in the past, been viewed by Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) as unlikely to provide an accurate and true view as to how individuals define themselves. Later, Alvesson et al. (2008) stated interviewing can be an efficient tool. Careful consideration needs to be taken with the interview method used. Using the BNIM approach for this study enables the participants to engage in a conscious stream of thought, rather than a set of pre-ordained questions. This narrative approach according to Sims (2003) is inseparable from storytelling and experiences. As these experiences are accessed via individual's memories, it creates a story. These individual stories allow participants to make sense of their lives but not to always understand the relationships within the stories. Inconsistencies within the stories are known to the individuals but they choose to edit the version they share, to enable them to make sense of their story.

3.4.1 Biographical narrative interpretive method

As previously discussed, this research involves a qualitative study which Fischer (2005) describes as being 'uniquely suited to discerning human's participation in what happens to them' (p. 411.). As this research follows an interpretivist methodology and seeks to gain a deep and rich understanding of women leaders, a narrative interview approach was chosen as the data collection tool, using Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM). The BNIM aims to explore participants lived experiences and using narrative interviews it aids researchers to gain a more biographical knowledge of a person (Wengraf, 2001). The BNIM is a methodological strategy which can uncover memories which may have been forgotten or

subsumed within other memory banks. This method of data collection was chosen because it supports the deep and rich exploration of career journeys and lived situations. The structure of the BNIM enables a researcher to have a dual focus: the personal meaning behind the biography and the wider context of socio-cultural processes. This specific narrative approach seeks to engage the participant in sharing their experiences rather than their position and as such can facilitate both the expression and sharing of previously forgotten perspectives, forming a rich narrative for interpretation. It places responsibility upon the interview to be a good listener and the interviewee to tell their story (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). The interviewee's experiences lead to follow on questions, which will change for each interviewee. This study seeks to elicit individual career stories, and this leaves the interviewee with the responsibility to tell their story clearly (Chase, 1995) and ensures the meaning is clearly created within the interview process. As each woman shares their narrative story there is likely to be a beginning, a middle and an end (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000) and as such it goes beyond explanations to refer to actual lived events. Wengraf (2001) suggests telling the 'Implied Author' (p. 18) life story may be far from the actual reality of the author's life and claims researchers need to be aware of the subtle shifts of subjectivity within both author stories. BNIM is based open conceptual open-ness and the interviewer does not seek to test a specific hypothesis (Wengraf, 2001), aligning it to an inductive process. The interviewer's principal role is to listen to the interviewee's communication with the concept of active listening being involved. Additionally, the interviewer might not understand why the interviewee is responding as they choose but the interviewer cannot seek clarification or interrupt, even if it is to ask a question. This active listening approach may take several forms. The interviewer may show they are attentive to the responses of the interviewee by non-verbal means e.g., eye contact, non-verbal sounds, or positive body posturing. The interview should be given time to pause and a silence should be maintained by the interviewer to allow the respondent time to recall their thoughts. During the

interview emotions can surface for the respondent and it is important the interviewer shows empathy but does not try to change the subject or move the responses on for fear of causing more upset. During the narrative process it was important that paraphrasing was avoided unless the interviewee seeks it. If the interviewer was unsure of what they were trying to say, a self-conscious possibility can be offered to help the interviewee clarify their thoughts. The single interview followed the BNIM approach and followed 'A Single Question aimed at inducing Narrative' (SQUIN). This question asked the interviewee to tell their life story, with a focus upon the experiences and events which they feel are important personally to them, up until the present. The method began with an open-ended question to the interviewee, with aim of 'digging deeper' (Kempster, 2010, p. 23) into the participants memories. The open-ended question asked was: Tell me about your career in teaching. Narrative interviews encourage participants to tell their story and provides a unique insight into life journeys, how individuals interpret events and how personal ideals have given structure to individual choices. A memory is selective and often either unconsciously or consciously events can be forgotten. The narrative interview seeks to encourage the interviewee to recall what they experienced from their own perspective and not the specific facts themselves which Mulaert, Sarubbi Jr, Gallo, Neto and Reis (2014) describe as past versus history. These narratives are to be considered neither true nor false but provide a perspective within history of that person's views.

The BNIM process involves a short interview process. This can be a drawback as the researcher has limited time to engage the participant in conversation and be able to provide positive encouragement. As all participants were provided with a clear schedule for the interview, with the understanding that unlike other interviews, this interview would not support the researcher providing positive acknowledgement. This gave the participants a greater element of trust and in doing so sought to reduce the Hawthorne Effect (Schwarz, Fischloff, Krishnamurti and Sowell, 2013; Yunker (1993). The Hawthorne Effect is generally described as 'the alteration

of behavior by the subjects of a study due to the awareness of them being observed' (Schwarz et al., 2013, p. 36). Within a few minutes of both the pilot study (section 3.7) and each of the 10 interviews the participants were engrossed within their narratives and became comfortable with me actively listening and not giving either verbal or non-verbal encouragement. As a researcher it was an important element of the pilot study and did require a great deal of concentration to ensure researcher impartiality. This provides a challenge for the researcher as it is difficult not to respond to experiences shared by respondents, that resonate personally. This can include refraining from expressing surprise, shock, or agreement. This challenge was overcome by focusing upon the words spoken, jotting down individual key words, ensuring as the researcher my facial features remained neutral and an awareness of ensuring the participants voice was the prime form of engagement.

Within qualitative data the researcher plays a significant role in the production and interpretation of the qualitative data. The researcher's values, beliefs and identity are inextricably linked with the data collection process and as such it should be acknowledged within the research process (Denscombe, 2003). Denscombe (2003) suggests a researcher uses two methods to control their own personal involvement within the research process; self-control to operate in a detached manner to ensure their research is not subjected to personal prejudices or acknowledge their own unique personal stance and how it can bring an alternative perspective on the research process.

3.4.2 Importance of telling stories

Hollway and Jefferson (2000) describe the process of gaining memories from an interviewee's life story as an anchoring of an account. The principle encourages a story-telling approach from a given initial question. In this study "Tell me about your career in teaching" was the initial question.

Hollway and Jefferson (2000) posit the natural unconscious defensiveness of research participants can influence the information gained. In addition, this affects how the researcher interprets the information collected. Defensiveness can be reduced during the biographical narrative according to Hollway and Jefferson (2000) by ensuring the interviewer avoids intrusive questioning or probing, but, aiming for free flow and open communication from the interviewee to gain knowledge (Wengraf, 2001). Encouraging participants to share their stories can according to support the 'indexicality' (Hollway and Jefferson, 1990, p.116) process, whereby participants are anchored to events which have taken place. This allows participants to engage with reality, whilst maintaining self-protection from more emotional memories. It can be more challenging to gain narrative stories, particularly if the participant might perceive their story lacks interest or significant events. Some participants are more able to use their storytelling abilities more successfully than others (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). During the interview process attentive listening needs to be observed with simple note taking, to allow for themes to be followed up. The originality of participants own words or phrases should be adhered to, ensuring respect and retention of meaning-frames. Further narrative relies upon open ended questions to encourage wide responses. The challenge for the interviewer is to assist the participant to say more about their lives and assist the process of gestalt, without the use of judgement, imposing own views or interpretations. The narrative interview process should not impose a structure upon the narrative (Wengraf, 2001). Free association when applied to the narrative structure can gain access to a participant's concerns which may not be uncovered by more traditional methods, including faded out or delayed recollections (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). Contradictions, omissions, avoidances can be highlighted during free association. The narrative gained during the interview is a product of the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee (Wengraf, 2001).

3.4.3 Building trust

Undertaking narrative interviews requires the interviewer to gather an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of the participant (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000. This process requires interaction and communication from the participant (Bartkowiak, 2012) and begins with trust and understanding. If this trust and understanding is not formed the participant might show suspicion and skepticism, which will be reflected within the depth and breadth of data collected (Molden, 2011). Building a relationship is therefore critical to the process of rich data collection. This relationship is based upon initial rapport and generates respect between the interviewer and interviewee (Guillemin & Heggen, 2009). Rapport is the ability to connect with another person to support a climate of trust and understanding, whilst appreciating the opinions of others and understanding and accepting the feelings related to those opinions (Knight, 2009). Once rapport is established the interviewee feels more at ease and this supports greater communication, leading to trust according to Turgo (2012) and this is most likely to result in quality research findings. Building rapport as an element of increasing the relationship between the participant and the interviewer is highlighted by Knight (2009), Guillemin and Heggen (2009) and Molden (2011) as an integral element of qualitative studies.

Therefore, to build trust within this study the participants were emailed information regarding the study. They were then asked to contact the researcher by email if they were interested in taking part in the study. This led to an agreement for the researcher to telephone the interviewee, at a pre-arranged time, so they would feel more at ease before meeting for the first time. During this telephone conversation a verbal overview of the process the participant could expect was given, including an expectation regarding the lack of what might be considered positive encouragement from me as the researcher, following up from the original information sheet they had received (Appendix III). A further explanation about the BNIM approach, why it would follow a specific pattern beginning with the initial question. It was clearly stated they

would not be interrupted, until they felt they had told their story. Once that point was reached, it was explained only specific questions related to a point they had mentioned would then be asked. A re-iteration of the process of the interview and what they could expect and what the researcher expects from them within the process, with most participants showing a genuine interest in the process and research outline. Clarity was given to the participants that the interview process would be recorded and of the ethics involved in that. In addition, a further reminder was provided that the researcher would remain silent following the initial question, following the BNIM approach, and they would not receive encouraging words or advice through the process. This led to a natural opportunity for the interviewee to ask any questions they might still have and arrange a time to meet for the individual interview. In all the initial phone calls the interviewee felt rapport had been established with a natural curiousness of the participants to ask about the study, followed by an increased flow within the narrative.

3.4.4 Limitations

The limitations of undertaking a holistic narrative data approach using the BNIM should be considered. The narrative approach enables life stories to be gained, but these can be difficult both to interpret and to retell within the data. It can be difficult to know when an event specifically occurred. Whilst the women within this study gave their narratives in what might be considered a chronological order, they were likely to be unable to recall specific dates or certain turning points, but rather focus upon gradual changes or outcomes. It relies upon the researcher interpreting and re-interpreting the data, particularly when seeking to ensure anonymity for the participants. It can also present challenges within the narrative account given, the interpretation by the researcher and the summary of the narrative. In addition, narrative data can be difficult to interpret and present in a meaningful way.

A different approach might have been the use of a longitudinal study which could have supported the opportunity to gain dated references and links to participant actions. However

due to time constraints this was not possible. The use of semi-structured interviews as an alternative was considered but the limitations regarding the questions becoming the focus of the interview. In addition, this form of interview was considered less likely to enable the participants to share their personal experiences in the widest form.

3.5 Positionality of the researcher

Within qualitative data the researcher plays a significant role in the production and interpretation of the qualitative data. The researcher's values, beliefs and identity are inextricably linked with the data collection process and as such it should be acknowledged within the research process (Denscombe, 2003). Denscombe (2003) suggests two methods to support the researcher to control their own personal involvement within the research process: either self-control to operate in a detached manner to ensure the research is not subjected to personal prejudices or acknowledge their own unique personal stance and how it can bring an alternative perspective on the research process. As a female leader, and a critical resource within this research, the positionality of the researcher being an insider within education, brings a unique perspective. Each researcher has their own personal viewpoint which Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2013) consider is arrived at by a researcher's beliefs regarding the world. This they consider affects philosophical positioning within the study, the research undertaken and the context for the research. In turn this can affect the research process, questions posed, or the way data is analysed. A constructionist approach seemed appropriate as each of the women held their own individual and unique perspective.

With very little written regarding female AHT/DHTs working in English primary schools, the intention is to gain deep and rich narratives to enable the exploration of the women's career journeys. The BNIM approach supports this view and ensures a broad opportunity for the

women to share, without constricting or directing their narrative stories. The pilot study enabled an opportunity to reflect upon the positionality of the researcher, within the study. Following on from the pilot study, a reflection process by the researcher, enabled subtle changes to the interviewing technique, ensuring the process adhered to the guidelines of the BNIM approach. The reflection process highlighted how important it was for the researcher to remain silent and this was the greatest challenge. I wrote 'do not speak' on the top of each subsequent interview and this made for a greater awareness of the need to listen to the participant. This ensured no unconscious affirmation was provided during the women's narratives or defense of their views (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000).

3.6 Research sample

Researchers are largely in agreement, that a sample size for undertaking a narrative analysis study can be of any size. Whilst a single case study might have proved suffice, it was considered a sample size of 10 participants, across four counties, would provide depth within the study and provide an additional layer of anonymity since participants were drawn from more than one county.

An initial email was sent to Primary Schools in the Local Authorities and Academies within Hampshire, Berkshire, Surrey, and West Sussex, via school communications system, asking for any AHT/DHTs interested to contact the researcher, via the details given within the information sheet (Appendix III). If the initial email did not elicit enough respondents for interview, then it was expected the use of networking would be employed, but this extra measure was not required.

Fig. 3.1 provides further information regarding the demographics regarding the women.

Pseudonym	Role	Type of School	No of years teaching	Children of their own
Marla	DHT	Local Authority Infant	Not disclosed	No
Kate	AHT	Local Authority Infant	18	Yes
Sally	DHT	Local Authority Primary	Not disclosed	Yes
Cerys	DHT	Academy Primary	19	Yes
Mandy	AHT	Local Authority Junior	Not disclosed	Not disclosed
Morgan	AHT	Local Authority Special School	14	Yes
Carly	DHT	Local Authority Infants	19	Yes
Debbie	DHT	Local Authority Junior	Not disclosed	Yes
Chloe	DHT	Local Authority Junior	11	No

Julie	AHT	Academy Infant	24	Yes

Fig. 3.1 demographics of participants

The cross-counties approach was designed to obtain as wide a range of experiences from the leaders, as possible. In addition, it also helped to protect the identity of participants as they could not be linked to just one county and additionally aimed to give participant views wider than within only one county. The information concerning the type of school and geographical area they work in was gained from the public domain. The number of years teaching and whether they have their own children was shared by the participants during the interview process itself.

The research focused upon 10 female AHT/DHTs working within Hampshire, Berkshire, Surrey, and West Sussex primary schools, including Special Schools. The type of leaders chosen e.g., female, DHT/AHT, primary phase and employed within Local Authority or Academy control ensured comparisons could be made between responses. As the research was being undertaken by a current female leader it is likely respondents would feel empathy, trust and an acceptance of their shared insider positions within education (Williams & Vogt, 2011). This purposeful sample ensured interviewees would have appropriate insight into the identified research issues (Basit, 2010 & Silverman, 2014). 10 women responded either by phone or email and then gave formal agreement to take part in the study. Following the same procedure outlined for the pilot study (Section 3.7) the women were then sent an initial introductory email with a further copy of information sheet (Appendix III) relating to the study and re-stating the purpose and aims of the research, what would be required from them and a consent form

(Appendix IV). Once a positive response of interest was made, the researcher arranged to speak with them over the telephone. This enabled an introduction and an opportunity to answer any specific questions before the interview, but also to help build trust, the importance of which was outlined in Section 3.4.3. A mutually agreeable time and date was arranged for the interview. It was with the understanding that the first session would last approximately up to 90 minutes and, if necessary, a second session might be arranged. A broad record was kept regarding the type of school the participants currently worked within (Fig. 3.1).

The narrative interview method chosen (section 3.4.1) sought to provide the greatest opportunity for the women to have the deepest recall regarding their careers. However, following the principals of BNIM, sampling through a second interview continued if required, until the women had told their stories. If any of the participants had chosen to drop out of the study, it was felt the research would remain in a strong position to continue with the study, however none of the women declined to continue. The interviews took place between June 2018 and October 2018, either in the participant's educational workplace or at a mutually agreeable location.

3.7 Piloting the research instruments

Following the granting of ethical approval by the University of Reading and before the main research was undertaken, a pilot interview was carried out. A DHT, who was not part of the greater research project, was chosen to undertake the narrative interview process. The process of undertaking a pilot of the proposed interview aids the researcher to gain skill for administrative procedures during the research and to ensure the BNIM approach was suitable, whilst ensuring the SQUIN was appropriate for gaining rich insights into the phenomena of research interest. Understanding how participants might react to the process and the timescale

needed for interviews is also considered important (Cresswell, 2014). The BNIM process requires the researcher to remain quiet generally during the interview and the pilot process provided an opportunity to ensure the interviewee was not drawn in to asking questions or seeking clarification. Auditory responses to aid engagement were given if appropriate e.g. "mmmm", without seeking to offer positive or negative responses. Thematic questions were asked within the final stage of the interview when appropriate. These only followed specific lines of enquiry from an area the women had mentioned within the interview. The interview was recorded, transcribed, and analysed to ensure any technical skills were robust enough for the key task ahead.

It was not intended to include the pilot study within the main study but only seek to gain clarity regarding the question asked and how the response might prove gainful within the whole research process. This process increased personal confidence with undertaking the research task and ensure ownership of the process. Piloting also enabled the administration of the interviews to be efficient, both for the participant and the researcher. It was also expected that timings for completion of each interview would become clearer, participant responses and how to respond non-verbally but positively during the participants narrative. Offering "mmm" as a response became an effective strategy, if the interviewee looked towards the researcher for positive reinforcement eye contact was given to provide re-assurance without leading the participants (Wengraf, 2001).

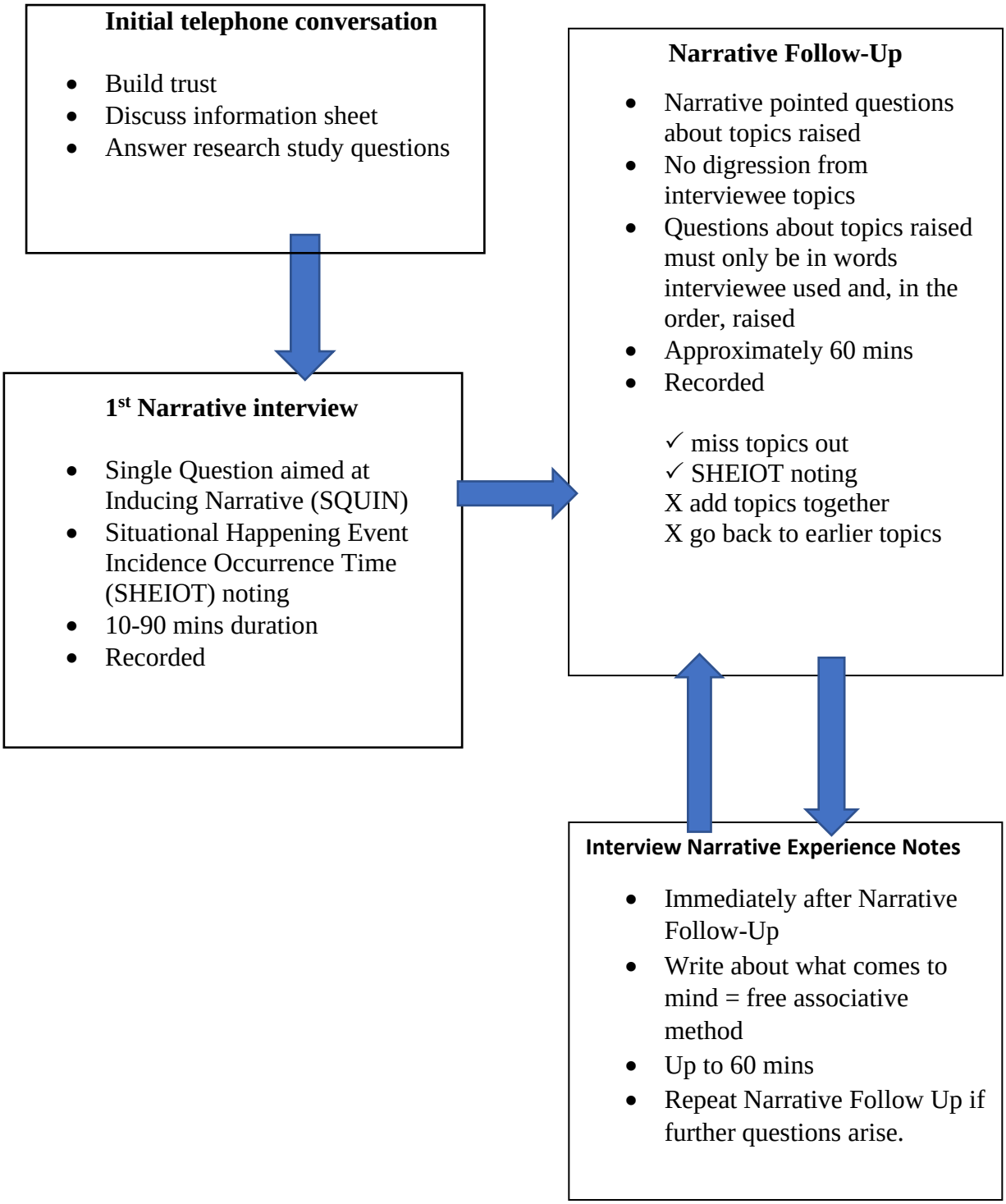

Fig. 3.2 participant interview schedule adapted from Wengraf (2001)

The first part of the interview session sought to build upon the trust and rapport from the original telephone call. Participants were encouraged to feel at ease and offered refreshments

and a light discussion regarding their day so far. Once it was established that the participant appeared ready, they were reminded of the ethics related to the study and given information regarding the BNIM approach. It was explained that the interview would start when the recording device was commenced and then they would be asked a constructed single narrative question e.g., Tell me about your career within teaching. Wengraf (2001) describes this as the initial narrative sub-session and the single narrative question is described as 'The Single-Question Initial Sub-session' (SQUIN). After the initial SQUIN no further questions were asked with the interviewer supporting the process through non-verbal gestures. The interviewee was encouraged to continue with their life narrative in reply to the SQUIN for as long as they wished. This can according to Wengraf (2001) last for 10 – 90 minutes, but it did vary according to experiences. As interviewer brief notes on the topic were noted, but only using the keywords the participant used, which Wengraf (2001) described as SHEIOT (Situation Happening Event Incident Occurrence Time) noting. All the participants reached a natural conclusion to their life narrative, and this was indicated by a clear lineation e.g. "*That's it really*" or "*I think I have told you everything*". Once participants had become accustomed to silence from the interviewer their narratives tended gained fluency.

As each participant had expressed a preference to complete the interviews during the same day, rather than over several sessions, it was arranged to suspend the interview to ensure the participant could have some refreshments and collect their thoughts. The women were reminded during this time that they would not be asked about their interview during this time. It was explained to the women that the following session would follow up on any themes or areas of specific interest, if felt it would be beneficial for the study. Wengraf (2001) states it is important that three key elements are adhered to. Firstly, only narrative-pointed questions are asked. Secondly an adherence to only topics which have been raised are asked and additionally when asking about the topics raised the interviewer only uses the words used and in the order

the topics are raised. Wengraf (2001) states a topic can be missed out, two topics cannot be subsumed into a single topic, but you can never go back to an earlier topic once it has been passed. The reason for this is according to Wengraf (2001) that gestalt might be broken. Gestalt is the free development and closure between the interviewer and the interviewee. If gestalt is broken by intrusive questioning or additional probing for clarification the free flow and openness of the principle of the communication can be interrupted and resulting in the interview being weakened (Wengraf, 2001). Once the second part of the initial interview was concluded Wengraf (2001) stipulates it is necessary for the interviewer to make brief notes of the interview experience, including anything specific or tenuous which comes to mind, even if it might seem irrelevant. This free associative method allows the interviewer to express their thoughts immediately, rather than seeking to remember them retrospectively.

3.8 Data collection

This research aimed to understand why female AHT/DHTs are not choosing to apply for headteacher posts by eliciting a deep, rich understanding of the female leader's experiences, perceptions, and ambitions. As the focus was the lived experience of female leaders within primary education, it was necessary for the data collection method to uncover nuance and detail in an in-depth manner. Undertaking research involving lived experiences require the researcher to go beyond the surface and probe into the participants memories (Kempster, 2010).

Following procedures trialled in the pilot study, and in alignment with research ethics considerations, once participants provided informed consent interviews were scheduled. The data collection method chosen for this narrative research was the BNIM which was intended for the analysis of biographic narratives. The BNIM oral interview procedure is comprised of three sub-sessions (Fig. 3.2).

3.8.1 Transcription

Each interview was recorded by consent. All participants within the study were referred to by a pseudonym and any specific identifying words were replaced with xxx or an alternative pseudonym where names were offered. Following each interview, the original recording was listened to, to gain a feel for the data and then listened to a second time. The interview was transcribed verbatim, into a word document. This required listening repeatedly to the women's narrative career stories to ensure accuracy (Bailey, 2008) and an example can be found as Appendix VI. Whilst a vast amount of data was collected, it was important that the recordings were listened and transcribed in person, rather than requesting someone to type them up. It was felt this control, would enable the audible talk to be represented in a consistent manner and ensured, as much as possible, that the data was interpreted accurately and judgements regarding details were similar over time. Transcribing from audio tape generates questions for a researcher about what to include and how data is represented e.g., use of voices (Cohen et al., 2011). This interpretive process was the first stage in analysis of the data. It might be argued that as a female researcher working within the disciplinary background of the study, methodological assumptions might be made. However, the BNIM question was an open one and further questions were only asked if the participant raised a point which required further detail. The interview method was not conversational. Thus, the participant and researcher responses are recorded in the transcripts verbatim and whole.

3.9 Data analysis

Qualitative research is not subjective and based solely upon the opinions of one participant, with a pre-determined outcome. During the interview process a great deal of unstructured

material was produced (Appendix VI) and this can be difficult to analyse, state Bryman (2001) and Briggs, Coleman and Morrison (2012) and Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014).

The research focus relies upon an exploratory piece of qualitative research following an interpretive mode of enquiry (Cresswell, 2014) with repeated data collection to ensure data saturation, until it is perceived nothing new is likely to emerge. Each individual transcript was read multiple times to ensure familiarity with the data before initial exploratory coding was undertaken (Fig. 3.3 – 3.5). This thematic analysis was undertaken by hand to identify themes and categories which were interpreted from the data. The process was iterative to ensure further themes were highlighted. For ease, short words or phrases from initial researcher response was noted in the margins either a short phrase or a word, with arrows to the highlighted section or word of the text, to ensure open coding (Fig. 3.3. – 3.5).

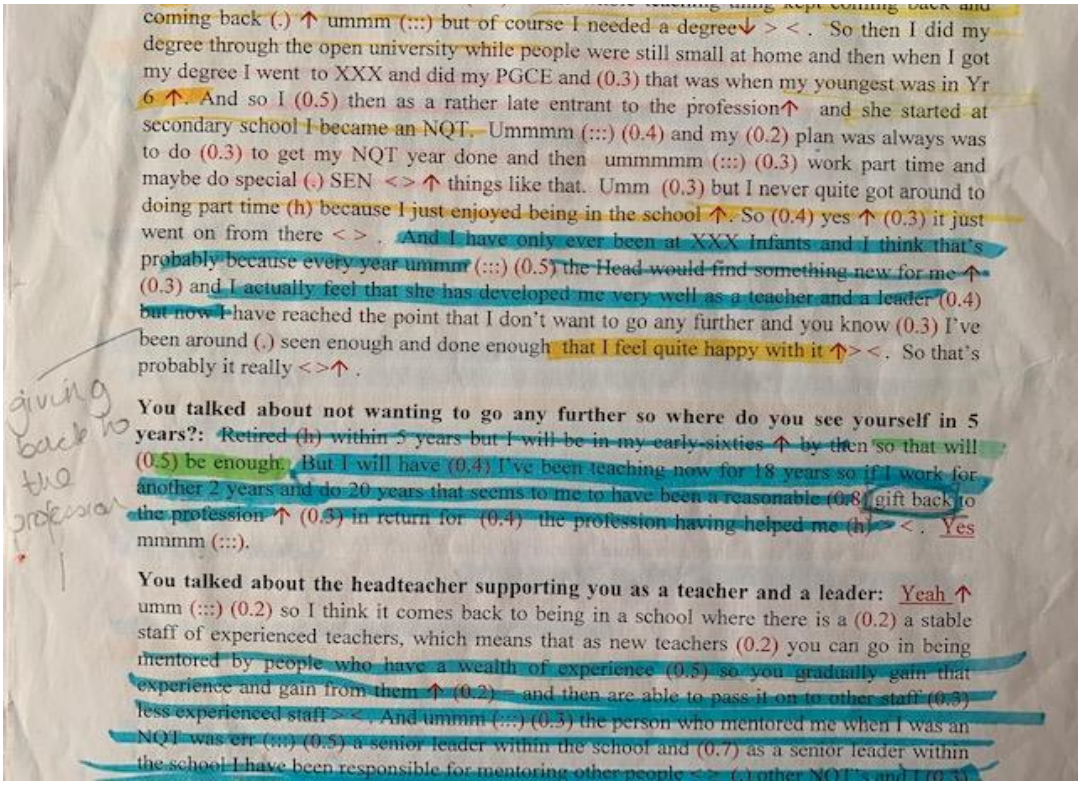

Fig. 3.3 photograph to show initial hand coding of subthemes from a participant's transcript

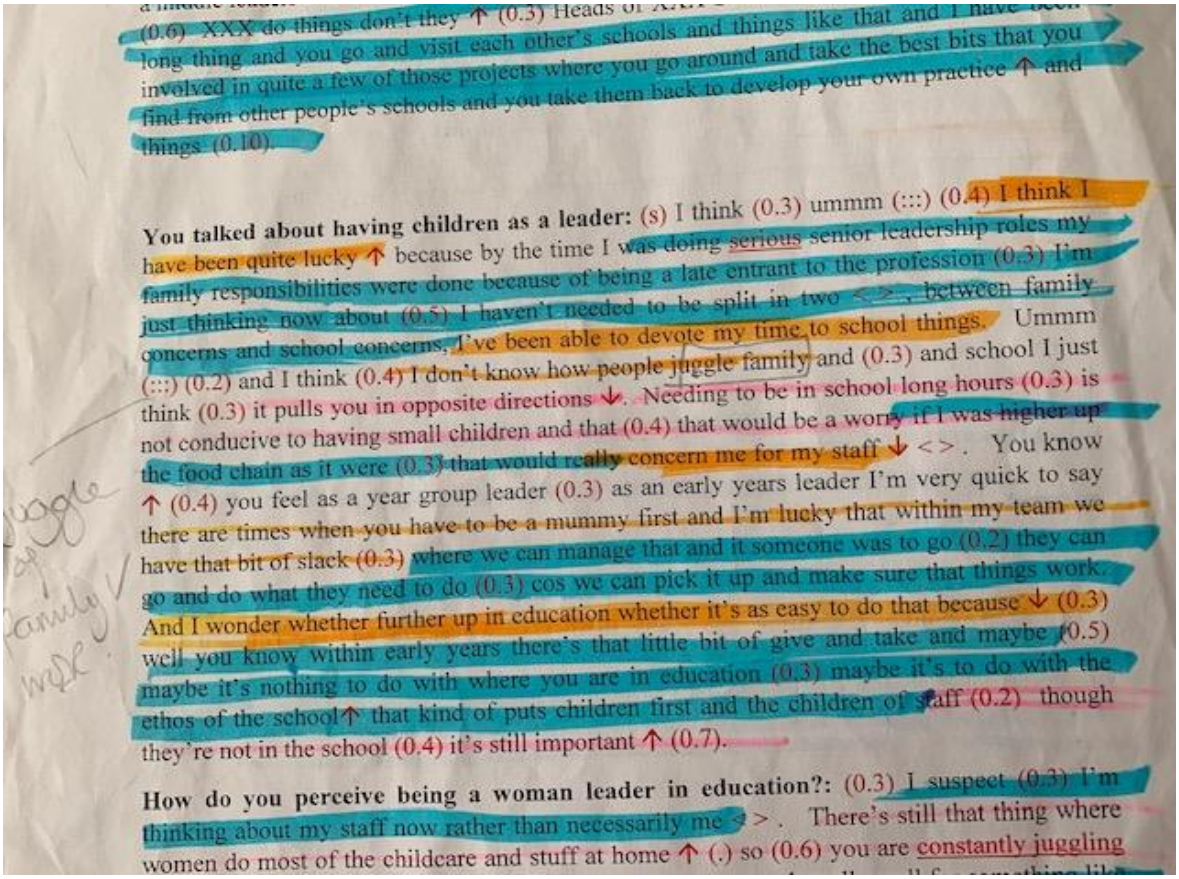

Fig. 3.4 Photograph to show initial hand coding of subthemes from a particpant's transcript

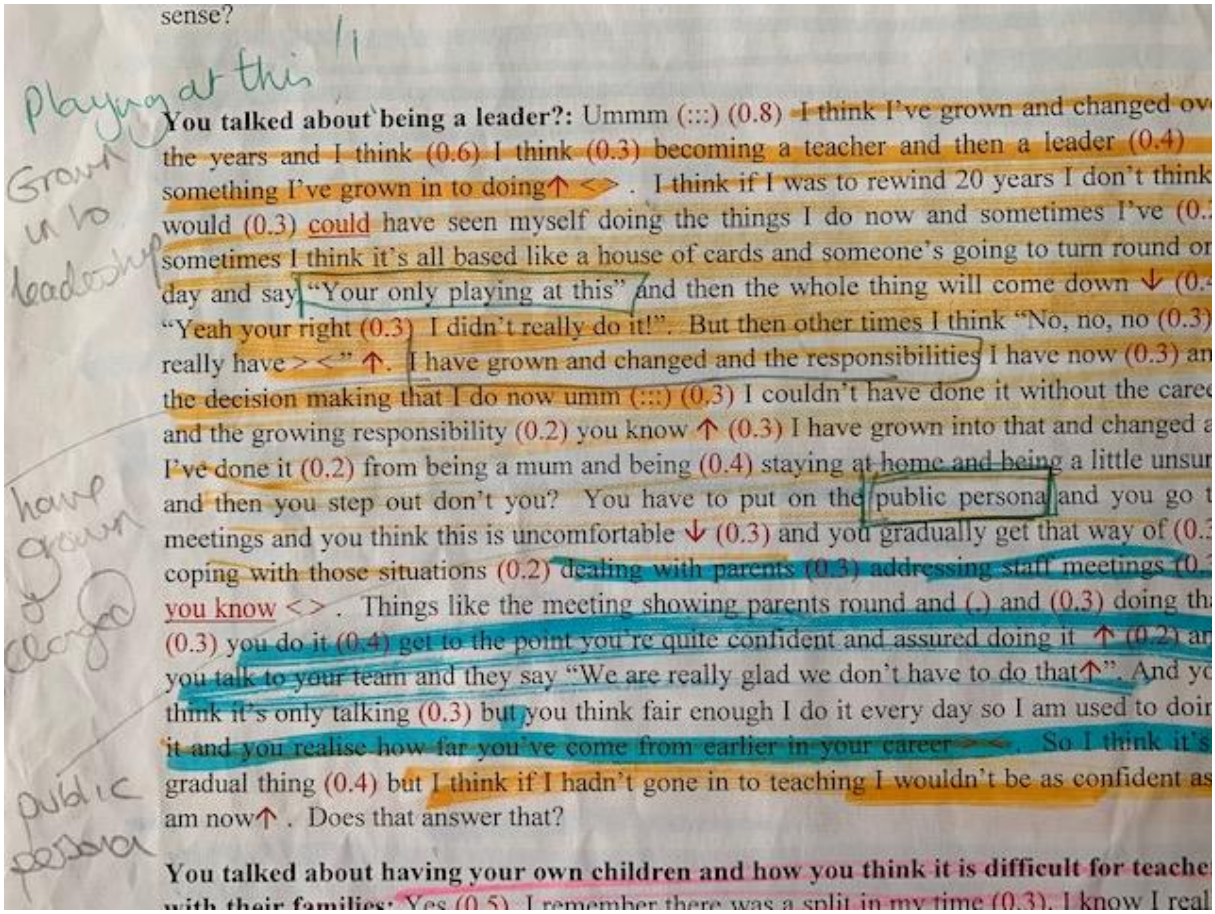

Fig. 3.5 photograph to show initial hand coding of subthemes from a participant's transcript

Continuing the inductive process, a grid was created to support the understanding of themes (Fig.3.6) and potential subthemes (Fig. 3.7). Using a simple method of ✓ and X, alongside each woman's pseudonym, the extensive raw text began to form into patterns. This enabled the identification of areas of correlation from the women's narratives. The themes covered were aspirational leaders, vision, trust, identification of talent, acting headteacher role, NPQH, family and working hours, changing identities, long hours/retirement, pressure of OFSTED, male versus female bias, aspiring headteacher, responsibility (full time/part time hours),

parents, family of teachers, SENDCo, number of schools worked in, years teaching, mature entrant and Governing Body issues.

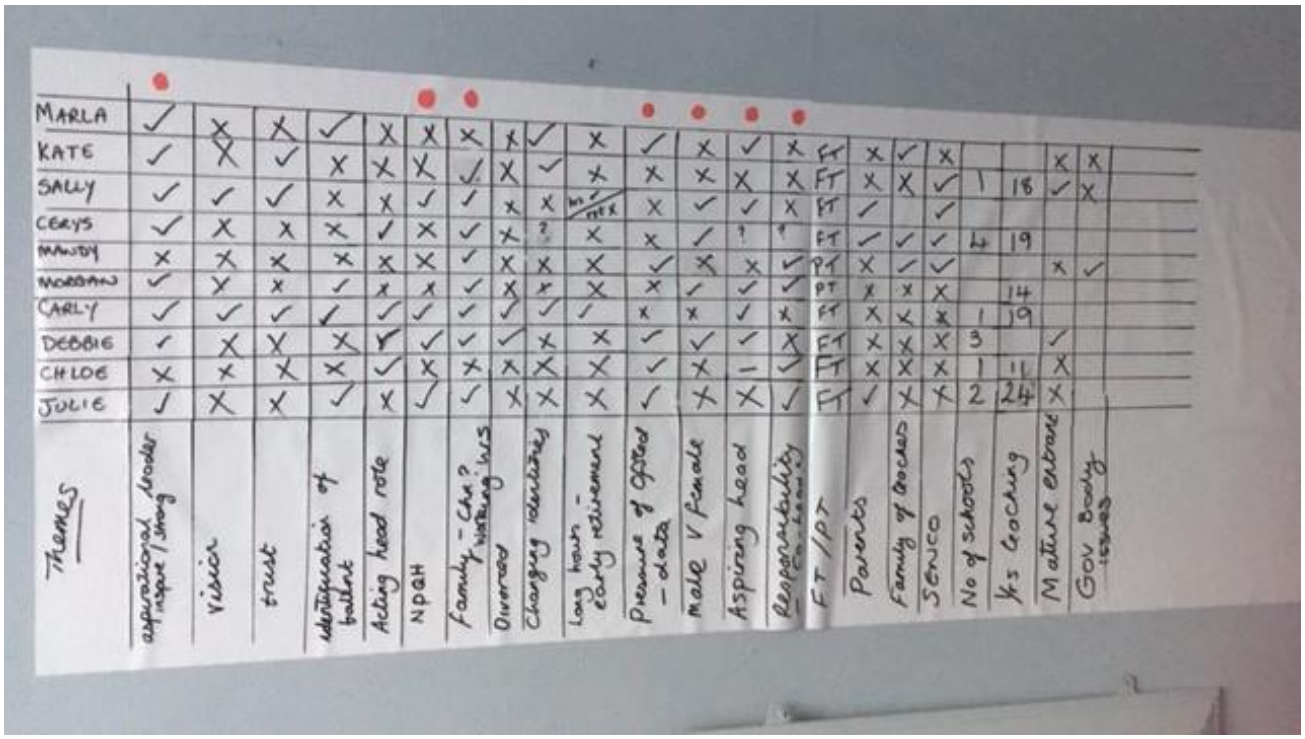

Fig. 3.6 photograph of initial data analysis grid identifying themes

It was expected the data would highlight some ordinary themes, but it was likely that there would be unexpected themes, which are not foreseen. These are considered hard to classify as they might contain ideas that do not fit a specific theme or overlap over other themes. In turn there can be major and minor themes that represent major ideas and minor ideas or subthemes. Layering and interrelating themes Cresswell (2014) suggests are useful tools to be used to build on major or minor themes and sorts them into an indeterminate number of layers. Using these themes and layers will then aid clearer interpretation of the qualitative data according to Guba and Lincoln (1994). However, analysis of data is eclectic and as previously stated by Cresswell (2014) and Guba and Lincoln (1994) qualitative data is interpretive research. How the

researcher viewed the data would be different from someone else, due to differing life experiences. As a female researcher currently working within an educational setting, it is likely the perspective of viewing the data to be different than a researcher who is not working within the field of education.

Fig 3.7 photograph of grid demonstrating potential subtheme coding

Analysis took place whilst data collection was occurring due to the iterative process (Cresswell, 2014) and data grouped, regrouped, and linked to build upon explanation and understanding (Grbich, 2007). The application and reapplication of codes through an inductive process, supports organising and linking of the qualitative data to support meaning and provide explanation (Grbich, 2007). An inductive approach enables the raw data generated from the women's narratives, to identify themes and subthemes (Jones, 2016). This codifying process

enables and supports the search for patterns to identify themes (Fig. 3.6) and sub-themes (Fig. 3.7) within each women's narrative. As the researcher listened to the narratives of each woman multiple times, a search for patterns and themes in their stories was undertaken, noting key words or phrases. With multiple readings of each transcript, colour coding and highlighting took place by hand. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest this process supports the researcher to both gain a feeling for the data alongside how it might look, to enable grouping to take place. Fig. 3.8 is an example of the initial coding framework, from Julie's transcript.

Interview transcript	**Initial coding framework**
.. umm quite sort of a very inspirational head at that time … he recognised people's talents and umm provided opportunities.	Career opportunities Talent spotting Bringing staff on
We've got a really, well-established team and we know each other well and very supportive in what we do.	Relationship with HT and other staff Learning about leadership Knowing self
I think it's about you have got to really understand the pressures for working mums	Working mum issues Gender differences Anxiety

Fig. 3.8 an example of an initial coding framework (Burnard et al., 2008, adapted)

From the data gathered from the initial coding grids it was then possible to identify the final coding framework (Fig. 3.9).

Final coding framework	Initial coding framework
Career Journey	Gender Qualifications for leadership Career goals Home and work challenges
Leadership • Relationships • Learning from role models observed in the workplace • Career aspirations	Career opportunities Talent spotting Bringing staff on Learning about leadership
Identity • Multiple selves • Fragmented self • Identity regulation • Identity anxiety	Relationship with HT Relationship with staff Anxiety
Gendered Career • Male v female • Gender bias • Career women • Family v professional	Working mother issues Gender differences Gender perceptions

Fig. 3.9 an example of a final coding framework after reduction of the categories (Burnard et al. 2008, adapted)

The data collected was then subject to critical reflection, with an inevitability of constructed meaning (Grbich, 2007). During the interview process SHEIOT noting occurred and these sought to identify specific words or phrases. Indeed, the use of qualitative data within research should be fit for purpose (Cohen et al, 2011) and allow a researcher to note patterns and themes relevant to the research questions. This inductive approach supports the process of secondary questions. Specific events during the narrative were also re-visited if clarification was required regarding responses.

Hollway and Jefferson (2000) describe interpreting narrative accounts as needing to avoid the 'hermeneutical circle' (p. 18), suggesting there is not an end to the process of interpreting narrative accounts. This interpreting of the accounts continued until it was considered that the identification of the subthemes had been reached. However, another researcher might gain differing research themes and hence have continued to interrogate their data in a differing style.

3.10 Ethical issues

Within this section the ethical considerations necessary for the research will be addressed. Ethical approval was gained from the University of Reading (May 2018) before this study was commenced. The research proposal, information sheet and consent forms given to the participants were approved by the University of Reading Ethics committee (Appendix V) and in addition followed British Educational Research Association (BERA) guidelines (BERA, 2014). The information within the forms was clear, concise, and readable and it was made it clear what the study was about. It was clearly stated that participants were under no obligation to take part in the study, and they were free to withdraw their consent at any time during the process. Prior to the interview, during an initial meeting, the information sheet was shared with each participant and opportunity given to answer any questions which arose, before the

participant signed the consent form. All participants gave permission to be recorded during the interview process by completion of the consent form (Appendix IV). Appreciation was given that for some participants the interview might uncover or highlight a previously undiscovered thought or memory. If this were to be the case the interview would be ceased until the participant was ready to continue. However, there was no requirement to invoke this. All participants were made aware they could withdraw from the research study at any point, without any judgement or questions. Confidentiality during the data collection was adhered to. Anonymity was assured to those who took part in the research, with pseudonyms assigned to the participants.

As an electronic method of recording was undertaken participants had to provide their consent (Appendix IV) and they agreed to their data being stored on a password protected computer and any data would be kept in accordance with data protection and destroyed upon completion of the study (Appendix III).

3.11 Trust, reliability and validity

Ensuring the quality of research is the aim for all researchers. Historically researchers do not agree on a prescriptive set of core qualities which qualitative study's need to establish to ensure their research demonstrates quality. Rather each study needs to choose core terms relevant to the paradigms chosen.

Holistic narrative data seeks to retain an individual's story and enabling the individual parts of the story to be interpreted within the relations of the other elements of the story. The BNIM following an interpretive method is congruent with a holistic narrative data analysis approach. Given the study gained individual narratives from 10 women with their own unique stories to share it was important to gain an understanding of how they perceived their own career story

was achieved and to enable a more inductive reasoning approach and fitting within the umbrella of social constructionism. This holistic narrative data analysis approach enabled greater analysis of the individual stories but also enabled an understanding of how the women represent, understand and make sense of themselves as women, leaders, mothers etc.

This study concerns qualitative research and as such attention needed to be paid to reliability (Cohen et al, 2011). This requires researchers to assess the application of the methods and ensure their suitability within the study (Noble & Smith, 2015). Reliability measures consistency over interviews, transparency within analysis processes and ensuring the findings are based beyond personal views and bias. Reliability is also based upon accuracy and precision. Hence if this study were to be replicated within a similar sample of participants, similar findings would be likely. Guba and Lincoln (1994) view the concept of reliability as generally positivist. However, Cohen, et al. (2011) point out that whilst reliability generally adheres to positivity more than qualitative research this is not exclusive and that both need to be reliable to ensure rigour within the process. Researchers seek to be objective and as such ensure depth within the interviews and subsequent data analysis. These findings are predicated within truthfulness and openness, both during the interview process and the data analysis findings. Whilst it is impossible to separate oneself as a researcher, from the research and be completely objective Guba and Lincoln (1994) consider trustworthiness a significant research goal. To address this the researcher positionality is clearly stated within the study information and during initial contact with the participants.

Validity is important within research and can be addressed through sampling, data instruments and methods of statistical analysis. Qualitative data validity is more focused upon objectivity, depth and truthfulness (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Gronland (1981) describes validity as a matter

of degrees rather than a fixed state with researchers striving to reduce invalidity and ensuring the greatest possible validity.

Rigour has been held up as a key to successful research studies, with the researcher held to account. However, Rolfe (2006) and posits that rigour within qualitative studies is different to rigour within quantitative studies. Upholding rigour within quantitative data is essentially the responsibility of the researcher according to Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson and Spiers (2002), whereas qualitative data shares responsibility with the studies reader. This premise links to the idea of trustworthiness which Rolfe (2006) considers a more persuasive element, due to the researcher ensuring their decision practices are transparent and clear. This transparency leaves the reader with the responsibility to assess and verify the research processes and enables the reader themselves to assess if they believe the study to be trustworthy.

3.12 Summary

This chapter analysed the methodological approach and methods used in this study. Qualitative data was gathered from 10 female AHT/DHTs from across Hampshire, Berkshire Surrey and West Sussex working within Local Authority and Academy primary schools. A qualitative method was taken for the data collection. A narrative approach using the BNIM structure ensured the data collection method fit the purpose of this study. The research sought to address the gap between what is known and understood regarding secondary school female leaders and their lesser researched primary school counterparts. It seeks to examine individual women's career narratives to gain a deep, rich understanding of their experiences, perceptions, and ambitions and how this has shaped their career journey, as primary school leaders.

Ethical considerations were also outlined and addressed. Every effort was made to ensure the interviews was conducted ethically and professionally, in accordance with guidelines. The data obtained was viewed from a professional and unbiased perspective.

Chapter 4 goes on to provide a rich condensed narrative description for each woman's career journey.

Chapter 4

Career Journeys – RQ 1

4.1 Introduction to career journeys

This study sought to gain a greater understanding regarding women primary school leaders. Their career journeys focussed upon how career journeys, identities and gender have shaped the careers of women AHT/DHTs, working within the primary phase in England. The career journeys provide a unique perspective to the women's lives and direct quotes are given, to support the four research questions identified within the following chapters. Bowles (2012) perceives career journeys as a social and anticipatory, waiting to be presented through conversation to a waiting and receptive audience. Whilst these career journeys are the participants version of their own story, including their retrospective thoughts amid their own presentation, each unique and verbatim account helps us make sense of their own personal career journey. Their personal and professional environments have shaped their lived experiences.

As mentioned previously, there has been little research undertaken regarding DHT/AHT primary school leaders. The research lens has been more firmly focused upon secondary schools, including Chagger's (2013) which was a mixed sex study of secondary DHTs and Guihen (2017) which focused upon female secondary school DHTs. Female primary school AHT/DHTs have not, seemingly, appealed to researchers. This research attempts to bridge that gap. 10 women AHT/DHTs were interviewed using the BNIM approach, and the participants were asked one narrative inducing opening question: *Tell me about your career in teaching*. A thematic analysis was guided by the original research question: How has gender and identity shaped the leadership of women AHT/DHTs, within the English primary education phase?

Following recursive spirals of analysis, a more detailed fine-grained discursive analysis of segments of data took place. Therefore, this study was led by emergent, and data driven findings and identified four key thematic categories: career journeys, leadership, identity and gendered careers. Hence, this study brings a new understanding of female primary school leaders in England, today.

The qualitative narrative rich results from the individual interviews with 10 DHT/AHT women leaders is presented in four chapters, in response to each of the four refined research questions:

> **RQ 1** - How do women who are primary school AHT/DHTs describe and make sense of their career journeys? (Chapter 4)
>
> **RQ 2** – How do women DHTs/AHT's experience 'becoming' a leader? (Chapter 5)
>
> **RQ 3** - How do women who are primary school AHT/DHTs identify with their professional and family roles? (Chapter 6)
>
> **RQ 4** – How do the women leaders perceive their career ambitions have been shaped by gender? (Chapter 7).

Additional information about the participants leadership background is found within the earlier methodology chapter (Fig. 2). This provided a summary of the women participants role, type of school, area of school, how many years they had been teaching, whether they were married and if they had children.

Within chapter 5 the theme of leadership is viewed through the subthemes of relationships, learning from role models observed in the workplace, self-perception of AHT/DHTs as school leaders and career aspirations. Chapter 6 addresses the theme of identity and the subthemes of multiple selves, fragmented self, identity regulation and identity insecurity. Chapter 7

addresses the theme of gendered career and the subthemes of male v female, career women, family v professional and gender bias.

4.2 Introduction to the career journeys of the AHT/DHTs

This chapter is presented to support RQ1: How do women who are primary school AHT/DHTs describe and make sense of their career journeys? The chapter focuses upon rich condensed career narratives from each of the individual participants. Career journeys was explored in greater depth as it emerged as a common theme in these narratives. Pseudonyms were used to protect participant anonymity.

4.2.1 Carly

During teacher training Carly was placed in a school where she felt "*the headteacher, was really inspiring as a leader, she was completely crazy, but she had a vision*". Later in her career when applying for a new teaching post, she once again met a headteacher who she felt was similar as the initial inspiring leader she had known during her training "*we had a connection … the vision the previous head had had*". Carly "*felt we got on really well*". Carly believed that the headteacher could see she was "*keen to become part of the senior leadership team and she liked me and my dedication to the school*". This enabled Carly to become a year group leader "*skipping all of the Upper Pay Scale (UPS) and moving straight on to the leadership scale*". Carly perceived at the time that this did not sit well with some staff members "*I was one of the youngest there … but then they could have applied anyway it was a bit awkward with a couple 'cos I was the newest person there*". After a change within the SLT roles Carly had "*more responsibility umm and that was good …it was getting a bit better with all the staff in terms of my role and the others accepting me in the role … I was earning respect really*". After a period on maternity leave Carly returned and she felt "*it was easier to be a bit more of a leader because*

I'd had that time away umm and not so friendly with everybody and I came back a bit fresher". The DHT then retired and the head asked, "*would you like to be acting DHT umm for a year umm because I don't want to appoint any DHT because if I'm going to retiring the new head will want to appoint their DHT?*". The headteacher went on sick leave and Carly became acting headteacher "*which was hilarious … I went from AHT to acting head in about 6 weeks … that was quite a challenge*". Carly was acting DHT and was not going to apply for the role of DHT "*because I thought I'm already AHT officially*". With two young children and pregnant Carly thought "*I'm not going to apply to be a DHT*". Carly remembered "*I always knew I would be a DHT, and I always knew I wanted to be a head… I always knew that … I knew there was a time in my career, and I didn't think I needed to rush it*". Yet as leaders came to look around the school Carly kept thinking "*I don't want them doing my job*" and after applying she got the post. Carly's headteacher retires shortly, and she has been asked to be acting headteacher for the beginning of term.

4.2.2 Cerys

In early childhood Cerys was "*always looking after somebody"* which she "*hated*". Cerys said all around her adults were saying she would "*make a good teacher"* and "*all through my life people had … I had been the oldest child, the oldest grandchild, the oldest girl in the street, the oldest girl in the village, so I was always looking after somebody, and somebody was always dragging along behind me and I was helping them*". After a PGCE which Cerys described as "*leaving me unprepared for teaching*" she took up her first teaching post "*I felt really comfortable as it was a class I'd trained with and I dunno teaching felt quite easy at that time*". However, Cerys shared "*foolishly at that time I got pregnant*", but "*things just slotted in to place*" and "*so I just got on with it*". Cerys moved schools where she considered herself to be in a role, she knew well to a new school which she viewed as "*a big learning curve*" After maternity "*then I began sort of to be more of a leader*" and after an OFSTED inspection "*which*

was a bit of a nightmare" Cerys' colleagues encouraged her to move on "*you need to think about your next move … you know you are going to be a head.... but I never ever wanted to be a head*". She reflected "*I've had a slight change recently…never wanted to be a head I thought it was too far away from the children*". After what Cerys described as "*a disastrous OFSTED and there was lots of finger pointing and it's your fault … it's your fault … and we could see it was the headship and we weren't being used effectively as leaders*" there was an exodus of staff, including Cerys. Cerys was determined "*that nobody, 'cos although I knew the finger pointing wasn't correct from before you sort of go ... I want to prove to you I know what I'm doing*". Due to staffing difficulties Cerys recalled "*I found myself doing more and more of her job … as the most experienced team leader we had*". When the DHT post became available "*everyone was going … go on you can do it' and I thought well actually I do it most of the time I might as well get the money for doing it*". Cerys had to undertake the complete DHT interview process but was the only candidate "*I always though in the back of your mind I only got this because I was the only person that was there, even though I did all the hoops they made me jump through*". Cerys also became the SENDCo "*so I've done my SENDCo training … so it's become my thing now*". Cerys chose to step down from the DHT role and accepted a position as AHT in a recently set -up Academy. Due to the changing model within the Academy, Cerys is currently considering becoming Head of School.

4.2.3 Chloe

Chloe said teaching was "*something I always wanted to do from a really young age*". She has worked at the same school from an NQT, for over a decade "*so this is a school where I have grown from an NQT to a DHT*". Chloe began teaching in Year 4 for a couple of years "*I think it's those early times that I started where I was given opportunities to work with others … I think that's when I first found I had a natural instinct, to umm help develop other teachers*". In her third year of teaching, she mentored a School Direct student "*that sort of began my ummm*

journey of training and developing teachers through a mentor and teacher mentor role". She applied for AHT "*which for me was the perfect job because I remained a class teacher, but part of the SLT so I was sort of able to impact on whole school umm things*". Supporting three NQT's kept Chloe "*very busy and it became part of my mission to live and breathe it alongside them, so I was in their classrooms regularly team teaching and planning with them*". Now Chloe has been out of the classroom role for approximately five years and believes she has "*grown and developed and taken on new roles*". The new roles included an acting headship for one term alongside the other DHT "*it sort of, forced me to experience the different side to the running of the school and take on new roles and opportunities… some of which I have continued to hold on to now even since the recruitment of a new head*". The acting headteacher experience gave Chloe "*that chance to explore a different avenue and explore different roles … in terms of my career*". After being an acting headteacher the Governing Body thought "*it was only fair*" to appoint her as DHT, remaining non-class based. She believed she was "*constantly looking outwards*" which she reflected was a skill gained from her headteacher. Chloe remarked "*I'd love to think about going into headship, but I feel as well at the same time I could still you know see my career changing in all different directions, even remaining as I am*".

4.2.4 Debbie

Debbie began her school career as a Learning Support Assistant (LSA). She undertook a Foundation Degree because she did not have any A levels, which "*I do not share, as a fact, with many people*". Debbie joined a Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) with a headteacher who, was a "*taskmaster*", with no vacancy at the end of the course. She gained a post at her current school as "*a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) at a very old age*". Debbie talked about a "*very nice*" headteacher who was happy for staff to go home "*early*" as *"long as the classroom was prepared, with the books marked*". The NQT year was "*great*" and there followed roles as subject leader. Debbie stated, "*obviously as an older person I needed to move a bit quicker*".

She was asked to be a part of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and was given another subject to lead because she had "*done so well*" leading the previous subject. The headteacher left and was replaced by an Interim Headteacher alongside a new DHT who "*sort of latched on to me because I knew the school and she didn't know the people*". The DHT took up the post of Acting Headteacher and Debbie progressed to DHT. This role was non-class based and she "*gets on quite well with all the staff... they know if I need to say something and that I'm not having a go*". She did not believe that she was enabled to "*do a lot of stuff… I have to ask permission [*from the headteacher*]*". This provides an interesting insight into self-efficacy and the inner angst Debbie experiences with the ambiguity of her current role. Debbie does not believe this is "*the right way to run a school*" and that the headteacher "*does not need to know and be aware of every minute decision, which should be left to the DHT to decide*". Debbie voiced that "*ideally I want to be a headteacher, but I don't want to be a headteacher like she's been a headteacher, because there is no thinking about everybody else*", but is aware "*finding the right post may take up to five years*".

4.2.5 Julie

Julie began her teaching career with a 4 Year BA Ed Hons. degree and her first post within a large junior school, was led by an "*inspirational but a maverick head, who recognised people's talents and provided opportunities for progression within their career*". After 3/4 years she became a Team Leader coordinating across the Lower School where "*I suppose I umm… applied for the DHT role*". At the time she was pregnant so described her career as "*taking a different direction*". Once Julie returned from maternity leave, she saw an "*opening opportunity*" for a secondment for one year to an infant school and, after twelve years in a junior school, she felt this would "*be an interesting experience*". Julie got the DHT role and then became pregnant again. She described being "*lucky enough to have a part-time role*" as she undertook the DHT role as a job share "*we did like a 3 day each*", which she described as

"*really successful*". Julie then became a full-time DHT "*there I am at the moment still carrying on after 24 years later and still in the job*". Julie believed "*we have got a really established team*" and perceived herself to be fortunate to work with her head "*I've worked with her for most of my teaching career, as in the school I worked in previously she was part of the team there, so I came across with her … so we are a really well-established team, and we know each other very well and we are very supportive in what we do*". Whilst Julie recognised the head was "*ultimately responsible*" she believed it to be "*a team effort*". Even though Julie had not worked within "*many schools*" she suggested that the "*schools I have worked in, especially my first school, had so many opportunities to progress and to have that umm ability to further my umm myself really so yeah*".

4.2.6 Kate

For Kate she had always wanted to teach "*going back a long, long, time to when I did my ...wanted to go into and ... err go and become a secondary language teacher*". Yet, this was not what her parents wanted "*no, no, no, no, what girls need is secretarial training so you will always be able to earn your bread and butter*". As, a consequence, Kate went to a polytechnical college and completed a secretarial course. She then "*worked for a bit as a bi-lingual secretary*" before having two children. However, "*the teaching thing never kind of left*" and Kate had other children over for mornings or afternoons and helped out at pre-school and "*the whole teaching thing kept coming back and coming back*". Kate completed a degree through the Open University, followed by a PGCE "*that was when my youngest was in Year 6*". So "*as a rather late entrant to the profession"* she began her career as an NQT in a secondary school. Her plan was to complete the NQT year and "*then ummm work part time and maybe do special SEN things like that*". She admitted "*I never quite got around to doing part time because I just enjoyed being in the school*". After making a move to primary, Kate had remained working in the same school "*that's probably because every year umm the head*

would find something new for me and I actually feel that she has developed me very well as a teacher and as a leader. She leads by example". Karen felt as a DHT "*I have reached the point that I don't want to go any further and you know I've been around and seen enough and done enough that I feel quite happy with it*". She acknowledged, she was likely, to retire within the next 5 years, and stated that was '*a reasonable gift back to the profession'*.

4.2.7 Mandy

After completing her teaching degree Mandy "*got myself a job working for a County Council in an overspill area*". Her first post "*was in a big primary school in a very deprived area and very poor and umm lots of illiterate and innumerate parents as well as children*". Mandy reflected "*it was an absolutely amazing place to work ... a very, very supportive team*". She believed "*things were very different umm 17 years ago and OFSTED wasn't breathing down your neck as it is now*". Mandy decided to go and teach abroad "*I got the Times Educational Supplement (TES) and turned to the international section, I closed my eyes and I waved my arm around and stuck my finger down and ended up in Egypt ... yeah all a bit crazy*". The first school she went to did not open "*which I now know in Egypt is quite common*". Mandy looked through the TES again "*very last minute and got a Skype interview one day and I think flew out possibly the next if not the day after*". After two years she moved back to the UK. Mandy then "*walked straight back into my previous job that I left before I went to Egypt just luck of the draw*. Mandy recalled "*the majority of the staff had left umm we had OFSTED breathing down our necks because the results were so bad, and the head had gone, and we went into Special Measures within the year of me coming back*". She described "*by the time head number 10 came around I thought "you know I need to go and work somewhere else*". Deciding "*if I'm going to get a new head I can go and get it anywhere somewhere else*". During her time at the school Mandy had been given the SENDCo role and after one year in the classroom the new head re-structured and Mandy became AHT with a non-teaching pastoral role "*I did all the*

SENDCo, all the child protection umm all the behavior umm I've done that for 7 years umm no I haven't I've done that for 6 years as I did a year in the classroom". Following a "*management shake-up*" Mandy was due to leave her school at the end of the term and "*I've gone back into the classroom actually. Got rid of all the management stuff and I've gone back to being a classroom teacher*". Mandy was not sure if she wants to be a headteacher in the future but stated "*I wouldn't mind going back to Assistant or DHT or kind of where the buck doesn't land with me".*

4.2.8 Marla

Marla described herself as coming from a "*family of teachers*". She worked as an LSA but thought "*being a helper isn't quite the ticket so perhaps I should be a teacher*". Finding it difficult to gain entry to a teaching course in her home area Marla questioned why "*...this is odd 'cos I'm not the most stupid person in the world but I'm not really clever either and I thought, how hard could it be?*". To gain a place on a teaching course Marla had to move further away from home but on completion of her teaching degree she thought "*I'm going to be stuck. If I go into teaching now, I'll never get out. So, I err ... sold our house and travelled around the world as you do*". When she returned Marla took up a teaching post "*in the middle of nowhere*". The headteacher asked her what she saw herself doing and Marla replied, "*your job really*" and the head responded, "*not quite yet, Marla you need to work for a little bit*". She remembered "*I couldn't get along with management and I continually challenged, inappropriately, now I'm doing it myself ... and raised issues which were not the right time and made problems for myself*". Marla reflected that she left jobs "*pretty quickly*". One headteacher she claimed, *"was particularly unpleasant ... several were, and I think they thought the same of me".* It was at that point Marla thought "*well I'll go for higher positions and it I don't get it that's ok, but I did get it*". She had applied for a DHT role but her school "*because I wanted to leave, they became very grumpy, so they were unpleasant and wouldn't give me a reference*".

Marla rang her prospective headteacher and said "*I need you to listen to what I'm saying, and I will explain to you how I am and what I will do … I understand if you don't give it to me in respect of what they have or haven't said … but I work very hard, and I can do what you are asking me to do*". Marla described herself as "*an actress really, as teachers are umm, I wouldn't say I was a liar but I'm a good performer … as a DHT, SENDCo, senior leader you turn up and it doesn't matter where you came from*". Marla remained a DHT and stated, "*I am settled, and I am calm and I have a husband and a house and I have a good job and I like the people I work with so there is no need to be proving it to someone else … who is acknowledging it anyway?".* Looking forward five years Marla reflected, "*I will probably be a headteacher*".

4.2.9 Morgan

Morgan stated, "*I did all my education in the States … did my master's degree, in the States".* Morgan then "*went right in to looking for a teaching agency …and my first teaching job ever was in a special school … and they sponsored me to come over*". Morgan was there for two years "*I was paid as an unqualified teacher for the first couple of years … they never talked to me about becoming qualified*". Moving abroad with her partner "*I got my license to work … they put me with the older kids umm in a special school looking at life skills and functional skills"*. Despite working within several schools in the UK Morgan had not completed her teaching qualifications so they helped her with her Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and "*it was kinda like an assessment only route because I'd been teaching so long and all I had to do was like do a mainstream placement and then with work the University*". After teaching there for a couple of years "*I took on a little extra responsibility looking at curriculum development and assessment, so they gave me a Teaching Learning Responsibility (TLR)".* Morgan stayed at the school for about two years "*I felt kind of indebted to the school … I should be loyal to the school*". She was working in the secondary department "*with a TLR looking at curriculum development in the younger department*". Morgan then gained a post at a special school "*a*

great school and a great head who really pushed me … an AHT job came up …I kinda felt quite ready". She described herself as "*quite passionate about post 16 because I'd done lots of work around functional skills and life skills*". Morgan was AHT for two years, got pregnant and then moved abroad for a year. After the year Morgan "*kinda thought I might look for DHTs at that point 'cos I'd been doing an AHT*". Morgan began applying for DHT posts and the head said, "*I am looking for someone to start in April*", but Morgan was not due back in the country until September and so he told her to re-apply in September. She flew into England for an interview and was offered the post. Morgan has been employed at the special school for three years as a DHT "*with a one-day teaching commitment which was excellent and brilliant*". But this had changed as her role developed "*I'd taken on the teaching school bit, so I don't teach at all now, which is a shame*". Morgan described herself as "*an aspiring head … maybe".*

4.2.10 Sally

Sally was a "*mature entrant … done various things before".* Sally described herself as "*having a varied path in to teaching*". As a mum of two young children, she became involved with schools as a parent governor "*I was spending a lot of time around schools and in schools*". She made a career choice "*actually I quite like being in schools and I'm interested in education*" so undertook teacher training. She trained through a School Centred Initial Training (SCITT) "*there are lots of SCITT's now and most teachers train through SCITT … umm it was one of the first ones in 2002*". Sally looked back at "*a difficult year because I was living in xxx and because the SCITT's had only just started up and they didn't have many placement schools so my placement schools were in xxx so that was tricky, and it was a long day*". Sally then went straight into a primary school and "*stayed there too long probably … 9 years in that one position umm and I think that was probably because it kept changing … it's an 'Outstanding' school and it's now become a teaching school … a big primary.* She remarked "*it got to a point because I'd got in to teaching quite late and I was an age where I thought I don't really want*

to move but I'm going to have to move quite quickly, or I've left it too late". This led to Sally looking at DHT posts and led to her current school "*it's only my second school but I'm coming up to 6 years here*". Sally joined the school as a SENDCo and DHT "*which at the time I had to do the SENDCo Award which again is another … back to Uni again to do that*". With the school expanding in size, "*it became obvious that as our school was getting bigger the DHT position and the SENDCo wasn't feasible*". Sally acknowledged "*I have been here as a DHT and I should perhaps move on and I was a couple of years ago… I've done the NPQH … I went for two headships. The first one I was offered and then decided not to take it for various reasons and the second one I didn't get and actually I'm getting into the same rut, not rut that's negative but a pattern*". Sally perceived her role as having challenges which have kept her hooked into the school "*every time I think perhaps, I should move on something quite exciting happens that I want to get my teeth into, and I don't want to leave this half done*". She does not plan to move to headship in the foreseeable future.

Having presented condensed narratives from each of the AHT/DHTs the study goes on to highlight some common themes presented from the narrative rich interviews from a leadership perspective (chapter 4.3.1 – 4.3.5).

4.3 Reflections on narrative career journeys

For the women, their leadership and identity remain an ongoing trajectory of metamorphosis. This leads to the stage where the participants became AHT/DHTs and remains a process as they deliberate over their future career aspirations. Their unique position juxtaposed between the headteacher and teachers was clear, with some participants erring more towards the headteachers perspective whilst others sought to strengthen their professional relationships with the teachers. Complications also arose for some participants who had become used to greater

freedom to make critical leadership decisions when either their headteacher was out of school due to illness or they had temporarily experienced an acting headteacher post, in another school. This led to difficulties for several of the women as they had to take what they considered a more subservient view of being a leader and seek permission from their headteacher, despite their previous experience as acting headteacher. Additionally, experiencing what some participants considered poor role models of leadership, whether from a headteacher or another senior leader, seemed to inspire the participants to become more ambitious leaders themselves, seeking to demonstrate there were more effective ways to move a school forward.

For over half the participants they gained further awards for their roles, including SENDCo Award or NPQH, making them some of the most qualified members of staff within their school and often with key responsibility for mentoring, coaching, or supporting upcoming leaders. For several of the participants, it was the realisation that they were able to lead a school, either through a chance remark from a member of staff, from gaining confidence through self-reflection or undertaking their NPQH. The myriad of possible selves some participants constructed within their working lives suggested some women changed their identities according to their environment. This juxtaposed with their identity experienced at home and, for their families this became problematic. This unique situation throws up further challenges for identity construction and will be explored in greater depth within chapter 5.

Gender was a common theme for almost all the participants. For some women they perceived a greater gender bias against women, believing men were treated more favourably within the workplace and others believed the expectations of working women was considered substantially higher than that for males, including working hour expectations. Early career influence was a strong subtheme which demonstrated a transformational and ongoing effect for the participants, often continuing to drive them as they sought headship. Balancing work and

family responsibilities was prevalent within the narratives of most of the women. However, it was clear that women often foster this gendered imbalance themselves and created their perceived difficulties. This complex issue will be explored within chapter 6.

4.4 Summary

Each of the 10 women interviewed described how they viewed their career journey towards a senior leadership role. Their career journey accounts were complex descriptions of their lived experiences and so thematic analysis was used to identify areas to explore more fully. Whilst each participant's story was unique it was important there were, a number, of common emergent themes.

Perhaps unsurprisingly the theme of leadership was prominent in the data. Four subthemes were identified linked to the theme of RQ2: relationships, learning from role models observed in the workplace, self-perceptions of AHT/DHTs as school leaders and career aspirations (Fig. 6).

Chapter 5

Leadership – RQ 2

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 presents the subthemes relating to the theme of leadership: relationships, learning from role models observed in the workplace, self-perceptions of AHT/DHTs as school leaders and career aspirations (Fig. 5.1). It addresses RQ 2: How do women AHT/DHTs experience '*becoming*' a leader?

Chapter 6 addresses the subthemes of multiple selves, fragmented self, identity regulation and identity insecurity, within the theme of identity (Fig. 9). Chapter 7 addresses the subthemes of male v female, career women, family v profession and gender bias, within the theme of gendered careers (Fig. 10). The inductive findings from each chapter are illustrated with excerpts of raw data and reviewed. A more detailed discussion and interpretation of the findings from the four chapters and how these relate to previous empirical research and the conceptual framework is presented within chapter 8.

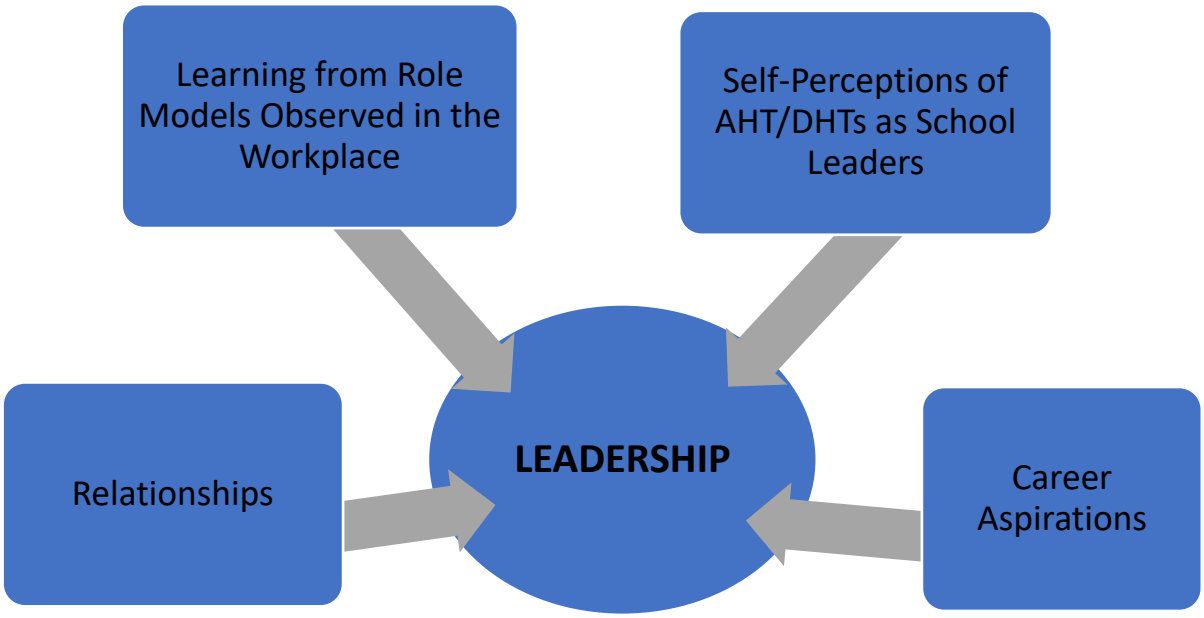

Fig. 5.1 subthemes within the theme of leadership (RQ 2)

The data gathered demonstrated that four of the participants made a conscious decision to be a school leader, but this decision was not made from the outset of their teaching career, rather evolving as they became more experienced as class teachers. The remaining six women gained their roles by the previous incumbent leaving or a new head arriving, seeking change within the SLT. Differing views regarding how they considered the role of leadership to be enacted were highlighted within the narratives and how their career journey had shaped their aspirations towards headship.

5.2.1 Relationships

Relationships were identified as a subtheme by eight of the participants, with most comments being about their relationship with the headteacher. Of these eight participants six of the

women mentioned positive relationships and two women gave examples of problematic relationships.

Positive relationships with the headteacher helped the AHT/DHTs with their critical decision-making skills and generally supported their professional development towards headship. Morgan divulged that her headteacher "*definitely grounds me ... our relationship works really well*". Cerys experienced what she believed was a positive relationship with "*two really good heads*". This opportunity Cerys believed had enabled her to "*support people (teachers) and help them to be proud of what they've achieved*". Kate considered herself to have benefitted from a positive working relationship with her headteacher and believed she chose "*times and places to push and helped by leading by example".* Kate believed her ability to positively influence other members of staff was a direct consequence of her relationship with the headteacher "*she was pushing me at the right time and choosing the right direction she wanted to send me and then me picking it up and running with it".* Marla when describing her relationship with her current headteacher confided "*there is a massive respect and mutual relationship of developing and making sure I can be the best I can be for the school*". Julie described how she and the headteacher "*work so much as a partnership ... every decision we make together".*

The role of DHT/AHT in building relationships, is considered, to be a complex one and this was illustrated by two opposing views. Marla summed up the role:

> "*It's getting a balance ... they're your friends, colleagues, lovely, relationships are all fine but you're never in it. You're just on the outside. I found it odd at first because everyone is friends ... quite social ... I do distance myself from that a bit ... I think that can be quite problematic and it can be disappointing when you get let down in a work capacity and your friends with that person and you get a double whack of hurt and that's quite a lot to contend with*".

For Carly she considers herself to be more neutral than Marla "*as a deputy head you are very much in with the crowd, and they tell you all their worries and woes and they will moan about things (the headteacher) they have to do …I'm like in the middle*".

Three of the participants mentioned how important they consider relationships with teachers within the school. As senior leaders the women are responsible for working closely with both experienced teachers and Newly Qualified Teacher's (NQT's). Carly considers herself to have "*a good relationship*" with the other staff which she considered crucial as she was about to become acting headteacher. Julie spoke of the relationship with the assistant head as a mutually supportive one "*we make decisions together. I think it is too much of a hard job or an isolating job to make anybody work on their own now*". Without these relationships Carly believed it would not be possible to challenge staff or enable them to undertake something they might not wish to do. Sally on the other hand, acknowledges aspects of negative relationships within school and learning to know "*when people are trying to manipulate you*". Yet she believes this had enabled her to become better at having difficult conversations and challenging staff when needed. Debbie spoke about how she has remained in contact with an NQT she previously mentored, who is now a deputy headteacher. Working with staff is an element of her role which Debbie especially enjoys: "*we have a bit of a laugh … but they know if I need to say things, I'm not having a go*". This attitude she considers has enabled her to build up a network of past and present colleagues.

In contrast two of the women mentioned relationships within school teams could sometimes be problematic. Cerys when entering a new team as a team leader found the relationships with other teachers in her team left her "*close to resigning*". Mandy revealed that some of the staff were difficult to manage and left her "*feeling a bit kind of tired of it all and it got me down*". These difficult relationships led to Mandy choosing to leave her leadership position and take

up a classroom teacher post in another school, in the new term. Cerys experienced "*lots of finger pointing and it's your fault…it's your fault*" from staff following what she described as "*a disastrous OFSTED*", which caused her to reflect upon how the headteacher was effectively using her, as a senior teacher. This "*finger pointing*" ultimately motivated Cerys "*to prove I know what I'm doing*" and she resigned to gain a new DHT post.

5.2.2 Learning from role models observed in the workplace

The influence of headteachers as role models was evident from the narratives provided by the AHT/DHTS, as they considered their futures, moving towards leading their own schools. Eight of the AHT/DHTs mentioned, at some point within their teaching career, being led by headteachers, whom they considered as positive role models. Of these, five of the headteachers were female and three of them were male. The only participant to use the name of their headteacher was Marla, suggesting that for the other women their relationship was based more upon a work level than a personal level, using the pronoun he/her/she etc. Their perceptions of a leader they admired were not seemingly swayed by gender but by their actions. Positive role model headteachers enabled their staff to feel valued, regardless of their roles or experience. Cerys described her first headteacher as a man whom she could have worked with for years "*that's how all heads should be*". Whilst she acknowledged she was "*too young and inexperienced to put her finger on what was great about him*" she reflected his strength was built upon his interest in ensuring he got the best out of his staff. For Kate, the example was similar, and she believed her headteacher "*leads by example*" and she considered this was a good example to set for others. Julie described her first head as "*a bit of a maverick … inspirational*" and she identified his ability to recognise teacher's talents and make staffing decisions based upon that specific knowledge, to achieve his goals. Although he was perceived by some within the school as a "*powerful and scary man*" she identified that staff respected

him for his drive and his passion for the school and he made the teachers feel valued and was considered agentic.

Cerys was the only participant who identified multiple headteachers whom she considered to be poor role models. After originally experiencing what she classified as a "*visionary head*" in a previous school, Cerys then faced "*terrible leadership from my head*" and this left her with the feeling of disempowerment as she felt "*they should know how to do it"*. Later in her career she identified two other headteachers who she felt lacked the ability to lead the staff, which negatively impacted the school and resulted in staff leaving. The last headteacher in place at the school caused Cerys to re-consider her headship career because she did not believe the headteacher was "*someone I would want to work under because we did not want the same things*". The importance of a shared goal as members of the SLT, negatively impacted Cerys and she chose to leave the school, to pursue a DHT role elsewhere.

5.2.3 Self-perceptions of AHT/DHTs as school leaders

The self-perceptions of the women as school leaders varied, with some women having a clear understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses. Nine out of the 10 participants presented as having a high regard for themselves, as leaders. Mandy was the only participant who did not appear to value herself or the role she was undertaking. However, she was the only DHT/AHT who will be stepping down from her leadership role at the end of the term, to become a classroom teacher once more. Her experiences with multiple head teachers and poor direction from within the MAT had left her disillusioned. She hoped to continue her leadership ambitions towards headship, in the future.

Kate perceived her leadership skills had to grow quickly when her headteacher was off school with cancer. Learning to make those complex decisions on a daily, basis and accepting "*the buck stopped with me*" was, she reflects "*interesting*". However, juggling her classroom with

the responsibilities for the rest of the school she believed affected her class. This led Kate to divulge that the complex role of being a DHT caused her sometimes "*to take her eye off the ball*" and the "*juggling of all the balls is stressful*". Being a leader, she feels "*you have to be fully focused all the while you are in school … you have to give it your all*". Yet Kate believed she was privileged to undertake her job and to be paid to do so.

Sally described herself as "*self-driven*" and "*the sort of person who likes a change*". She then conceded that it was ironic that "*I have been in one school for 9 years and this one for 6, but I'm quite pragmatic".* Outside of school she said she "*has a lot going on*" and despite having little management experience for her role she is always busy in school "*looking for ways to move it forwards*". Sally viewed herself as having unlimited energy in her current school but felt if she had to go to a new school that energy level might dip. A strength Sally believed she had gained as a leader was in having difficult conversations and challenging people, realising that for her, the ideal time to have the conversation was when she was very busy and "*to go straight in*" because when "*if I think about it too long, I can put it off*". A criticism that has been levelled at Sally in the past is "*I only asks for help the way I want it … maybe that's true and that's why they don't offer a bit more*". Whilst she said the "*staff laugh about it they say they know I just want it done my way*", which Sally linked back to her need to set standards and expectations of leaders.

Debbie projected as more informal during her interview, in comparison to the other participants. She believed she got "*on well with all the staff … have a bit of a laugh*". She also perceived herself to be the member of staff "*who everybody comes to talk to*" and that she had "*stopped a lot of staff from leaving*". She was the only woman who divulged that "*I didn't do particularly well at school*" and the difficulties she had faced financially, when beginning her teacher training journey. Through her narrative Debbie gave examples of showing determination "*I*

was told I was rubbish at science … I then had to do a night class for my Foundation Course". It appeared to drive her to ensure the children in her school did not give up and that "*I don't tell the children they are rubbish, if you know you're rubbish and if you tell people they are rubbish they will never think they can do it*".

Chloe had worked in the same school since she qualified as an NQT, 11 years ago. Early in her career she was given opportunities to work with trainee teachers through mentoring and coaching. She believed she had "*a natural instinct to help develop others*". Her influence, with other teachers, has she stated, helped her to learn and develop, alongside her colleagues. Whilst she is no longer class-based she considered it a "*mission to live and breathe"* the classroom role to help shape and support those newer to the profession. For Chloe developing staff was "*something I am passionate about*" as a leader and was a reason for her to want to remain in her current school, whilst still having opportunities to be outward looking and build upon practice.

Cerys saw her role as supportive with staff "*you've got to please … bring everybody together when you're a leader*" and indicated that she found this more of a challenge. Whilst Sally was more pragmatic and described her thoughts more succinctly "*people either come on board or they don't"*. Suggesting that she did not consider it her role to unite staff, but it was their responsibility to take control for coming together. Cerys wished to bring her staff together in a democratic style, which contrasted with Sally, who demonstrated more of an autocratic style. Sally's style could according to Huber (2004) be considered decisive and goal-orientated and this is backed up by Sally's description of herself as "*quite self-driven*" and "*if you give people too much say you don't get anywhere*" but acknowledged "*you get better at managing people*". Huber (2004) considers school leaders should not be, considered as '*super humans'* but need to deploy a range of styles to suit their school and context. Cerys's narrative supports a view

of her as a transformational leader, who are supportive of the staff carrying out the tasks asked of them. This is in direct conflict to Sally's more autocratic style, which drives her to tell staff what to do because "*I want it how I want it because I have seen it done better*".

Mandy described how she found "*teachers really difficult to manage*" and this was one area which had given her some self-reflection. For Mandy being a leader had been a challenge, one that had caused her to re-think her leadership role for the future "*I did all the SENDCo, Child Protection, umm behaviour ... but now I have had enough, and I am going back into the classroom*". She described how she was looking forward to moving away from having to tell teachers to implement something she did not believe in. This has led to her giving up her leadership position and taking a pay cut but wanted to show others that there could be another way to lead. She admitted she had seriously considered leaving the profession but "*I found it virtually impossible to do anything else … I can't find a job that would pay me the same amount of money*". Mandy admitted she would leave the teaching profession if she could because for her it is no longer "*satisfying*". She admitted, "*I can't tell you the last time I laughed about my work … cried absolutely, but laughed, no*". She followed her statement with how this made her feel sad because she understood how important those years are to the children but "*we are all so stressed and tired and unenthusiastic a lot of the time*".

5.2.4 Career aspirations

The role of DHT/AHT has traditionally provided a pathway towards headship. Of the 10 participants only two of the women fully identified that they aspired to headship, with one participant stating they did not want to proceed towards a headship role. Seven participants remained undecided due to a variety of reasons identified below.

Carly has worked at the same school for 17 years from an NQT and currently holds the post of DHT. As her headteacher is retiring she will be shortly undertaking the acting headteacher

role. She does intend to apply for the role of substantive headteacher. She acknowledged that if she did not gain the headteacher post she would apply to another school because "*I don't want it to be someone telling me what they want*".

Kate entered the teaching profession as a late career entrant and expects to retire from her DHT post within five years. She stated that after teaching for 20 years she considered that "*a reasonable gift back to the profession*". Debbie stated that "*less women leaders want to get to headship now*" and from her perspective believes a male DHT/AHT would always get a headship post over a woman. She therefore felt "*it is getting harder to get into headship as a female*". She considered she will remain a DHT until "*I find some other role that interests me*".

Seven out of the 10 participants remained unsure on their aspirations towards headship. Sally would consider a headship, but only if it were to become available in her current school. Sally described being approached by the Diocese to undertake a headship but at that point in time she felt she had "*too much going on professionally*" and did not want to leave her other school-based projects undone. However, she had recently felt more positive at the thought of headship within her own school. Morgan described herself as "*an aspiring head*" but having a young family left her concerned about the time commitment required. She was able to reflect that as her children became older, she might seek a headship or "*going back to Assistant or DHT or kind of where the buck doesn't land with me"*. Having a young family left her questioning "*if it's worth that level just yet*". One career aspiration she had considered was becoming a "*co-head … and oh my goodness I would love that*" and how this might change her thoughts on becoming a headteacher "*I would be much more, keen … I would feel like I have a little more control in my personal life".* Mandy was not sure if she wanted to be a headteacher in the future but stated "*I wouldn't mind at some point … maybe"* showing a certain amount of prevarication. Cerys admitted she had had a change of heart from never wanting to be a

headteacher. She admitted she "*thought it was too far away from the children … why would I want to put myself back in that offic*y *(sic) environment?".* However, after working with "*some terrible leadership*" it has made her question her future career aspirations and left her considering headship. Chloe stated headship felt like "*a dangerous business to be in for some headteachers*". Despite undertaking interim acting headteacher roles within two schools, Chloe remained unsure if she would move to her own headship post as "*I can see my career changing in all different directions or even remaining as I am now*". Julie had completed her NPQH award. However, she divulged "*I like that back up of having somebody there as an extra support to bounce ideas off*". Julie stated the role of DHT/AHT was "*hard enough as it is, why would I want to put that extra pressure on myself and my family?".* This view was echoed by Marla who vacillated during her narrative. She considered the role of headteacher as "*a lovely job but how long can you do it for*?". However later within her narrative when asked where she saw herself within five years, she thought she would be a headteacher "*possibly within three years*".

5.3 Summary

Within this chapter it can be seen from the emergent data only two of the AHT/DHTs were actively considering headship but, on the other hand, only one of the participants were dismissing taking up the role of headteacher. The fact that seven of the participants were unsure of their commitment to the role of headteacher remains concerning, particularly as their reasons were varied, dependent on their individual circumstances. This will be explored in more detail within chapter 8.

Moving on, chapter 6 seeks to address the theme of identity (RQ 2) and explores how the AHT/DHTs made sense of their professional and family roles. Identity has become an

important focus of contemporary leadership studies and this emerged as a central theme in the narratives. This is organised according to the sub themes multiple selves, fragmented self, identity regulation and identity insecurity.

Chapter 6

Identity – RQ 3

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus upon identity, more specifically on the metamorphosis of multiple and fragmented identities, alongside identity regulation and identity insecurity, as the participants considered the convergence of their professional and family roles (Fig. 6.1). A detailed examination of the participants rich narratives identified identity as a key theme. As discussed within the literature review (chapter 2), identities change over time and this study aims to demonstrate that for the 10 women interviewed, their identity has been shaped by a variety of external and internal forces. Therefore, this chapter seeks to answer RQ 3 - How do women who are primary school AHT/DHTs identify with their professional and family roles?

Chapter 7 will focus upon the theme of gendered careers and identify four subthemes: male v female, career women, family v profession and gender bias. The inductive narrative findings from each chapter are illustrated with excerpts of raw data and reviewed. A more detailed discussion and interpretation of the findings from the four chapters and how these relate to previous empirical research and the conceptual framework is presented within chapter 8.

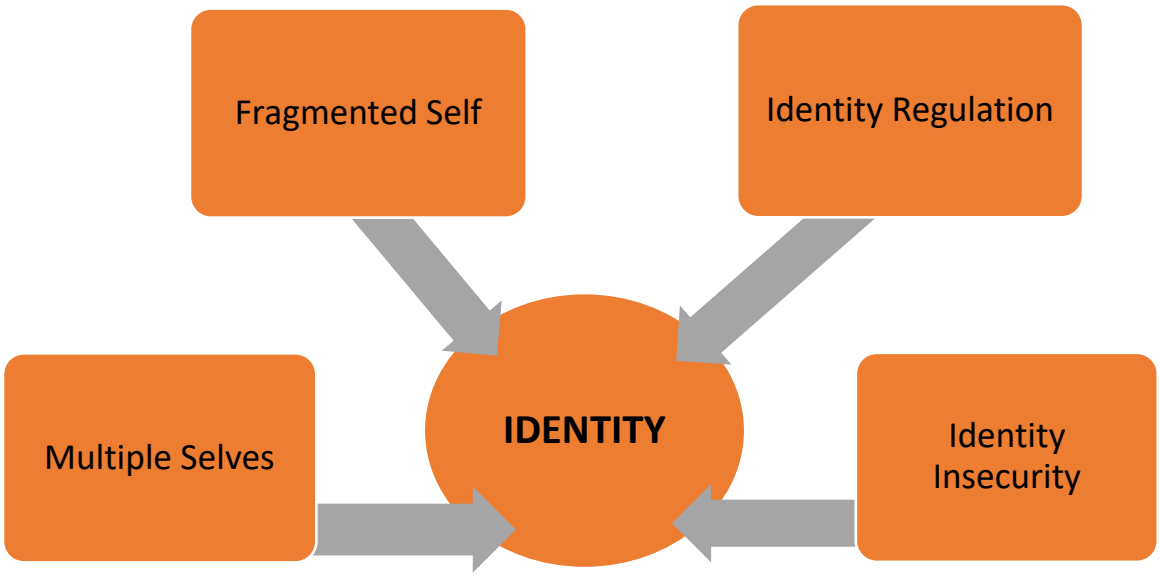

Fig. 6.1 subthemes within the theme of identity (RQ 3)

6.2.1 Multiple selves

This subtheme relates to how the participants viewed themselves within their roles, what the participants showed others within that role and living their working lives. The changes with an individual's working identity occur gradually and might not be obvious to the person themselves but emerge through discourse. Multiple selves occur when a person oscillates between their original role, which they are outgrowing, in this case DHT/AHT, and the new role they might aspire to, that of a headteacher. Eight participants narratives demonstrated examples of multiple selves.

During their professional journey's, the participants had experienced the professional transitioning within their work identity from an NQT, to a classroom teacher, a middle leader and then a senior leader, considering headship. The AHT/DHTs shared their multiple selves, including their work self and their personal self, related to their family roles.

Chloe reflected on her current leadership role taking her out of the classroom setting and the changes she believed had occurred "*I have been out of the classroom now for probably four years maybe five … even in that time I have grown and developed, and you take on new roles in that time as well*". Kate was a class based DHT and she shared her views regarding how torn she can feel between undertaking her duties as a class teacher and fulfilling her DHT role:

> *"I wonder whether the responsibilities I have … mean that sometimes I take my eye off the ball with my class because there are so many other things call me, you need to do this, have you done that, have you prepared this and oh my goodness it's now 11pm and I haven't marked my books for tomorrow".*

This view had been shared by Marla who had previously covered a class:

> "*I was in the classroom for two or three months after Christmas and it near on killed me … you can't do both, you can I know but it is a shocking result at the end of it I think on your personal life and on the school cos (sic) you drain that person and children don't get the best out of you. Nor the staff".*

Kate further quantified her views regarding her conflicting identities and the impact it had upon her and might have upon her colleagues within the profession, considering senior roles:

> "*That sometimes is a bit of a stress. Yeah, juggling those balls is difficult. I don't have young children, but I do worry for those who are SLT and haven't got children, as yet. How will they manage to do it all?".*

Kate spoke of her family commitments and how she considered she was fortunate that her husband worked locally and was able to take flexi-time, to enable them to undertake medical appointments:

> "W*e were able to wangle that so he could do those, and I didn't need to be taking time out of school or begging favours or whatever. A big help in helping me settle into being a teacher full time without worrying about those outside things … you have to be fully focused all the while you are in school if you are to make a success of it. You have got to give it your all*".

Seven of the AHT/DHTs talked about elements of transition towards becoming a headteacher. Chloe "*I'd never go into headship just to be a head. What I do find scary is that to take on the role of headteacher you have to take a real leap in the dark*". Yet Sally's reflection was based upon looking forwards towards the future and confidence in undertaking a new role "*when you feel you can do it better than the person doing it then it's time to move on*". Cerys had recently been asked if she would consider undertaking the Head of School role, when the current headteacher leaves but although the staff would like her to be Head of School, she voiced concerns "*when you're sat on different chairs it changes you*" and the staff she perceived might not expect that, causing her to re-evaluate her working identity. Her comments demonstrate she is aware of the risks to her identity and the changes it might bring.

Whilst exploring new budding possibilities of their identity as potential headteachers, some of the participants found themselves looking backwards to their previous roles. Mandy "*I remember my first two years being fun and laughing and really, really enjoying everything that I did. But I couldn't say the last time that I've laughed about my work, cried absolutely but laughed no. I think that's really sad*". Mandy had chosen to leave her senior leadership role and move back into a classroom role "*for the next couple of years I will be quite happy teaching and doing the SENDCo bit and I'd like to work my way back up the ladder but I'm not in a hurry to do that at the moment*". Marla believed she went "*through the hoops quickly"* but questioned whether she knew what the end goal would be any more. She spoke of the headstone analogy that "*when we die it won't mention being a senior leader or a teacher on the*

headstone". She believed that teachers and senior leaders worked "*themselves into the ground*" but forget themselves entirely in the process. Her views suggested she was not immediately ready to consider headship. Morgan referred to loyalty as a reason to remain at a school and undertook what she describes as an "*horrendous journey" to* repay what she considered to be a debt for supporting her career, this was for helping her gain QTS and moving on to giving her a TLR "*I felt indebted to the school … I thought I should be loyal*". This debt she considered she needed to repay was not time specific, but she had begun to muse over the possibility of being a co-headteacher in the future. She believed this would allow her to have more control in her personal life and it wouldn't be as scary to have someone to share their ideas and responsibility with adding *"maybe that's why so many people love being a DHT?".*

Doubt was evident within three of the AHT/DHTs narratives. Working part-time with a job share member of staff, Julie recalled "*there were times when I had that feeling umm like I say I wasn't doing any job well".* Julie followed this thought with *"I couldn't give it 100% not through wanting not to do that but you know I just physically couldn't".*

Kate shared her view regarding imposter syndrome and how it has, at times, made her feel:

> *"I think if I was to rewind 20 years, I don't think I would or could have seen myself doing the things I do now and sometimes I think it's all based like a house of cards and someone's going to turn around one day and say: 'You're only playing at this' and then the whole thing will come down. But then other times I think 'No, no, no I really have'. I have grown and changed as I've done it".*

Marla described the impact the role of DHT had upon her and provided the headstone analogy of when she dies her gravestone will not mention being a teacher or senior leader. She described the role as "*working yourself into the ground"* and how after a period of significant illness she realised that "*whilst the role requires you to support other people*", she had forgotten to look

after herself. Mandy was aware of the toll the role had upon her and confided "*I did look to get out of teaching completely but umm, but I found it virtually impossible to do anything else*".

Three of the participants described how their complex roles created an alternative persona, which was viewed differently within school, to their persona within the home. Constructing an alternative persona when at work was described by Kate. Kate voiced concerns that she considered she was merely enacting her leadership role and felt a pull within her identities within different situations. She gave an example of having to appear quite confident and assured dealing with a difficult work situation, whilst inside she described it as "*playing at this"*. Morgan shared similar views "*you have to put on the public persona, and you go to meetings and you think this is uncomfortable and you gradually get that way of coping with those situations*". These acts could be one of imitation according to Ibarra (2003), which people do unconsciously as they experiment with their changing identity, towards becoming a headteacher. Carly described how her husband viewed her as two different people during term time and holiday time. During working-time she shared that he felt she was stressed out and tired and unable "*to give him much time"* and only able to do what she had to do for their children. She perceived that during holidays she became a "*nice person"*" who was able to listen to her husband and discuss wider views and feelings. Carly viewed this identity juxtaposition as "*that's what teachers are like, it's a fact".* Furthermore, she suggested she might develop a 3rd persona when she becomes an acting headteacher and changing elements of her identity, to step into her new role.

6.2.2 Fragmented self

This chapter demonstrates the role of DHT/AHT can be inconsistent and demanding upon an individual's possible selves. For seven participants they expressed views suggesting a fragmented self, due to a loss in their teacher identity and sometimes an incomplete congruence

with their leader identity. This subtheme explores the fragmented identities the participants experienced as they juggled their professional and family roles. The period between moving from a class teacher, to DHT/AHT, then to considering a headship can be challenging due to the myriad of differing thoughts, ideas, and tasks. This can lead to a feeling of fragmented identity involving a sifting and sorting of thoughts and ideas, often with those closest around us such as family and friends. For two participants it gave them an opportunity to craft a narrative and try out different possibilities with other professionals or family before making a change within their career journey. Morgan "*I spoke to a couple of heads I'd become friends with, and you know they were look 'You should just go for it', when I was considering deputy posts*" and she went on to obtain the DHT post. For Cerys she suggested, within her narrative, that she had faced some indecision with considering a new professional identity, and her and her husband had discussed the issue of a promotion to the role of Head of School. She recalled her husband saying "'*you could do it you could do it, stop putting yourself down",* suggesting that Cerys herself had professional doubts regarding her capabilities or alternatively how she perceived herself within a new transitioning role.

Five of the participants mentioned the impact of a fragmented identity of being a mother and a DHT had, upon their own career identities. For Julie she had returned to her DHT role part time, after previously working full time. She reflected that she "*valued that somebody would give me that opportunity to still be that deputy and be that mum and work part-time … when there weren't many job-share deputies*". This view was shared by Morgan "*I have two children …what's really great about working in schools … people understand you have families. I have been able to be flexible in terms of my working days… and that's really helped*". She further quantified her view "*sometimes if our kids are sick and I have to give up my time … but people empathise and understand more when they are in the same situation as you*". During her narrative Debbie went on to consider how being a mother had brought additional skills within

her perceived identity "*I'm good at spinning those plates as a mother".* For Kate she reflected to a specific time as an NQT, when she felt pulled between being a mother and being a teacher. Kate's son was on a gap year during her first year of teaching and offered to "*help if you are too busy"*, supporting with his younger siblings and this memory enabled Kate to reflect *"I think you always feel mothers guilt no matter how old they are"* as she suggested, as a teacher, she sometimes was less able to give her time so freely to her children. Kate was able to recall that she did consider herself "*quite lucky because by the time I was doing serious senior leadership roles my family responsibilities were done*". This she believed had aided her professional working identity "*I haven't needed to be split in two, between family concerns and school concerns, I've been able devote my time to school things*". Morgan also divulged the juxtaposition between being a teacher and being a mother and how the consideration of progressing towards headship had made her reflect upon her professional decisions and the effect upon her family *"I have a really good friend who's a retired head who always told me those opportunities are always coming but what happens now with your kids won't*" with a greater view upon prioritising her family over her professional role.

The issues of a fragmented self-linked to family roles was different for Kate, as joined the teaching profession as a mature graduate. Hence her children were older once she reached a senior leadership position. This experience she perceived had enabled her to focus more upon her teacher identity, than that of being a mother "*I have been quite lucky because by the time I was doing serious senior leadership roles my family responsibilities were mostly done*". This she considered had enabled her to "*devote my time to school things … I don't know how people juggle family and school as I think it just pulls you in opposite directions*". Karen's view implied that she did not believe she would have been able to have undertaken teaching with a young family, due to the fragmenting of her personal and work identities. Cerys had taught

with a young family and identified how challenging it had been with an early reference to her young son being at work with her during the school holiday period:

> "*He was toddling about and at one point he was going 'Hole, hole' yeah he had found a pair of scissors and cut holes in his clothes because I was so engrossed in the reading books … what a terrible mother I am*".

Cerys further recalled a memory of the role her children and husband had within her professional life, which encroached upon her family life:

> "*They have always been roped into sorting the library or putting up a display or Mummy's brought some letters home, and I would say* '*Why don't you cut them out or colour this in for me' and my husband has sticky backed plastic books and painted props*".

These memories have remained with Cerys and resurfaced when she talked about her adult daughter responding to a question during an interview process, within the medical profession, and stating that she couldn't be like her mother and give up her whole life to teaching. Reflecting, back on this, Cerys deduced "*I haven't been a very good role model to my daughter*". This view was illustrated by Kate who considered aspects of her identity related to her family had been shaped by her career "*if you go for senior leadership you have to put your family life down a level of importance*".

For the AHT/DHTs they had multiple and often fragmented, selves within the school, depending upon their roles and responsibilities. For Marla, a DHT she considered she had "*one of the biggest voices in the school, bar the headteacher, but you've got none*". This precarious position had been made possible by Marla no longer having a middle leader role or the penultimate top leadership role. Even though she had what she considered to be "*massive respect and mutual relationship*" with her headteacher, for Marla she demonstrated she felt as

though she had, as DHT to align her voice with that of the headteacher, even if it might not mirror her own opinions.

6.2.3 Identity regulation

Organisational control is accomplished partly through identity regulation. For the participants they had progressed from the role of class teacher and were on a trajectory for headship. Their leadership identity remained in transition as they moved towards a role with greater responsibility and accountability, alongside the perceived expectations of those they worked alongside. Identity regulation for some participants resulted in them acting out their role to provide a convincing performance, to demonstrate or prove to others they were able to undertake their role. Five of the participants disclosed examples of how their leader identity had been shaped by their own personal expectations, both positive and negative. They reflected upon previous leaders as examples of how they believed they should look or act, to provide a convincing performance to others.

Sally looked back to last year, when her headteacher was on a secondment and Sally become the acting headteacher "*it is good to know you can do it, but it didn't make me feel that's right and I can do it".* Marla's headteacher was retiring shortly, and other staff had been asking Marla strategic leadership questions which she perceived as reassuring:

> "*It's given me the reassurance that I'm doing a reasonable job because they trust that I will look after them. So, there's an achievement or a small sense of achievement that I can't be that bad 'cos they ask me questions and don't think I'm completely hopeless … well I hope they don't".*

Marla demonstrated the rippling effect of identity does not always enable positive thinking *"actually, I must look very strong to them when I'm so entirely weak and worried.* Despite being a deputy headteacher for several years and on a trajectory to become a headteacher, Marla

spoke of a lack of confidence in her leadership abilities, demonstrating the rippling effects of identity do not always proceed in a direct line. Cerys also reflected a similar view as Marla, and she confessed that she believed others might say things about her such as "*in that meeting she was terrible, and she didn't know anything".* On the other hand, Kate shared her view that teaching had given her greater confidence and changed her as a person '*I think if I hadn't gone into teaching, I wouldn't be as confident as I am now'* and reflected that she had '*grown and changed over the year's'.*

The opposite however was true for Sally who had a secondment as headteacher, to another school for a term, and whilst she shared how much she relished the experience at the time she reflected: "*it's good to know you can do it … but it didn't make me feel that's right and I can do it and I need to go somewhere else".* At the other end of the scale Karen described how her relationship with being a school leader has developed "*I think I've grown and changed over the years and I think …becoming a leader is something I've grown into doing".* She was able to acknowledge within her professional role "*I have reached the point that I don't want to go any further … I have seen enough and done enough that I feel quite happy with it*".

For Marla she considered she created a work identity which she chose to show specifically to others during the interview process as she believed herself to be "*very good at interviews"* and presenting herself by '*putting on an act'*. She believed individuals put on a performance to fit the role they covert and that this is easier for teachers because they put on this act everyday within the classroom and therefore this is easier to transfer to an interview scenario, in comparison to other professions.

Marla had been a DHT in her school for three years and yet she described her role as being *'lonely'* when her headteacher was not in school. Furthermore, she shared that "*I won't sit in Amy's (headteacher's) chair anyway. It's not mine, she's the boss and it's being alright with*

that". Kate demonstrated that she had begun to update and prioritise her evolving identity and was able to reflect more positively upon her career trajectory *"other times I think 'No!' I really have grown into that and changed*". The gradual incremental changes, suggested by Ibarra (2003), was demonstrated by Marla's view "*You can sit at the pub and think you can rule the world … however it is a gradual process".* Cerys gained an Inclusion Lead post within a newly set up academy school and admitted "*I didn't really know anything about phonics*". However, she believed that she would be able to build upon her existing skills. Cerys "*I'm quite good at learning things you know like I'm going to know this, bluff this until I know it*".

6.2.4 Identity insecurity

Identity insecurity was evident within the narratives of four participants, but particularly within Marla and Cerys' interviews. Both Marla and Cerys expressed how they had viewed their past selves, in what might be considered a less than positive light, given their accession to their current roles. Marla "*I would never be the straight A student … never the brightest, never the fastest, never the prettiest, always okay at everything, always okay*" and Cerys' thoughts when reflecting on what she knew in comparison with current NQT's:

> *"I don't know if they went to better universities or we train them in a different way, but they seem to know lots of different things that I didn't know, and I was like 'How do they know? Oh, we are doing a dissertation on this pedagogy' I didn't even know the word pedagogy when I started teaching and now people throw it around all the time and I'm like 'How did I not know these things?".*

Cerys' past self-experiences held deep memories as to how she perceived staff might view her as a leader. She related that she had worked for what she considered to be '*good heads'* but also some who "*weren't good heads*". She recalled that:

> "*People really, really moaned about them behind their back and I'm sure people moan about me. I know people bitched about them behind*

their back saying they were rubbish and I'm sure people say that about me".

This earlier experience of others' perceptions seemed to have been magnified during a difficult period. Cerys experienced what she believed to be a disastrous OFSTED at one point during her career which had left her with the feeling that:

"*I've got to know everything about every person who works in it (team) and how they tick, how everything runs, nobody is going to say, 'Well you didn't know, or you did that wrong because it should have been like this' ... you sort of go I want to prove to you I know what I'm doing".*

Confidence and self-doubt were pertinent to this theme and seven of the women were open in stating their concerns regarding being a future headteacher. Marla shared mixed views regarding confidence and during the opening five minutes of her interview stated, "*I'm not really very clever*". Yet interestingly during her early career she divulged that when asked by a headteacher what she saw herself doing within school roles, she replied "*your job*". Marla further went on to describe this statement as "*arrogant*" and that she had "*regularly challenged leaders and managers within schools*", which she described as "*thinking I knew how to do things better*". Cerys discussed her feelings regarding a lack of her knowledge and that this appears to have stayed with her as she reflected upon new entrants to the profession: *"I don't know if they went to better universities or we train them in a different way, but they seem to know lots of different things that I didn't know".* This self-doubt in her own skills had left her questioning herself *"I just don't think I can be* (a headteacher) *and I don't know why I think I can't".* She had been spoken to within the Trust leadership regarding the opportunity to be Head of School, but her response was *"oh my God why did I say that? ... so that's on my shoulder all the time ... I don't want to do it".*

For Mandy, she oscillated between holding on to the present and demonstrating some insecurity towards embracing the future *"perhaps I've found my niche role for a while, but I do worry that I haven't got enough knowledge and training for all the other parts that should come under an assistant head role".* Cerys described when seeking a senior leadership role within her school feeling self-doubt regarding her own leadership merits and abilities *"I applied for the DHT because everybody was going on at me … but I only got it because I was the only person that was there".* She qualified this further by sharing:

> "*I was the only candidate, but they still made me do all the things I had to do to get the deputy headship and I always thought in the back of my mind that I only got this because I was the only person that was there and even though I did all the hoops they made me jump through*".

Despite gaining her promotion to the role of DHT through a rigorous process, identity insecurity remained for Cerys, as she believed she was more suited to the role of a DHT rather than that of a headteacher:

> *"Quite good at being that second. I'm dogged and I will get it done for you well, by the deadline and it will be organised, colour-coded and the paper clips will match, and it will be amazing, and I will even stand up in the governor's meeting and present it for you, but I just don't know I think I'm quite good at managing but I'm not sure about leading".*

Marla spoke of her feelings with her current role in a school as a DHT and having a headteacher which were familiar too her "*that's a good place to be, isn't it? It's solid*". However, Marla's headteacher was about to retire and Marla had met the new headteacher. Her comment suggested Marla held a modicum of insecurity regarding the new head wanting her to remain

at the school and she appeared to experience a feeling of gratefulness, to be reassured on the continuance of her role as DHT:

> *"A parent asked me yesterday …she was talking to the Head a new headteacher and she said, 'Is Marla staying?' and I was stood there, and I thought 'I hope so! … and she said 'Yes' …'Oh thank you, good, thank you*".

Marla also expressed insecurity regarding schools being able to afford non-class based AHT/DHTs, following on from her earlier comment "*schools won't have any cash and I'm going to get fired*". Looking forwards towards headship Marla expressed an element of insecurity, to the tasks she might be required to undertake within a headship interview process:

> *"I worry that I don't you know, people talk about in-tray tasks and manipulating data type of things and I wouldn't be able to do any of that easily because I, it hasn't been part of my job role".*

Cerys revealed she had recently been asked to become Head of School and replied, "*yes of course*". But after the conversation ended, she thought "*oh my God why did I say that? So now that's on my shoulder all the time … and I don't want to do it*". She further clarified:

> "*I never ever wanted to be a head. I've had a slight change recently …I thought it was too far away from the children … I love the fun side of it being with the children. Why would I put myself back in that offic*y (sic) *environment?*".

Carly admitted she had sought reassurance from staff to ask if they considered her clothes were smart enough for her new role, as acting headteacher. She decided "*I will come back with a jacket and something to look smart for a meeting and they agreed that that is what I need to do*". Whilst for Cerys she viewed asking staff as a sign of weakness and perceived as a

prospective headteacher she should know everything and never need to seek opinion from others:

> "*I do know there are staff in my school that I could go to and do that, but you lose your respect as a head if you go to my lovely year 4 teacher and say, 'What am I going to do about this?' in my head a headteacher knows everything*".

She reflected on one element of the role she did not feel she excelled at:

> "*If you're put on the spot about things and you're supposed to know everything and I am not very good at going 'You'll have to give me a moment to think about that' because I think, I know, it doesn't show weakness but to me it makes me think 'I should have known that, so I don't like being put in that position*".

Her views suggested she believed, as a leader, she should portray strength through a confident manner to others "*most heads you meet …they are very polished and much more confident than me*" and she voiced the concern that after the meetings the heads might say "*in that meeting she was terrible, and she didn't know anything*".

6.3 Summary

It can be seen within this chapter that the participants faced challenges within their identities. The roles of being a wife, mother, senior leader etc., had led to some of the women experiencing multiple selves. Changes within their working identity moving from class to senior leader had both a positive and a negative impact upon the woman. Exploring their new identities as possible headteachers left some participants looking forwards, whilst others looked backwards to gain context to the type of leader they wished to be or to support their reasons for continuing to work within the same school. Feelings of doubt or of being an imposter were not uncommon

and the women reflected upon the additional personas they had created to support their transitions.

The loss of teacher identity demonstrated fragmented identities were evident. Participants gained support from both professional and personal circles to support them to gain perspective. Being a wife and a mother had led to feelings of motherly guilt for some participants and how the constraints of personal and work identities proved challenging. Identity regulation was observed when the women were 'acting a part' to show others they could undertake specific roles. This was at times shaped by the experiences of previous leaders, both positive and negative. Identity insecurity was evident linked to their own self-doubt in their skills or knowledge. For some participants it had led to them questioning their own career trajectory through oscillating views regarding headship progression and the skills they perceived they needed.

Chapter 7 seeks to address the theme of gendered careers (RQ3) and explores how the women's career ambitions have been shaped by gender. Gender has become an important focus of contemporary researchers and this emerged as a central theme in the narratives.

Chapter 8 involves a more detailed discussion and interpretation of the findings from the key themes of leadership, identity, and gendered careers and how these relate to previous empirical research and the conceptual framework.

Chapter 7

Gendered Careers – RQ 4

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus upon gendered careers, more specifically regarding the participants views of themselves as women, how a gendered career has shaped their ambitions and the perceptions of gender bias, both real and perceived. Within the theme of gendered careers initial subthemes were identified (Fig. 7.1) through the iterative process. As discussed within the literature review (chapter 2) gender and leadership are considered by many to be contestable. The term gender is used within a wide range of meaning and is constantly evolving. Historically gender has been viewed as a barrier for women within leadership roles. Therefore, this chapter seeks to answer RQ 4 - How do women leaders perceive their career ambitions have been shaped by their gender?

Chapter 8 will provide a more detailed discussion and interpretation of the findings regarding leadership, identity and gendered careers for the participants. Previous empirical research will be analysed within the conceptual framework. Conclusions from this study and implications for future research will be presented within chapter 9.

The theme of gendered careers was identified as a specific theme by eight of the participants. It relates to the challenges and restrictions the participants identified from their own perspective as women, but also their perceptions of working alongside males and how they perceived the gender differences. The theme of gender included their own views regarding their own perceptions of how their gender might have shaped their careers. The theme of gendered careers was divided into four subthemes from the iterative coding cycle: male v female, career women, family v profession and gender bias (Fig. 7.1).

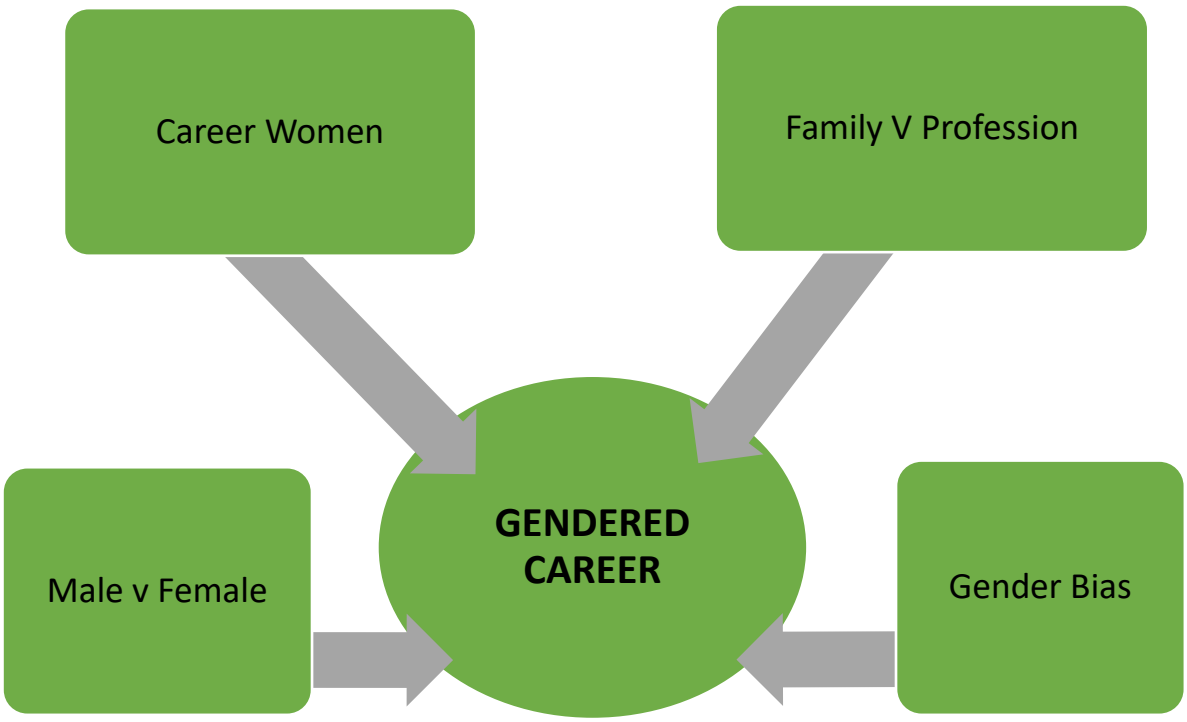

Fig. 7.1 subthemes within the theme of gendered career (RQ 4)

7.2.1 Male v female

The first subtheme within the gendered career's theme was the consideration by the participants of male and female traits, within the workplace. Within their career narratives three of the participants explicitly mentioned the traits of males versus female colleagues and gave examples which they considered demonstrated their views. For Cerys she gave the opinion that men can undertake difficult conversations and that they are less likely than women to be concerned if staff '*get along'*. Whilst for Cerys she believed men were promoted ahead of her due to their indifference as to whether the staff '*get along'*:

> *"I don't know if that's because I'm a woman or if I just want to make everybody else be nice and peaceful and calm and I've found in some roles people have, men have gone above me or ahead of me or I've seen them do a job and I think 'I could do that' and I don't know if it's 'cos their a man or because they can do difficult conversations or if they don't care if everyone doesn't get along".*

Cerys' clarified that she was unsure if it was a womanly trait, that she preferred to avoid difficult conversations, in preference for a more peaceful and calm working environment. Either way, her belief is that males are not concerned with ensuring a harmonious working environment but, are focused upon ensuring the job or task is completed. Even if this involves difficult conversations. Cerys is making a clear distinction regarding what she considers to be male *v* female traits. She further described how the male teachers she had worked alongside had advanced more quickly through the leadership structure of the school and that this has led to personal self-doubt, when a man has gained the senior role instead of her, despite her beliefs that she would be able to undertake the tasks requested:

> *"As I've gone along, I've found umm you know I would start somewhere and I would be a team leader and there would be a male as a team leader and umm I thought maybe they had more confidence or things, they would be much quicker at taking that next step. So … I'm going to be a DHT, and I'd think 'Oh I didn't think he was as good a team leader, but he's got a DHT role' and then I'd go for a DHT role and then not get it and then think 'Oh well I must be rubbish then cos he's got it and he wasn't very good".*

Cerys linked the trajectory speed of males achieving higher leadership positions with the possibility that she displayed a lack of confidence. Whilst she did not explicitly link confidence as a male trait, she did link confidence as a reason she, as a female, did not get the promotion which was offered instead to a male.

Debbie shared her views regarding what she considered as the specific traits from the different sexes. Her narrative suggested that she believed a male should always be an authority figure, no matter what sex they were. Her view was shaped by a previous headteacher who she felt lacked authority. She also viewed authority, when seen within a female leader behaviour, to be a strong characteristic and a skill to aspire to:

"Even though he was male he wasn't really the authority figure and the authority figure was the DHT, who was a strong female. That then changed, and we got a very strong head who was a female who knew exactly what she wanted and who I would quite like to model myself on".

Sally claimed that one of the trait's males displayed, when applying to working in a different school, was their express need to apply to lead subjects which are predominantly considered, within the teaching profession as high status and a pathway to further promotion. This view was supported by Cerys:

"I think we have young men coming into the school … they will have 3 or 4 candidates they all want to be here as math's lead or they're coming because of a team leader role, they've all been teaching maybe 3 or 4 years and the females you know they'll come and tell you what they can do and if you offer them the job, they will take it. If you offer it to the male they will say 'mmmm well, I'm not sure it's enough money now' and I've really found that with men … they are more prepared to argue their corner … none of the women do that".

Sally's narrative suggested more men apply for pathway leadership roles, despite only having a relatively short period within the classroom. Additionally, Cerys believes male traits will ensure the men, when offered the job, will barter and seek to negotiate the role or the pay. On the other hand, Cerys held the view that within her experience women were likely accept the job without caveats. She gave further examples of what she perceived to be a negative bias against women with the suggestion that the route to headship for males was different:

"Our School Improvement Partner (SIP) is male and there's lots of males in there (County). There is always a higher proportion of male headteachers compared to what you see in the classroom. They seem to have an easier way through or are they just more bolshy and confident? As women we generally seem to always be apologising for ourselves … whereas the men give it a go and with the attitude of 'I don't care'. You see it in staff meetings the way women react when a

man talks to the way they react when a woman is talking. They all turn towards him".

Following on from Cerys' example it might be considered that the behaviour of women towards men speaking within the staff meeting, might be considered deferential behaviours. Deferential behaviours exist within most societies but if these behaviours become a barrier to members of a group speaking to share their opinions, then it can be detrimental to the whole group. Alternatively, it might be the case that men do have greater confidence than women within the working environment. Cerys certainly held the view that men have more confidence, and this aids them in progression through the teaching profession:

> *"As I've gone along, I found I would be a team leader and there would be a male as a team leader, and I thought maybe they would have more confidence or things, but they would be much quicker at taking the next steps".*

As senior female leaders, the narrative approach enabled sharing of thoughts regarding what the AHT/DHTs viewed as being more feminine or womanly traits but also on the other hand what they perceived to be more masculine or male traits. Sally reflected on her experience within her last school, working directly with men and she believed it was more likely for men to want to work in an environment where there were other men:

> *"I don't know whether being a woman has any influence I don't know. Sadly, we only have one man working with us, but the last school I worked for I only worked (directly) with men and had a male headteacher and the more men you've got the more men are going to want to come and work there. I'm sure that happens. It's now got that kind of we show lads round and they probably see loads of middle-aged ladies and think 'This is boring'!".*

The absence of males within the working environment she saw as a direct result of the males experiencing a negative view of a school. However, she was able to recall two examples from recently interviewing, which she believed demonstrated the confidence male colleagues show when being offered a job:

> "*Now I'm interviewing I see it; the men ring back and say, 'My school don't want to lose me, so you know they've given me a retention point what are you going to give me?'. None of the women do they for these roles. Every male we have offered a job to … ask for the weekend to think about it*".

The second example suggests males tend to apply for higher positions and they are prepared to negotiate pay scales, whereas the women will simply accept the post. Cerys cited two examples from recently interviewing for new staff, which she believed demonstrated the confidence male colleagues show when being offered a job:

> *"I've also found certainly with younger men coming in that they … all want to be here as a math's lead or they're coming because of a team leader role, they've all been teaching 3 or 4 years and the females you know they'll come and they'll tell you what they can do … and if you offer them the job, they will take it. If you offer it to the male, they will say 'Mmm well I'm not sure that it's enough money now … they are more prepared to argue their corner".*

Perceptions on the ability of the different sexes to undertake the myriad of roles of senior leadership was mentioned by Cerys. Cerys held the belief that men chose to undertake the roles which were considered more highly thought of, but were less likely to want to deal with the mundane jobs within a school:

> *"I've often found males in primary school they want to do the you know look at me the big chief stuff but they don't want you know to do the 'I will mop wee off the floor' because you know there is no one else to mop wee off the floor or I'm changing the dirty pants or whatever and they think 'I can't be doing that' and sometimes they say*

it would be a safeguarding issue. Well, why isn't it a safeguarding issue if I do it?

7.2.2 Career women

The second subtheme within the theme of gendered careers was that of being a career woman, working within primary schools today. This subtheme was identified by seven of the participants.

Carly remained clear that whilst she did not know what her future held, she would not be working within the teaching profession "*once I get to 60*", so "*I don't have to work such long hours*". Marla also spoke about the fact that she had not got the patience to continue to be a teacher, despite it being a "*lovely job"* but that she "*can't keep up the pace*" required for the job. Carly was taking on an acting headship within a term and whilst she viewed it as a positive challenge for her personally, she also perceived it to be an opportunity for her to reflect "*do I want to be a head yet*?". Carly also expressed doubt about moving to another school as a headteacher where she believes she would have to prove herself again and leave her current school where she felt she had personally made a difference. This perception was also shared by Sally *"going somewhere else which I feel I've got to start the whole thing again getting it how I want, I'm just not feeling that at the moment".* However, both women report they do not feel they could work with another headteacher within their current school and being told what to do, in an environment they know so well.

Marla oscillates within her thoughts regarding moving to headship. At one point during the interview, she agrees that she would "*be alright as a deputy head forever"* but later in the narrative she professes to seeing herself, "*as a headteacher within five years"*.

More recently a movement called 'Co-Heads' has gained momentum, within social media spheres, to champion and to support women who, due to a variety of reasons, might not wish

to take up a full-time headship, but rather a part-time co-headship with another leader. Morgan mentioned this movement within her narrative:

> "*I think in 10 years' time you might see a lot more of it due to the teaching crisis. I can definitely see it happening … there is definitely a shift happening".*

Marla also brought up the subject of co-headship, which she would be in favour of:

> *"There are more co-heads these days and oh my goodness I would love. I would love it if someone was like I would definitely be much more keen if people said (0.2) "Look if you are willing to be a co-head and there is two of you, two heads of school and you work 4 days" I would be like 'Yes'*".

Both Morgan and Marla further pointed out that they believed this opportunity for some women might enable or encourage them to move into a headship and help support the recruitment and retention of senior women leaders within school. Interestingly nine out of the 10 women interviewed disclosed that they had children. Of the 10 participants, eight of the women worked full time. The two respondents who worked part-time, both had young children. Six of the women who worked full time, had children. All the women interviewed spoke of being married or in a relationship. Debbie made a reference to the role of being a working mother and what she considered the sacrifices she had made within her leadership career and gives it as a reason as to why she considers less women are choosing to become headteachers:

> *"I think being a working mum who teaches is just so hard work juggling constantly and giving sometimes more time to other people's children than your own. That's why I think less women want to get headship now".*

However, for Carly whilst preparing for maternity leave, she held one view but the reality of the position she held was challenged. Whilst she loved being a stay-at-home mum, she missed her professional working role when she took maternity leave:

> *"I remember thinking 'gosh I'm going to love being on maternity leave and it will be great to be off work and everything' but of course once I wasn't at school and I had 6 months off I was kind of itching to do more than being a mum".*

Kate described her leadership journey from secretarial college, to university, NQT, middle leaders and then AHT. She reflected that she had been lucky *"seen enough and done enough that I feel quite happy with it"* and was not looking to move on to headship in the future. When Debbie was within the early stages of choosing a career, she was given advice from another leader about the dual roles of being a working mother and teacher, but she continued with her planned career trajectory despite this:

> *"I said I wanted to go and teach, and she said 'don't' ever go and teach while you've got young children, don't even think about it and wait until they have grown up' I thought if I waited until they were grown up, I would be ancient".*

Chloe ended her narrative reflecting on her career, whilst looking towards her future "b*eing a headteacher was all I ever wanted to do and I'm not so sure I want to do that anymore*". Her views sum up the reflections of five of the participants, who were undecided on whether to continue their career forwards to a headship role (Fig. 11).

Aspiring Headteacher	Career DHT/AHT	Undecided/Unclear
Carly Marla	Julie Kate Debbie	Chloe Morgan Cerys Sally Mandy

Fig. 7.2 table demonstrating participant future aspirations

Schools are acknowledged (Coser, 1974; Gronn, 1999; Thomson, 2009 & Sullivan, 2014) as greedy institutions, along with other places of employment e.g., hospitals. A greedy institution is seen as one where no matter how many hours you work you are unlikely to reach the end of your tasks and the place of work will always seek to require more hours. Sally stated, "*it doesn't matter how much time you give it the school could always take more*". Teaching unlike other professions does not have a set number of weekly hours to be completed within the building, but only directed hours within the classroom. Most teachers and senior leaders take work home each night and plan and mark during their weekends, to ensure they are prepared for the week ahead. The working hours required to be a school leader were mentioned by three of the participants: Cerys, Sally and Debbie. Sally mentioned the time that school staff give to their places of employment and that *"you never get to the end and it's always what job shall I do first."*

Debbie viewed it from a different perspective and saw schools as places where the headteacher sets the tone for the staff, allowing flexibility if possible. Debbie has in the past worked for a male headteacher who had children of his own and she perceived him as being more understanding, regarding workload for those teachers with children and more about modelling and supporting home and work life balance:

> *"The male I have had here I think was a bit more with it because he had young children so he understood people's lives and got that they might need time off to go to something or understood that you can't sit every day and mark your books all night or do the planning all night and work all weekend and that is your life, because he didn't do it and therefore, he didn't expect us to do it.*

It is clear from Debbie's view that she believed a senior leader, whether male or female, is better placed to support the staff if they have children themselves. This view was echoed by Morgan, Julie, and Carly. Now Debbie works alongside a female headteacher, who does not have children, she views her headteacher as being less aware of home and work life balance and does not model this to staff, which Debbie feels has a negative effect upon staff:

> "S*he doesn't have children and never wants children and she's … that's her life so she is obsessed with it and always on her phone or on her emails".*

Eight out of the 10 participants disclosed they were mothers and all the women had wider family responsibilities, alongside their school leadership roles. Nine out of the 10 participants referred to what they considered to be the difficulties of being a female leader and what they saw as the negative impact of their school leadership role upon their families. Three participants reported that their home responsibilities changed as their career progressed. For Cerys, the opportunity of applying for a headship arose, which made her question her decisions. She also

mentioned that she believed it unlikely that men take in to account the impact long working hours might have upon a young family and stated that from her experience male teachers do not perceive having young children as a difficulty, moving into more senior roles.

> *"There was an opportunity for me to apply (*for the headship role) *but I looked at the ages of my children and thought I can't, and I don't know if men have that concern. I've got to come in at a reasonable time because I have to bring my children with me in the morning to bring them to school so I can't come in at 6 in the morning and expect, you know, two children to come with me…. I don't think men think of that but maybe I'm wrong but lots of male teachers I know haven't had to take that into consideration".*

Is having a family and further responsibilities, reducing the aspirations for headship or do women use that as an excuse? Carly, due to the circumstance of her initial headteacher retiring and a new headteacher going on sick leave, and the DHT leaving, found herself moving from AHT to the acting headteacher role within a few weeks. Once she returned, to her AHT role, she was pregnant with her second child and was adamant that she would not apply for the DHT role at that time. The process of seeing prospective candidates viewing the school and positive encouragement from her headteacher, made her apply. Carly was 28 weeks pregnant and actively discussing her maternity leave dates. However, her school interviewed her and offered her the job, with a start date after her maternity leave would end. She viewed this as an unusual decision and thought it was unlikely that other schools would take her pregnancy into account when seeking to employ a member of the senior leadership team.

Sally also has a young family and worked full time and commented on the hours expected of her: *"Everyone is here from 7:40am until 6pm every day and is always taking work home".* The hours she gave differed in comparison to those given by Cerys, who felt she needed to be in work at 6am, to undertake her role. Sally's hours could be considered average or even low within some professions. Whilst for Cerys it might be suggested that she had an unacceptable

expectation of school-work hours, although it is not known if she has an earlier end to her day. If Cerys is seen, as a senior leader, demonstrating the expectation of early working hours, this, might deter prospective senior leadership candidates from choosing to pursue headship in the future.

Carly when offered the role of acting headteacher was considering applying for the role of permanent headteacher. She commented that moving forward she would see how the role affected her young children and then decide based upon that. She did not give expectations of what might qualify as either a positive or a negative effect upon her family, so it is difficult to extrapolate any further meaning. For Cerys too the impact upon her family was a prime concern and one she felt contributed to a stalling within her leadership career. Cerys is an AHT and a mother. She made clear the disadvantages of being a working mother, wife, and senior leader. She felt that her career had been halted once she made it known that she couldn't take on the extra responsibilities of evening meetings:

> *"Cos I was like with my husband's work pattern I can't be at Governor's meetings until 8 o'clock and I can't you know work at that this and the other…so I sort of stalled a bit there".*

Within education there is an expectation for senior leaders to be a part of the school's governing body. For most schools today, the governing body meetings take place in the evening, after the normal working day is finished. For Cerys, whose husband is a shift worker, they, like many other families, rely upon specific working timetables to cover childcare. This can make additional evening meetings problematic. The language that Cerys used could be viewed as being vague and non-explicit e.g., "*work at this that and the other"* and "*stalled a bit*". Yet the underlying point behind her narrative is one of an expectation for senior leaders to be available regularly in the evenings, which some might argue on the appropriateness of the expectation of work meetings being held at night, rather than during daytime working hours. Within usual

school practices senior leaders do not generally receive time off in lieu of the extra twilight hours they might work, as part of a Governing Body. Yet the requirement is that they should attend the meetings as a senior leader.

For Cerys she believed her children to be negatively affected by her working role. She also shared that she did not feel parents appreciated what she suggested was a "*sacrifice*", from spending time with her own family:

> "*If only the parents knew the effort we put in every day for their children, often at the expense of our own families*".

This view expounded by Cerys suggested that she sought the approval from parents of the sacrifice she gave to their children, at the expense of her own. She did not give details regarding what she perceived as "*effort*", but, given that she believed she provided this every day it is suggestive of what is a given, within the teaching profession.

Kate also pointed out that having a family, as a senior leader, was more difficult but as her children were grown up when she became a senior leader, she had not personally experienced it, but believed it to be a real issue within the teaching profession: "*I don't know how people juggle family and school ... it pulls you in opposite directions*".

7.2.3 Family v profession

The third subtheme identified was family v profession, highlighting the juxtaposition the women faced when juggling their family and professional roles. Eight of the 10 women interviewed disclosed they were mothers during their narrative, as well as their professional roles of AHT/DHTs. For Sally, Debbie, Cerys, and Kate the role of motherhood was an

introduction to playgroups and Sunday School, and this piqued their interest for the profession of teaching.

Sally came into teaching as a mature entrant with young children. With a demanding job in the City, Sally perceived that being a teacher with young children would be easier, given the difficulties with commuting. As her husband worked from home, she acknowledged this made her commitments for her career, simpler for her. She had intended once she graduated to work part-time but "*that never quite worked out*". Sally admitted she had "*been lucky as by the time I did serious leadership roles my family responsibilities were done*". She reflected that had left her able to devote her time to her school career. For Sally she believed that she would have been unable to juggle family as it would "*pull you in opposite directions*", particularly citing the long hours required for her to work example. Sally stated that women undertake most of the childcare and "*stuff at home … constantly juggling home and school*". From Sally's perspective times that "*you have to be a mummy first*" and she had remembered this with her staff and given them what she described as "*a bit of slack*". She put this attitude down to the ethos of the school and in addition queried whether this attitude would be possible further up in secondary education. Furthermore, she believed if you were going for a senior leadership position that you need to put your family life "*down a level of importance … most of our staff are not prepared to do that*". This view was echoed by Mandy "*I didn't go for the head of school job because I couldn't commit to it. I have I've got small children and I didn't wanna (*sic*) work, I didn't want to work full time*".

Cerys admitted that the lines between family and her profession had at times become blurred "*my children have always been roped into sorting the library or putting up a display. Even my husband has been covering books with sticky back plastic and painted props*". Furthermore, she recalled:

> "*My daughter applied for a Nursing Degree and they could see she has experience working with children and she was asked why she wasn't going to train to be a teacher and she told them it's terrible being a teacher and all your life is school. She said she couldn't be like me and give up her whole life*".

This resulted in Cerys reflecting that she "*had not been a good role model to my daughter or my son*" and believing the impression she had left with her family was that "*being a leader in school is not great … which is sad*".

Debbie was advised by teaching friends to wait until her children were older before she undertook teacher training but decided if she waited for them to grow-up she would be "*ancient*". For Debbie she looked back on that time as "*very hard*" and voiced her opinion that "*it is still the woman, I think it is the way we are built that we feel responsible for doing everything*". At that time Debbie was trying to fit work in, going to University for one day a week and writing essays in the evening. Whilst she acknowledged the process was difficult "*I was adamant they weren't missing out on anything*" and described how she did not want her own children to have to struggle with going to University as a mature student, as she had. Debbie did recall "*I got a buzz out of spinning all those plates as a mother*" and even though her husband was away a great deal she became good at "*juggling balls*". Debbie shared her view "*being a working mum who teaches is just so hard work, juggling constantly and giving sometimes more to other people's children than your own*". For this reason, Debbie believed less women leaders want to obtain a headship post nowadays. She was able to reflect on the positive aspect of being a working mother "*having a family does help you and having children does help your aspect and your outlook on things … doing this whilst you've got children also helps you appreciate things more*".

None of the women interviewed mentioned their spouse as being the main child-care provider or gave explicit details as to how the childcare hours were covered. Kate shared a view that she perceives women provide or arrange the childcare, whilst taking on other home responsibilities and working in the school and how this requires significant input:

> "*There's still that thing where women do most of the childcare and stuff at home, so you are constantly juggling home and school*".

Kate's late entry into a career within teaching meant that she reached senior leadership once her children were older, and she considered this to have been a lucky opportunity:

> "*... because by the time I was doing serious leadership roles my family responsibilities were done … I haven't needed to be split into two between family concerns and school concerns*".

Whilst this view could be considered fortuitous for Kate, it has wider implications for others who have younger children. From Kate's perspective it appears she viewed it as unlikely that a senior leader within school is able successfully to juggle family responsibilities with their leadership role. She did not however suggest that this is only an issue for women, rather a more widely held belief for both sexes. Kate's view is echoed to some extent by Karen who perceived that to be a senior leader in today's schools there is a need to put family life behind the professional life. She believed that is why today more teachers and senior leaders, wish to job-share, to enable teachers to achieve a greater work-life balance, with their own children and families:

> "*So, if you are going for senior leadership you have to put your family life down a level of importance, and I know that for most of the staff at our school they are not prepared to do that which is why people want job shares*".

Anecdotally, as someone working in schools, it is noted that job sharing has become more widely accepted within schools over the last 5 years or so. But in all cases known to the researcher the job-sharing involved women, both class teachers and members of the SLT. The DfE suggest this is a popular option for both teachers and schools, particularly for individual teachers who can arrange and set -up their own job share arrangements (DfE, 2017a).

However, for Sally, who had a previous career within the City, she acknowledged that other professions work hard too and that teachers do not necessarily work harder than other professions and that she reminds members of her staff of this fact. Her belief appears to be that both sexes need to be aware of the demands of the profession, but teachers should cease bemoaning about the hours they work.

7.2.4 Gender bias

The fourth subtheme within the theme of gendered careers is gender bias. Perceived or real gender bias was highlighted by four participants. This subtheme addresses both the perceived and real bias experienced by the female participants over the course of their career, whilst moving towards a leadership role. The interpretive data within this subtheme demonstrates how the female participants believed gender has influenced their working role and shaped those working in education, around them.

Most participants within this study, referred to working alongside male colleagues, throughout the course of their career. Cerys described a male primary teacher and how she believes they are given more nurturing and care within their professional working day, in comparison to how she perceives she is treated. She felt the non-teaching support staff, choose to mother male members of staff with more of a caring and motherly role, which was not given to women. Cerys' excerpt below provides a unique perspective on what she considered to be biased behaviour from other women, towards men, to the exclusion of women.

> *"Some people say to me 'We have to get him his coffee or we have to help him with this' you know or 'Have you got lunch?'. They'd never ask me if I wanted a coffee … because I'm a <u>woman</u> so I know where the kitchen is in the school and how to make a lunch.".*

Cerys begins her statement with "*some people*" … rather than the term '*everyone*' suggesting according to Wiggins (2017) she might be seeking to distance herself somewhat from the view she presented. This leaves a question mark as to whether the gender bias is real or perceived. The interesting use of "*never*" demonstrates this is not likely to be a one-off experience but a permanent unchanging situation. Cerys attributed the attitude to her being a woman as she emphasised (*underlining*) the word. Cerys suggested women reserved their caring and motherly roles for the male workers and not the females, which she has perceived as unfair. As an aspiring headteacher she stated no-one asked her if she needed her lunch to be collected or whether she would like a coffee brought to her, but she had heard males being asked these types of questions on a regular basis. She perceived this behavior to be attributed to her sex, with the suggestion that as she was a woman therefore, she knows where the kitchen is, in the school and how to make and bring in her own lunch. A comparison could be made to the evocative use of the outdated saying "*a woman's place is in the home*". This reflects social norms and expectations. The implication is that as Cerys is a woman, she is capable of multi-tasking. Yet if you are male some women might implicitly mother males working within their environment, a trait that is not extended to women. It also shows how gender difference is enacted and experienced in very nuanced ways, which do not go unnoticed by other women.

These nuanced behaviours were identified by Sally when she mentioned promotions of males within school. She believed men are likely to get promoted more quickly than women. She questioned how men sometimes get to the position they have, despite what she considers lack of skills. This view goes some way to support the findings of Thornton and Bricheno (2000),

who highlighted inequalities due to stereotypical patterns of masculinity. However, it did not reflect the bias of others outside of the leadership circle and how those nuanced behaviours create their own bias, against women. Sally gave an example in support of her view:

> *"Head of my last school great businessman but umm … I didn't work with him as a teacher but ALL the teachers who were there said he never once marked a book or put up a display and yet after a year becomes a DHT, headteacher and that does happen, and I think in schools … some of them have a meteoric rise".*

Sally considered the head had a "*meteoric rise*" to headship and yet she chose to focus upon marking books and putting up displays. For Sally it was clearly an emotive subject and she used language to demonstrate this. For instance, the statement "*all the teachers who were there said he never once marked a book"*. At first glance the sentence seems self-explanatory. Yet this could be viewed as a sweeping, generalised statement. Sally admits that she never worked alongside the headteacher, in a classroom setting, but rather her view was gained anecdotally from unknown number of staff members. It could be challenged, by those within the teaching profession, to be unlikely that any member of the teaching staff could reach a leadership post without undertaking the basics of classroom management, in this case marking books. This will be discussed in greater depth within chapter 8. Sally also used "*umm"*" towards the beginning of her sentence, suggestive that she required thinking or ordering time for her reply. Sally however distances herself from her words with the use of "*I didn't work with him as a teacher*" and she follows this up with "*but ALL the teachers who were there said …".* She deliberately emphasised the word '*all*' suggesting she was not alone in her views. Within Sally's comments she used the word "*them*" when describing male career paths "…s*ome of them have a meteoric rise*" suggesting she holds the view that males are different to females and they rise quicker through the promotional pathway. She does quantify her view in the use

of "…*some of them …",* which is indicative of her seeking to diffuse her views, rather than saying that all men in her opinion have a meteoric rise. This shows how gender difference is enacted and experienced in very nuanced ways, but this leaves a certain amount of resentment, lasting for significant periods of time.

This gendered view was also shared by Cerys. Cerys' comments identify that she perceived males to be more willing to undertake the roles that had what she believed had greater prominence within school, but less likely to want to undertake the more practical or mundane tasks, with men providing mitigating reasons as to why they cannot undertake certain tasks:

> *"I've often found males in primary school they want to do the, you know look at me, the big chief stuff but they don't want you know to do the mopping wee off the floor …changing dirty pants and they think 'I can't be doing that' and sometimes they say it is a safeguarding issue. Well, why isn't it a safeguarding issue if I do it?".*

The opening sentence "*I've often found …*" gives little indication of how many times she has noted what she considers to be a gender bias, but rather leaves it open to interpretation that there are many other occasions. Her use of the description of the males as *"… the big chief*" is perhaps more suggestive of her view of the males rather than the males view of her. Her language is certainly biased against what she considers to be an unjust system.

Is it perhaps because there are fewer male teachers working within primary schools that every detail of their behaviours or actions is more readily remembered? Or might it be considered that women hold a gender bias against males, which is perpetuated by other women's perceptions and views? The lack of male teachers in primary school featured in Sally's interview twice and included her perceptions and what she perceived other male teachers are thinking when being shown around a prospective school:

> *"I don't know whether being a woman has any influence … but the more men you've got the more are going to want to come and work there. It's got that kind of we show the lads around and they probably see loads of middle-aged ladies and think 'This is boring".*

Sally's comments show her belief that men are biased against working in schools which might be predominated by women, particularly if the women, are middle-aged. Her view suggested that men were going to be more likely to want to work in a school if other males work there.

Debbie voiced concerns regarding what she considered to be a positive gender bias towards men, which disadvantages females. As mentioned earlier primary education has a greater number of female teachers than males but a greater number of males reach a headship position in comparison to females. Debbie considered that if she were up against a male for a post, they would get the job, regardless of their abilities:

> *"I just think it's harder getting into headship as a female I think myself it's like I have to keep proving myself more so if I was up against a male, I think they would get the job and it doesn't matter whether they think he is maybe the best candidate. I think in primary level a male would get the job over a female even if I was the best candidate. Probably because they need to be seen in primary schools more and I think people, governors might think they have more of an impact upon children".*

It was interesting to note that Debbie qualified her opinion by making links to gender bias within the wider community "*I think people, governors might think they (*men*) have more of an impact upon children*". She began stating '*people*' but then clarified this with '*governors*', suggesting that school Governing Bodies have an inherent gender bias, during the interviewing process. Debbie's view suggested that in the drive for equality of the number of men versus women working within primary education there has become an element of bias, which is now perceived by prospective female headteachers, as a barrier. Sally too mentioned what she

considered to be a bias against women, which she believed begins from the earliest point of a teacher's career and once again impacts upon career trajectories. Three of the participants talked of males having an easier path towards leadership than females, despite the males sometimes demonstrating less developed professional skills than their female counterparts. Jones (2016) agreed that a male has a higher probability of becoming a headteacher in comparison to a female.

The trajectory of male leadership was mentioned by Sally who appeared to consider the men with whom she had worked, within the school, work environment, in a less than positive light:

> *"As a woman in primary teaching I do know a few men in primary teaching and I know it's a cliché, but I do wonder somehow how some of the males made it to the position really".*

The differing traits displayed by males and females during staff meetings was a focus during Cerys' interview, which suggested she believed women, themselves, give greater credibility to the words spoken by a man in comparison to their female colleagues:

> "T*he way women react when a man talks to the way they react when a woman is talking. They all turn towards him*".

Morgan, reflected on the positive differences she was aware of between her and her male headteacher and how this affects their ability for leadership and the working relationships formed:

> *"We work in a much more women driven society and the head that I work for, and with, he's a male and I think he definitely grounds me because for him it's very black and white and I think that makes a difference. Our relationship works really well because I am the 'I'm willing to think about this and people, people' and he is very much 'No this is what we're going to do' … we both bring something different to the table".*

The view from Morgan is that she perceived, both her and her headteacher think differently but not that there is a specific gender link.

The participants shared their perceptions related to what they viewed as being female traits or characteristics. These views ranged from a need to be more forceful as in Debbie's view below:

> *"I think females feel they have to be more forceful or have a point to prove and I don't know why especially in primary level 'cos normally I think you have got a lot more female heads and males in education primary level get an easier ride into it because people always feel we haven't got enough men in the classroom, so we need some".*

Debbie provided an alternative view in which she espoused women are inherently able to multi-task and this provides them with an additional edge over males, within the schoolwork place. She expressly linked her role as a mother with the ability to multi-task and gain satisfaction:

> *"I think I got a buzz out of it in a way spinning those plates, as a mother, but I think women are more geared to it and I don't think men could cope with that they … have their little window and that's them and that's what they are doing and then family fits in with that not they fit in with the family".*

Debbie's viewed men as being unable to deal with more than one issue at a time and that also includes their family responsibilities and by default how they make their family fit in with their responsibilities, not the other way around. This leads into an interesting area of the responsibility of looking after the children, whilst being a school leader. Debbie was the only respondent who spoke about the responsibility of looking after children as a traditional feminine role:

> *"…even though your marriage might not be like that and life is not like that anymore it is still the woman. I think it is the way we were built though I think we feel responsible to get doing everything, so we*

are responsible looking after the children more than men. I don't know why but that's the way. I think it's the way we're built that is in us, so that's what we do".

Debbie's view stated she was committed to the belief, that the women is the main care giver for a child. She suggested that it is a genetic and inherent structure of being a woman that leads to this. Her words '*to get everything done'* gives the implication that only a woman has the skills to be responsible for the care of a child. Morgan, claimed, "*women tend to be better at multi-tasking"* and this she believed enabled her to be *"much more efficient with my time".*

Debbie's candid narrative suggested she continued to follow the traditional roles of women as main caregiver, despite working full time as a senior school leader. But perhaps her words are more in alignment with the view of the studies from Gronn (2003) and Hochschild (1997), who claim some males and a few females found work as a refuge to their home life. This compartmentalisation might explain why some leaders are able to give sole focus to their role, but others remain aware of their additional family responsibilities, even when outside of the home.

Cerys highlighted what she believed was a difference in attitude between males and females working within education:

"*Our school improvement partner is a male and there are lots of males in there (*County*). There is always a higher proportion of male headteachers compared to what you see in the classroom. They seem to have an easier way through or are they just more bolshy and confident? As women we generally seem to always be apologising for ourselves and going 'I might not be very good at that' whereas the men just give it a go with the attitude of I don't care, I don't care if people talk behind my back, I don't care if I'm not very good at that I'll find it out or I'll bluff my way through*".

Debbie summed up similar thoughts to Cerys "*I think females feel they have to be more forceful or have a point to prove*".

Chapter 8

Discussion

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, inductive study was to gain a deep and rich understanding of female AHT/DHTs, working in primary schools and how gender has shaped their career journeys. The organisation of the chapter, original question which forms the basis of this study and the four open and explorative research questions are re-stated.

The chapter is organised into five main sections (Fig. 12); career journeys (RQ1), leadership (RQ2), identity (RQ3), gendered careers (RQ4) following the findings in relation to each of the four research questions clearly stated in chapter one and lastly a discussion related to the theoretical framework and findings. Each research question will be systematically examined and discussed, with reference to social identity theory, empirical and the conceptual framework set out within chapter two.

An original question formed the basis for this study: Why are female AHT/DHTs not choosing to apply for headteacher posts? From emergent data four open and explorative research questions guided this study:

- **RQ 1** - How do women DHTs and AHT's describe and make sense of their career journeys? (**Chapter 4**)
- **RQ 2** - How do women AHT/DHTs experience 'becoming' a leader? **(Chapter 5)**
- **RQ 3** - How do women DHTs and AHT's identify with their professional and family roles? (**Chapter 6**)
- **RQ 4** - How do women leaders perceive their career ambitions have been shaped by their gender? (**Chapter 7**).

10 female AHT/DHTs were interviewed individually, using the BNIM approach. The women leaders work within a Local Authority or Academy primary phase, within the South of England. Wengraf's (2013) Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) was chosen to elicit narrative-rich career journey's, through a conscious stream of thought. Data for this study was collected between April 2018 and July 2018.

This study is comprised of four themes: career journeys, leadership, identity and gendered careers. Together these themes support a deep and rich understanding of women's experiences and perceptions, through progression to headship. The following sections seek to discuss the findings of each of the research questions viewed through the theoretical framework of social identity theory, relate to the literature review from chapter 2 and the findings found within chapters four, five, six and seven. The discussion begins with research question 1 and relates to career journeys.

8.2 Career journeys – RQ 1

This section addresses the research question: How do women who are AHT/DHTs describe and make sense of their career journeys?

The findings presented within chapter 7 demonstrate career journeys as complex and multifaceted. However, there are three subthemes identified within the findings to discuss: first, career journeys and future aspirations are explored through professional opportunities; second, gender bias and the difficulty of balancing professional roles, alongside wider family responsibilities and third, early career influences. These three subthemes will be discussed in turn.

From a socially constructed perspective occupations are considered gendered, with primary school teaching being predominantly made up of females and leading to it being labelled a gendered occupation (Blackman & Jarman, 2006). From an individually constructed perspective the perceptions of the women leaders within this study believe that their careers have been shaped by their own gender and their career might have faced less barriers if they were male (Jones, 2016). This study attempts to highlight the issue of gender upon career trajectories of AHT/DHTs working with primary school.

Firstly, the leaders rich and condensed career narratives (section 4.2) explore the individual journey to where they are now within their career, but also aspirations for future career roles. Career journeys are important in enabling a deeper understanding of the trajectory of teachers towards leadership and support the understanding of the wider variety of routes and roles the AHT/DHTs take within leadership. There has previously been little research regarding women AHT/DHTs, working within primary schools (section 1.3). The interviews were conducted using passive techniques with an initial narrative inducing question, resulting in sequential, chronological accounts (section 3.4). This is supported by narrative researchers such as Elliott (2005) and Riessman (2008) who consider narratives go beyond a participant merely sharing their story, but the process uncovers the depth of meaning beyond the individual events.

This study's findings demonstrate professional self-doubt, hesitation, and anxiety. Yet, the data identifies these emotions were more constricting and impactful upon future aspirations of headship, with headship viewed as a precarious and unpopular career choice. These findings are in line with those of Oplatka and Tamir (2009), who highlighted similar issues despite their studies being undertaken in Israel. However, Oplatka and Tamir's (2009) study only interviewed leaders in secondary schools, who had been chosen specifically because they had expressed their intention not to become headteachers. Yet there appears to be implications for

the sustainability of the pathway to headship in both primary and secondary schools. It can thus be suggested that if leaders across both phases are viewing the role in such a negative light, the continued crisis in appointing headteachers is likely to remain.

It is interesting to note that the leader's agentic abilities to problem-solve or forward plan through maternity issues or professional difficulties with the headteacher, enabled a more strategic pathway towards headship. This finding is consistent with that of Chagger (2013) and Guihen's (2017) secondary school studies, which demonstrated a key driver was the opportunity to have autonomy and the control this could bring for headship of a secondary school. For their primary school counterparts this was also considered important in the consideration of headship. However, this study confirms earlier observations that the loss of autonomy within decision making is insufficient motivation to support their decision to move to headship. There remain complex reasons for the lack of aspiration to progress to headship, linked to a variety of factors including leadership (chapter 5), identity (chapter 6) and gendered careers (chapter 7) which will be discussed next.

The findings identified the leader's additional awards e.g., SENDCo Award or NPQH, giving them significant whole school responsibilities to work with other staff members through coaching, mentoring or supporting upcoming leaders. Having these significant responsibilities following from professional development, has provided opportunities to gain confidence, through self-reflection. In turn this has led to an adaption of professional identity, to what is considered the new professional persona. Challenges with professional and personal identities were highlighted, whilst making the switch between identities was problematic. Indeed, the leaders did not see themselves becoming a headteacher in their future career aspirations, despite being professionally qualified for the role. The NPQH was brought in to provide a pathway for AHT/DHTs to progress to headship (NCSL, 2003), but the findings regarding career aspirations

do not appear to support that trajectory (Fig. 7.2), which was an unforeseen finding. This contradicts the findings of Muijs and Harris (2003), but one possible explanation for this difference of opinion might be that their study from 2003 was undertaken when the NPQH pathway was in its infancy and greater aspiration might have been attached to the qualification.

The second key theme related to RQ 1, highlighted was gender bias and has links to RQ 4 (section 8.6), which focuses upon gender. The belief remains that men working within primary schools, are treated more favourably than women. This either results in a different career path for women, with reduced professional expectations placed upon them or men gaining promotion far quicker. Social constructionism considers discourses are inherently bound within the structures and practices which individuals experience daily, in society (Burr, 2013). Hence if men are viewed as having greater opportunities the dominant feminine voices, such as that seen within a largely feminine dominated profession, it continues to endorse power inequality. This key finding gives further evidence to support the empirical evidence of a gender bias from Spence and Buckner (2000), Ridgeway and Correll (2004), Lueptow et al. (2001) and Koenig and Eagly (2014). Their studies, whilst not always education based, maintain men are considered more competent and agentic and given greater status than women. This leads to the view that gender bias remains systemic within society, despite a greater focus upon equality and equity. This finding contrasts with the view of Prentice and Carranza (2002) which examined a framework to categorise gender stereotypes, within American society. Their study found few gender differences within a predominantly female workforce. It is of note however, Prentice and Carranza's (2002) study was undertaken in the context of Princeton University. They remark on males being more likely to demonstrate the traits of aggressiveness and forcefulness, however the findings within this current study gave little evidence to support this. This might suggest that although leadership has in the past been viewed through a male perspective, possibly in the climate today women's perspectives have changed. Alternatively,

it may be considered that their findings may not translate to a primary school working environment.

Early career influences created a transformational and ongoing effect on women's careers (section 4.3) and were highlighted as the third theme. Despite being new to the profession the data suggests poor role models of leadership inspired a passion to become a leader. Furthermore, the data highlights aspects of what represented positive or negative leadership skills. These aspects might be considered a process of challenging the participants into the leaders they are today, leading to increased confidence as they undertook their career journeys. Latu, Schmid Mast, Lammers & Bombari's (2013) suggest women who experience successful female role models can be negatively affected within their leadership aspirations and their self-perception. However, this study does not support their view but supports the psychology review findings of Hoyt and Simon (2011) and Rudman and Phelan's (2010) who state women can experience positive role models from either sex.

So, the AHT/DHTs individual and complex career journeys have been discussed but how do the findings identify how they become a leader?

8.3 Leadership – RQ 2

This section addresses the research question: How do women AHT/DHTs experience 'becoming' a leader?

The key findings presented within chapter 5 demonstrate becoming a leader is experienced in varying and diverse ways. Four subthemes are identified to discuss: professional relationships; experience of role models, both positive and negative; self-perception as school leaders and career aspirations. These four subthemes will be discussed in turn.

Firstly, professional relationships were identified as significant (section 5.2.1). None more so than that with the headteacher, but also with others. The main finding from this study is regarding the positive relationship's leaders experience, with the headteacher and the impact upon their subsequent leadership journeys. Where the narratives did not explicitly provide examples of positive relationship with the headteacher, it may not necessarily be taken as a negative view. Possibly, the AHT/DHTs might have experienced a negative relationship with a headteacher they would have disclosed this during the conscious stream of thought within their narrative. However, a social constructionist might view this from the various individual's subject positions, which will offer different rights and obligations upon given situations (Burr, 2015). Turning a negative relationship to a professional advantage seemed to enable more confidence with difficult conversations and challenging staff. Certainly, the role of leaders in building relationships, is considered, to be a complex one. Theoretical studies by Hogg (2001); van Knippenberg and Hogg (2003); Reicher et al. (2005); van Knippenberg et al. (2004); Haslam et al. (2011) note the importance of relationships within leadership and the shifting within these relationships. This research study concurs with the views of the studies mentioned above, as the findings describe a complex and shifting relationship, with the headteacher. Theories from Hogg (2001) suggest social identity theory supports leader identity through a sense of belonging and when this relationship is in jeopardy it can result in a move away from group agreement and the breakdown of the relationship, which seems to concur with this study.

Secondly, the findings highlight a significant impact from learning from role models. Muijs and Harris (2003) and Guihen (2017) noted the relationship of the DHT/AHT with the headteacher as an important element in encouraging and motivating women towards headship, including negative and positive influences. There was little to indicate a gender bias in this area, which was a surprising outcome of this study. This is in contrast with the findings of Coleman (2007) which demonstrated a gender barrier was present within leadership of

secondary schools. The secondary school educationalists (Muijs & Harris, 2003; Guihen, 2017; Coleman 2007) perceived leaders as being male and hence this hegemonic stereotyping created a barrier to aspirations of headship. Headteachers who were viewed as positive role models enabled staff to feel valued, led by example and were respected. When poor role models were experienced, it left a feeling of disempowerment, lacking in shared goals and resulted in a negative impact upon staff. Creating a shared sense of '*all on the bus'* and encouraging staff to share vision and goals, to bring about collective change was, seen as necessary (House, Javidan & Dorfman, 2001).

Yet what occurs when a headteacher and a DHT/AHT are not sharing a positive relationship, with shared vision and goals? The findings of this study suggest leaders would choose to leave their role, seeking employment within another school or leaving leadership entirely. This demonstrates the importance of positive role models and experiencing a shared goal. The findings of Latu, Schmid Mast, Lammers and Bombari's (2013) view that when women experience successful female role-models they can experience a loss in their leadership aspirations and how they perceive themselves. Whilst the American study was undertaken by listening to the speeches of significant male and female political leaders, their findings demonstrate exposure to successful women was likely to inspire other women. Hoyt and Simon (2011) and Rudman and Phelan's (2010) earlier research conflicts with Latu et al. (2013) study. The findings from this current study concur with Hoyt and Simon (2011) and Rudman and Phelan's (2010) study stating women can experience positive role models from either sex.

Chagger's (2013) leadership study, whilst focussing upon secondary school, highlighted similar barriers to leadership related to a lack of positive role models. Given Chagger's research was set within a secondary school context, where schools are in general much larger than their primary counterparts, it seemed less likely that positive role models would be an issue. Primary

schools, being smaller, suggests a great deal of interaction and opportunities to share leadership goals. Findings highlight early career influences of both positive and negative role models had a transformational and ongoing effect, throughout leader's career journey which Guihen (2017) acknowledged.

Thirdly, the self-perception of the AHT/DHTs as school leaders seemed clear in the findings. Leadership can be considered especially difficult during challenging times. Avolio and Gardner (2005) view a sense of self as a necessary conduit to support leaders to organise and give meaning to their own behaviours, affecting change. The findings of this current study mirror Avolio and Gardner's (2005) assertion. It was clear that shifting challenges whilst causing some upheavals are a necessary element of leadership, but a sense of self is identified. With the increased pressures of school inspections and the myriad of educational directives becoming core to the role of school leaders, having a sense of self supports leaders. The findings demonstrate an understanding of individual strengths and weaknesses, sharing a high regard for themselves as leaders and able to juggle multiple tasks. Weaknesses were viewed more harshly in comparison to strengths, which supports Guihen's (2017) findings. A significant finding was the belief of putting both their class-based responsibilities and their family responsibilities secondary to their leadership role.

As leadership is a socially influenced process, it requires leaders to have followers. The AHT/DHTs follow the headteacher, as well as being a leader to less senior, members of staff. The findings acknowledged some autonomy within leadership roles but demonstrate occasions when it is necessary to sacrifice autonomy, to concur with the views of a headteacher. This was a challenging process, particularly after an interim headteacher secondment. This adaptive behavioural response is not unexpected but is a significant part of the process of transition from one role to another. This study supports the findings from Ridgeway and Correll (2004),

Lueptow et al., (2001) and Koenig and Eagly's (2014), who consider males are viewed as more competent and agentic, with increased status in comparison to women. This study's findings suggest women consider they need to prove themselves far more than their male counterparts. This leads to demonstrating a more forceful manner, which as Prentice and Carranza (2002) state is viewed as a less desirable trait within women, which the findings show an awareness of. Certainly, the data demonstrated evidence of reflection and this enabled a sense of perception and perspective regarding themselves as a leader. Indeed, this was a significant factor in how they experienced becoming a leader. '*Becoming*' was chosen to reflect both the career trajectory pathway for the women, but also their growing realisation of their leadership qualities and skills. The findings demonstrate the role to be complex and demanding, but the data highlights a determination in being goal driven and decisive transformational leaders. The growing of leadership skills can be challenging with staff, who the leaders consider to be '*harder to manage*' and caused self-reflection. The findings indicate leaders are, able to change their leadership styles, to adapt to individual personalities for the good of the school. Eagly and Karau (2002) developed role congruity theory and they posit women who do not behave in a stereotypical gender pattern can be conceived as less likely to be leaders. Certainly, the findings suggest a need to avoid conflict, which some might consider to be stereotypically female in behaviour (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman et al., 2004) but might also be attributable to leadership training skills or personal skills previously gained. The findings additionally indicate a wish for a harmonious staff, yet it was difficult to get all staff on board and if not careful, there could be '*backlash*' (Eagly & Karau, 2002, p. 561).

Fourthly, the findings identify career aspirations, with thought given towards becoming a headteacher. The data shows motivation to leadership occurred through self-actualisation and supports the views of Cubillo and Brown's (2003) study. A key difference was seen in the findings lacking any reference to improving the future for working women. Traditionally the

role of DHT/AHT has been to provide a pathway to headship but this study, unexpectedly found, the likelihood of choosing to proceed to headship is minimal. While senior leaders have undertaken additional leadership courses, including NPQH training, the data suggests that in direct contrast to the expectations of Muijs and Harris (2003), the leadership training programme does not support senior leaders towards becoming headteachers. This key finding might be attributable to the need for greater autonomy over a work-life balance (chapter seven) after experiencing an interim headship, with an awareness of the wider responsibility and expectations of the complex role of headship. Like any new role, it takes time to establish and maintain a balance of work and home roles, but interim headship roles are often only for part of a school year, either a half term or up to two terms and some might argue that would not be sufficient time to acclimatise the role and begin to prioritise a wider life within the role. Alternatively, it might be proposed the issue of work life balance is not at issue, but rather the link to school leadership and the accountability that goes with the role. Having autonomy through independence and self-direction can be considered an important element of leadership, but the data indicates a need to sacrifice this autonomy and to accept the headteacher has ultimate leadership authority for direction and influence within the school. This agrees with the findings of Chagger, (2013) and Guihen (2017). Chagger (2013) identified secondary school DHTs felt they lacked the necessary power to enable change and that they wanted sole accountability. Guihen's (2017) study recognised the secondary leaders felt a sense of restriction. Both these issues are linked to accountability, which this current study recognises.

New challenges are considered necessary, but the data demonstrates a preference for leaders to remain within a current school due to the opportunity to undertake a new whole school initiative or experience specific training. Findings note little personal gain to leave a school with known staff, the system, and processes. Interestingly, when the post for headteacher or DHT became available in the current school the reality of an outside applicant applying for a role they

coveted, was clear. This process led to clarification of a leadership identity and a shaping of leadership aspirations. Yet, having a young family and leading a school was a concern, with work-life balance an issue. The data identified the experience of headteachers leaving, either due to promotion, retirement or demands upon their workload and family had caused pressure. This led to reflections regarding the same pressure and difficult choices and resulted in an oscillation between current role and the previously aspirational goal of becoming a headteacher. Undertaking additional family responsibilities alongside a career, which Gregory and Milner (2009) identify can lead to work-life balance issues, exhaustion, and stress. The element of schools being a greedy institution (Coser, 1974) supports Sullivan's (2014) argument in that leaders are expected to answer emails and constantly be connected. This was particularly evident in the findings related to the perception of part-time school leaders, with the belief for a need to carry over uncompleted tasks to through unpaid days or further promotion was unlikely. This is in direct comparison to Thomson's (2009) earlier findings which viewed part-time leaders as having greater flexibility and hence ability to manage their tasks during their working days.

Career aspirations was identified as an important element within this study. A surprising finding was how often a new post with significant responsibilities was gained, due to the previous incumbent in their school leaving or a new head arriving and making changes within the teaching staff. This is significant, suggesting the importance of headteachers and governors ensuring senior leaders have appropriate career training and support. For, without this, schools might inadvertently promote to a headteacher role, without the person having relevant knowledge and experience, which may lead to a school experiencing significant difficulties.

Of concern to the profession and researchers, might be this study's findings related to the significant number of senior leaders who were undecided whether to proceed to a headship. If

senior leaders are unsure whether to become headteachers, in the future, it has wider implications for the profession. There are four options available to senior leaders: continue within DHT/AHT role; step down from leadership; apply for headship or leave the profession. The data suggests remaining as a senior leader is most likely, and possibly causing long-term damage to the profession. Remaining as a long-term senior leader can inadvertently block others continuing with their own aspirational career journey (Chagger, 2013). It was also the original reason for the undertaking of this study, following a chance remark within a senior leadership conference (section 1.2). Applying for headship following a period as a member of the SLT has previously been the suggested route to headship, but the data suggests this has less appeal. Finally, leaving the profession entirely might cause a vacuum within the profession and hence leave others aspirant leaders feeling hesitant about taking up such a complex and demanding role.

Collinson (2003) views the construction of identity partly as self-confirmation which is gained from family status, gender, and religion. Identity then moves towards self-validation through career and the material successes that might bring. This, Collinson (2003) posits creates a juxtaposition between greater freedoms and choice, but the additional difficulties associated with greater insecurity, uncertainty, and vulnerability. Hence, the leader's identity lingers between identities during periods of professional and personal considerations (Ibarra, 2003), which this study highlights.

As discussed within Chapter 2 (section 2.3) it has historically, proved difficult for women to gain leadership positions and move towards headship. Moreover, the role of senior leader is a precarious position, with the responsibility and accountability yet without the power and legitimacy. This leads to the question of how, as leaders, women, wives, mothers, and partners women identify with their professional and family roles?

8.4 Identity – RQ 3

This section addresses the research question: How do women who are primary school AHT/DHTs identify with their professional and family roles?

The key findings presented within chapter 6 demonstrate the convergence of the professional and family roles as complex and that working identity for the AHT/DHTs has been shaped by a variety of external and internal forces. There are four subthemes identified within the findings, to discuss: multiple selves, linked to professional and family roles; a fragmented self; identity regulation and identity anxiety. These subthemes will be discussed in turn.

Firstly, this study's findings demonstrate leader's multiple selves. Being senior leaders was only one element of individual identities, but also teachers, partners, mothers, and friends. Changes within a working identity occur over time. The data identifies an element of conflicting identity between wanting to undertake the responsibilities being a leader, but also wanting to be a good partner, mother, and colleague. In addition, the findings identify an element of being torn between whole school responsibilities or looking backwards towards being a class teacher. This oscillation might be described as putting on a show or performance within the roles, vacillating between front stage and back-stage (Chagger, 2013). The data identifies a resulting conflict and the belief of being unable to undertake roles as effectively as they might. This finding agrees with the secondary school research conducted by Guihen (2017). This conflicting oscillation is demonstrated in the identified imposter syndrome, creating doubt regarding taking up a headship and deep reflection upon what aspects of professional and home life might need to be altered to enable progression. The unconscious imitation of a professional persona was also evident as leaders experiment with these identities (Ibarrra, 2003). Mischenko et al. (2017) and Lord and Hall (2005) consider the leadership experience is an important process within an individual's identity. This supports Ibarra's

(2003) theory that our identities change over time and the women demonstrated multiple selves as they transitioned within their work identities from NQT to senior leaders.

Exploring the possible pathways within leadership careers demonstrates identifiable characteristics, according to Ibarra (2003). It is this learning process which can lead individuals towards answering questions or beliefs regarding making a change. For the school leaders it leads to a sense of their '*possible selves'* (Ibarra, 2003, p.54). This might be through the eyes of a fellow professional or family member, leading towards new prospects or a realisation of outdated identities. However, an unexpected finding was how professional identity seemed fragile and dependent upon the headteacher. Ibarra's (2003) belief is that this transition can take significantly longer than might be expected because whilst individuals have an ideal of what they might become, they must inherently distance themselves from previous ideals, demonstrating a lingering between identities.

Secondly, the findings suggest a fragmented self, due to a loss in teacher identity and an incomplete congruence with their leader identity. The role of a senior leader is seen as demanding and at times inconsistent, moving through a myriad of thoughts and ideas. As the process of sifting and sorting of these thoughts take place, the consideration of the prospect of headship becomes more real. The data highlighted a period of reflection and discussion with from both a personal and professional level, supporting the views of Alvesson et al. (2008). Professional doubts appeared common according to the findings and this insecurity supports the views of Collinson, (2003). The findings suggest supporters often took over a coaching role, giving reminders of how far the leadership journey had taken them or offering reminders of the original goal of becoming a headteacher. This agency provides evidence to sustain the views of Wilson and Deaney (2010) and data demonstrates the control leaders have over their lives and what they decide to choose to do as professionals, with a feedback loop resulting in

an adjustment within behaviours and decisions (Billet, 2008 and Wilson & Deaney, 2010). This study supports the views Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) and Collinson (2003), whose findings state most senior leaders do not choose to go on to headship, which is an unexpected finding in this current study. Ibarra's theory of social identity can be identified by the oscillation experienced, both in the long term, but also the changing of views during the narrative process as an altering of reflective self-identity (Ibarra, 2003). This self-confirmation of identity is likely to be linked to leadership achievements and has hence led to the uncertainty of future roles and insecurity. Collinson (2003) identifies this as likely to impact individuals in seeking to remain in their familiar environment, rather than making what might be a more precarious choice in applying for headship and involve taking more responsibility in their decisions. This supports Ibarra's (2003) theory of a lingering between identities and subsequent oscillation, regarding choices. Even once a decision is made not to progress to headship, the findings demonstrate self-anxiety and indecision remain. Choosing to move to headship leads to the beginning stages of a disconnection from the current school with some sense of loss, whilst looking forward to new possibilities (Ibarra, 2003). The fragmented identity experienced by mothers was perceived as shaping career identities, both positively and negatively. Nyberg and Sveningsson (2014) whose business leader study, linking to leader construction and how they make sense of their leadership role, found leaders identified that a belief in their true and natural selves shaped their leadership. Yet, this current study demonstrated the leaders felt pulled between being a mother and a school leader. The juxtaposition between the two identities caused reflection regarding the professional journey and the effect upon the prioritising of family life. An unexpected finding of the study suggests professional memories shared appear to be deep seated and not only adversely affected the individuals, but their own children. This has led to the next generation who have decided not to pursue a career in teaching because of the difficulties associated from viewing negative

mother experiences with undertaking school roles and the perceived incompatibility with family life.

Thirdly, identity regulation was highlighted within the data, which was not unexpected. The elements of transition towards headship and the feelings that invoked, support the findings of Alvesson and Wilmott (2002), identifying the leaders beginning to define themselves as potential headteachers. However, the findings show the route to leadership was considered difficult and the toll felt upon personal identity and the negative affect upon the family, was prevalent. Self-doubt regarding undertaking a senior leadership role was evident, with elements of imposter syndrome being revealed. This supports the views of Jetten et al. (2002) and Alvesson (2010) who suggest it can lead to an element of non-identification within a group, in this case a school or leadership team. This in turn might lead to a feeling of being ungrounded (Ibarra, 2003) and that they might no longer, feel as though they fit within the group. The data suggests identity changed according to the situation the leaders found themselves within, whilst also having doubt over the ability to undertake the role. Ibarra (2003) considers this an act of imitation and this study would concur with this view, with difficulties assimilating their multiple selves leading to a clear segregation of identity; both as a leader and as a family member.

Organisational control is accomplished partly through identity regulation. Ibarra (2003) identified the process of progressing within the teaching profession towards a headship role involves identity being in transition. This process brings with it, greater responsibility, accountability, and expectations. The findings identify that the leaders consider themselves to be '*acting a part'* (Ibarra, 2003, p. 7*)*, choosing to demonstrate to others the ability to undertake the role. This acting was built upon the predication of headteacher role models from within the career journey. When it was believed the act to be positive it motivated and provided

reassurance to continue their trajectory towards headship, but if the rippling effect of the transitioning identity was compromised or challenged, a loss of confidence was felt. This was particularly pertinent when undertaking an interim acting headship, which either clarified views regarding ability to lead a school or resulted in deciding to continue in the present role. The process of being an interim acting headteacher, did not lead to the senior leaders moving on to their own headships. This might be because the process of acting their part out proved too great to continue to project or the transition was compromised due to negative self-belief and insecurities. Ibarra (2003) suggests that whilst people in general think they are able to move from their initial idea for change, in this case thinking of moving to headship, the single decision for taking up the change, applying for headship roles, requires an element of testing responses to the possibility before moving towards the actual defined role. The time this takes allows for a review of the alternatives and an opportunity to test possible role identities and beliefs.

The data disclosed the impact being a mother and a senior leader demonstrated a fragmentation within career identity. This was particularly significant for leaders who had taken maternity leave and then returned to a leadership role. What appeared to support identity was when others within the school aligned their identities with the DHT/AHT, for example empathising with the difficulties of childcare or being flexible with meeting after school. However, the data identified that this did not support the working mothers from feeling guilty, when being unable to give what they considered adequate time and focus to their own children, due to their working hours or expectations. For the leaders, with older or grown-up children, the findings identified they were still negatively affected by the self-perception of being a poor role model. This, shaped aspects of identity, causing them to place family life secondary to a professional life. Yet positive aspects of being a working mother were identified, including being able to multi-task more effectively, prioritise and work to a deadline.

Fourthly, identity anxiety, including confidence and self-doubt were evident within the study, which was unexpected. Newer teachers to the profession were considered more knowledgeable about classroom practice than the senior leaders and this caused disquiet. Despite being highly qualified, anxieties remained with the common perception of not having enough knowledge to lead a school, even in cases where an interim headteacher role had been undertaken. The act of portrayal of being knowledgeable and decisive around staff was also reflected within the data, ranging from believing they should always project a confident manner, even if they did not feel it. It was a common feature in the data for the leaders to believe other headteachers might perceive a lack of knowledge and hence negatively judging them. This unexpected finding of the rippling effect of identity, led to a belief of being unable to be a headteacher, despite being well qualified for the role. Hence, the leaders view themselves in a less than positive light, including both professional and personal attributes.

Alongside professional identities the data demonstrates family identities linked to being both a partner, mother, friend etc. Feeling conflicted within identities was noted and the strategies adopted include adapting with multiple-selves, dependent upon the role situation. Jones (2016) has previously acknowledged these challenges with a study of female primary school headteachers. The worry for leaders with young children was expressed, even once the children had grown up. The data suggests this fragmented and conflicting sense of self, lasts longer than might originally be thought and could be viewed as an important finding to support the research of Nyberg and Sveningsson (2014).

8.5 Gendered careers – RQ 4

This initial section addresses the research question: How do women leaders perceive their career ambitions have been shaped by their gender?

The key findings presented within chapter 7 demonstrate the belief that males and females are treated differently within school and being a career woman has personal and professional ramifications. There are four subthemes identified within the findings, to discuss: male v females; career women; family v professional and gender bias. These subthemes will be discussed in turn.

Gender as a construct requires living within a daily life and Bradley (2007) identifies that it is not specific to a specific aspect or activity but is bound up with the power relations between men and women. As such it affects relationships, actions and language, regardless of what sex you identify as. For Bradley (2007), the term gender, from a social constructionist perspective, is the complex relationship between men and women and how this affects the individual, the institution, and wider relationships. As mentioned earlier (section 2.3) the historical role of teachers involved women and today the primary teaching profession remains dominated by women. However, considering the lower percentage of men enter teaching, a disproportionate percentage achieve leadership positions. Teaching remains a gendered career (Blackman and Jarman, 2006), particularly within primary schools.

Gendered careers are at times considered at odds with stereotypical sex categorising behaviours (Ridgeway, 1997 & 2011). For leaders within primary school's feminine stereotypes prevail, with women who display attributes viewed as less feminine being considered less competent and agentic than males (section 2.3) and hence seen as less effective as leaders (Spence & Buckner, 2000; Prentice & Carranza, 2002; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004; Lueptow, Garovich-Szabo Lueptow, 2000 and Koenig & Eagly, 2014).

Maniero and Sullivan (2005) undertook a study, of women executives, and highlighted the decline within the number of women aspiring to leadership roles, due to family and work commitments. The findings from this current study identifies some cause for disagreement

with some aspects of their findings. Maniero and Sullivan's (2005) study suggests women leave the management world entirely for a different career, whilst in this current study the leaders appear more likely to remain within their current role, rather than leave their leadership positions. This might be considered good news for the teaching profession but could have unintended consequences, inadvertently blocking new or aspirant leaders from coming through the leadership pathway. This consequence is also supported by the findings of Chagger's (2013) study, despite being undertaken within a secondary school. If this trait identified within secondary and primary schools continues in the future, there is likely to be significant implications for appointing headteachers (Rhodes et al, 2009; Howson, 2011). Certainly, trends have highlighted increasingly the re-advertising of headship posts (Howson, 2011) and headship appears to be viewed as less aspirational (Chagger, 2013; Denholm, 2017 & Oplatka and Tamir, 2009) than it was previously. There are a number, of possible reasons for this.

Firstly, the consideration of male and female traits was identified within the data. The present findings suggest the view that men are more likely to attain headship or other senior leadership positions due to specific male traits. Individual's unconsciously hold beliefs regarding male and female traits. Within leadership roles when either sex seek to assert their influence and authority, it can be perceived by others to be aggressive or dominant. Spence and Buckner (2000), Ridgeway and Correll (2004), Lueptow et al. (2001) and Koenig and Eagly (2014) identify males are often given greater status than women, due to their perceived social dominance. This study identifies the traits of being forceful and aggressive as male traits. Traditionally, Prentice and Carranza (2002) argue that when women display these traits, they are considered a negative trait. Yet for a male they can be perceived as using their authority to be competent and effective leaders, which Ridgeway and Correll (2004) and Ridgeway (2011) identifies as continuing to maintain gender status stereotypes, with forceful women being viewed as displaying less, desirable traits. Indeed, Ridgeway (2011) identifies that social

interactions with others, leads to individuals categorising others by sex. This process then causes changes within their interactions based upon that person's gender and might lead to gender stereotyping. Social constructionism considers social structures and daily practices are enshrined within the fabric of the laws of the country, forming daily lived experiences. This in turn enables individuals to view the world from certain perspectives but Burr (2015) posits differing discourses in themselves create debate. This debate hence challenges the original views and leads to a change within perceptions and ideas. Reality can take many forms and is constantly shifting and is tethered within history and culture perceptions. Indeed, the perception of a swifter career trajectory for men, towards headship was identified. Yet, the findings illustrate only anecdotal evidence to support the view that those appointing headteachers are biased towards males and these views were from secondary sources and therefore may be perceived as less reliable. Hence it might be considered that gender difference is enacted and experienced in nuanced ways, leaving some resentment which appears to be held for a significant period, of time. Certainly, Thornton and Bricheno (2006) identified inequalities due to stereotypical patterns of masculinity. As there are fewer males working within primary schools it might be pertinent to suggest the actions of men, especially if perceived by women to be negative, are remembered and provided as a continual conversational bias. These perceptions are shared within the female dominated staffroom and perpetuated, until a larger number of women believe it and further perpetuate the bias.

The findings highlighted the perception that males are more able to undertake difficult conversations in comparison to women. Yet, this was in direct contrast with the women's views which found having these conversations enabled them to become more skilled. These opposing findings support Butler (1999 & 2004) who considered that the operating framework, in this case school leadership, is responsible for supporting and hence enabling staff to undertake difficult conversations. In addition, she considers males are less likely than their female

counterparts to be concerned regarding staff harmony and so this might prove an interesting point for further study. Indeed, the findings identify males are more likely to be promoted than women, due to presentation of authority. This authority was noted within the data as an aspirational behaviour, with the trait of forcefulness identified as a masculine trait, which was adopted to be viewed as more successful. Hence the data demonstrates the leaders compare themselves to males.

Gender is enacted in very nuanced ways. The data highlights the view that males are likely to get promoted quicker than women. These stereotypical patterns are supported by Thornton and Bricheno (2000) who noted a larger proportion of males achieve headship or deputy headship in comparison to women. They also noted they were more likely to be given traditionally higher status subjects to lead e.g., science or mathematics which were mentioned by one of the women in this study. Leading these subjects is often considered a pre-cursor to a more predominant leadership role. Thornton and Bricheno's (2000) research highlighted women's perceived gender bias and the disproportionate number of males reaching senior leadership positions, including headship, in comparison to their female counterparts.

Secondly, the data suggests being a career woman brings with it some challenges, related to gender, which is not unexpected. Men and women are more likely to form networks within their own gender according to Ibarrra (1993) and Perriton (2006). These networks are generally multi-faceted and provide friendship, support, and an advice-giving capability. However, the findings of the current study do not fully support this previous research. One element of the current study which did produce similar findings linked to Perriton's (2006) view, suggested whilst some women might feel they are excluded from male networks it might be because the women themselves might not allow time for acceptance within the group to develop and therefore inadvertently exclude themselves. A social constructionist view might consider the

bias experienced is one which is created by the women themselves, by their actions and exchanges, albeit unintended.

As highlighted within section 2.3, there are a greater number of women taking up employment today (71%) than in the past, and as a result, the expectation of women holding down employment is viewed differently from that of previous generations. Women who reach senior positions, which in the past have traditionally gone to men, can according to Bowles (2012), influence gendered career aspirations for other women. The findings in this study indicate it the perception that it remains an advantage to be a man, when seeking headship. However, when exploring the narrative data and the language used, Wiggins (2017) would suggest, a distancing by the AHT/DHTs from the views. Some consideration was given regarding the pro-male biased actions, they observed and identified it was due to other women reserving their caring and motherly role for males, but not females. In addition, evidence of negative gender stereotypes was noted. Support staff were also perceived by the AHT/DHTs as being more likely to undertake a mothering role when working for male teachers, but this behaviour was not extended to female teachers. The data identified men as being considered less competent than women. This, finding supports those of Spence and Buckner (2000), Ridgeway and Correll (2004), Lueptow et al. (2001) and Koenig and Eagly (2014). Spence and Buckner's (2000) study whilst undertaken with college students, in the USA, acknowledged gender stereotyping. Certainly, Prentice and Carranza (2002) argue the masculine traits of aggressiveness and forcefulness are viewed as less desirable within women and hence can result in bias. Yet, Butler's (2011) notion of a '*ritualised production'* of repetitive performativity supports this study's findings regarding women expecting men to be less capable and hence treating them in that way, which in turn may create a self-fulfilling prophecy. Thornton and Bricheno's (2000) research noted males were more likely to be responsible for core subjects and this study's findings agree.

Thirdly, family versus the women's professional roles was expected to be identified within the findings. The negative impact of a school leadership role upon family life was highlighted within the data. When considering taking up leadership roles the leaders discussed the impact of the role with their families. Yet long working hours and the inflexibility of having time off for family issues, were identified. It was of note within the findings that headteachers who allowed greater flexibility and understanding for staff regarding workload, related to headteachers of both sexes with their own young families. The data highlighted work-life balance as a barrier to undertaking a headship role in the foreseeable future, with an unwillingness to place career before family. This was specifically pertinent in the data when requiring full-time hours and this finding agrees with the secondary leadership research from Guihen (2017). The findings demonstrate women remain the main caregiver, with an acceptance that the role requires an element of juggling professional and family roles but the data found it would be difficult for any school leader, regardless of their gender, to juggle their work and child commitments. Hence that might be a greater influence as to why a growing number of teachers and senior leaders wish to work part-time and job-share. This point links back to the possibility of Co-Heads (section 7.2.2) being a successful model to enable leaders to remain in the profession, achieving their goal of being a head, whilst still being a partner or mother. This unexpected finding highlights the opportunity to share a headship might both encourage and enable women into headship, stemming the decline of aspirant heads leaving the profession. This might prove a significant trend for career women, particularly within primary education and could prove an interesting topic for further research.

Fourthly, gender bias was highlighted by the data, with the perception that men are treated in a more favourable manner and hence promoted more expediently. The data presented the view that men experience positive bias in several ways. The participant's views consider men more be likely to be promoted over female counterparts, men are willing to negotiate their role and

pay during the interview process and display greater confidence, regardless of their ability. This supports the definition of gender described by Kaplan (2000) and links to power (section 2.2). The findings consider females exhibit deferential behavior when a male is in a group, due to confidence and this trait enables them to progress through the teaching profession more quickly than their female counterparts. This study has not sought to examine whether men experience positive bias. The women's perceptions or interpretation of male confidence was noted within the data as related to negotiation of pay, applying for a post they were less qualified for and choosing not to complete a task, if it was felt it was less high profile. This links to Butler's (1999) view of gender as a performative social construct (section 2.2.) despite changes within gender over the last decade or so. The findings support Butler's (1999) view of the traditional operating framework remaining unchanged within primary schools and supporting traditional social norms. Hence the perception of female deference to males remains. From a social constructionist perspective, this might be viewed from the structures and practices which are enacted within society and have not sought to change the traditionally held beliefs regarding males as more commanding, authoritative and powerful. This leads to Burr (2015) suggesting female discourses surrounding what is considered feminine traits, continues to perpetuate the inequality associated with power. Hence, the findings highlight that perceived gender barriers remain and these influence and shape school leader's careers.

The theory of social constructionism is based upon the premise that ultimate truth is absent (Burr, 2015). Hence the construction of realities within different contexts leads to the path of being unable to know completely, where the ultimate truth lies. Relativism dictates differing constructions of views can only be compared within the relationship of each other and not with a view or perception of truth.

Views or ideas which individuals take for granted can, from a social constructionism perspective, be found to be preserved by individuals through societal group or cultural membership. This study took place within the group context of a primary school. Each of the women held beliefs which they considered to be the truth and at times the views appeared to be anecdotal, yet the women held the views as the truth.

This study demonstrates the AHT/DHTs careers do not follow a linear path. A constructionist view of this being each career narrative is placed within a broader context. Hence the AHT/DHTs individual account sits within a system, within a culture, society, a specific time, and place. Shaped by the careers and beliefs of others, both professional and personal. An individual's career is always evolving and organically shaped and a relational process, according to relational actions.

Chapter 9 will provide a conclusion following on from this discussion chapter. In addition, the contribution to original knowledge is presented, implications for leadership retention and development and recommendations for future research are given.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

9.1 Introduction and summary

This study is framed by the original research question: Why are female AHT/DHTs not choosing to apply for headteacher posts?

Following the introduction this concluding chapter is divided into four main sections. The first, section 9.2 summarises the purpose of the research and methodology and the wider outcomes in relation to each of the research questions. The original contribution to knowledge regarding a neglected area of educational leadership, the studies limitations, implications and recommendations for policy and practice is discussed in section 9.3. Section 9.4 identifies recommendations for future research, researcher positionality, implications for participants, and research reflections and outcomes. Lastly section 9.5 summarises the study.

The original research question arose from the problem identified during a presentation within a DHT conference (section 1.3): Why are female AHT/DHTs not choosing to apply for headteacher posts? This study sought to gain a deep and rich understanding of female primary school AHT/DHTs. The methodology involved individual interview's with 10 female AHT/DHTs and followed the BNIM approach. The objective was to advance understanding, of the noteworthy proportion, regarding women who go into DHT/AHT roles and their progression to headship. This research study was encompassed by a conceptual framework surrounding leadership, identity and gendered careers.

Four questions arose from the literature review (Chapter 2):

- RQ 1 - How do women DHTs and AHT's describe and make sense of their career journeys?
- RQ 2 - How do women AHT/DHTs experience 'becoming' a leader?
- RQ 3 - How do women DHTs and AHT's identify with their professional and family roles?
- RQ 4 - How do women leaders perceive their career ambitions have been shaped by their gender?

Addressing these questions with the specific aim of understanding the career journeys of AHT/DHTs was an underpinning of an interpretive paradigm, within a social constructionism epistemology. The process of undertaking individual interviews resulted in detailed reflexive career journeys, for each of the ten women (chapter 4).

9.2.1 How do women AHT/DHTs describe and make sense of their career journeys? (RQ 1)

Each of the 10 women from this study provided a unique perspective to their professional career narrative during the BNIM approach. Following a constructionist approach the women's narratives are viewed through their own lens and indicate how personal and professional environments have shaped their experiences. The women's narratives confirmed their career journeys as complex and multifaceted.

Professional leadership qualifications brought in to support the career trajectories of AHT/DHTs such as the NPQH has failed in its premise to provide a pathway to headship, as neither of the women are currently aiming for headship. For Sally it is the challenges which keep presenting themselves at her current school, which keep her tied to it and for Julie it is the issue of sole accountability which is causing her to re-think her career progression.

Oplatka and Tamir (2009) described headship as a precarious and unpopular career choice and this study identifies little to disagree with their statement, with only Carly and Marla considering progressing to headship. As a gendered occupation primary school teaching is predominantly composed of women (Blackman & Jarman, 2006) and their narratives reflected their belief of their careers being negatively affected by gender and their perception that males are often promoted ahead of them. During the last 20 years empirical evidence supports their beliefs (Spence & Buckner, 2000; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004, Lueptow et al., 2001 and Koenig & Eagly, 2014). This is despite regulatory and policy changes which have swept across the globe to ensure equality regardless of gender.

The interviews highlighted the pivotal role headteachers provide in supporting and enabling progression opportunities for AHT/DHTs. When this relationship is positive it becomes a conduit to supporting development and professional growth of the DHT/AHT towards their goal of becoming a headteacher, through training and professionall encouraging the headship goal. Where the relationship is more precarious the journey to leadership is likely to stall the AHT/DHTs to commit to their own headship and the women shared little evidence of the headteacher providing career guidance to their AHT/DHTs.

Despite significant progress within recruitment and working practices the women remain committed to the view that males are treated more favourably than females. The resentment the women shared was linked to males being considered more competent and agentic and supports the view of a systemic bias within primary education.

9.2.2 How do women AHT/DHTs experience 'becoming' a leader (RQ 2)

Primary school AHT/DHTs experience becoming a leader in varying and diverse ways. The paucity of studies within primary education (section 2.3) offers the opportunity to gain a new perspective and understanding regarding school leadership.

Wider empirical research from Cubillo and Brown, 2003; Cranston et al., 2004 and Oplatka and Tamir, 2009 acknowledged difficulties for leaders in school. More recently Chagger (2013), Guihen (2017) and Bruce-Golding (2019) have shone the spotlight on educational leadership, however their studies were within secondary education. Similarities are noted within this current study related to the influences of role models (Chagger, 2013; Guihen, 2017 and Bruce-Golding, 2019). When the role model was strong it was likely to have a transformational and ongoing effect throughout the women's careers.

The significance of building professional relationships, particularly with the headteacher, was noted within the career journeys and was complex and concurs with theoretical studies from Hogg (2001); van Knippenberg and Hogg (2003); Reicher et al. (2005); van Knippenberg et al. (2004) and Haslam et al. (2011). Throughout the women's narratives a sense of belonging was shared and when this shared belonging was disrupted, either through a new headteacher or breakdown in relationships with other key staff, it was likely the DHT/AHT would leave the school.

The leader's self-perception acknowledged the difficulties with leading during challenging times and support earlier studies form Avolio and Gardner (2005) and supports Guihen's (2017) findings in which leaders view any weaknesses with greater harshness, in comparison to their strengths. Despite however much time they gave to their role the women considered they should be undertaking more. The women spoke candidly about their families and the negative impact their leadership role had upon their own family circumstances.

Role models were identified as providing significant encouragement and motivation, particularly headteachers. This supports the findings of Muijs and Harris (2003) and Guihen (2017), but even when the role model was identified as a negative influence it continued to

inspire the AHT/DHTs to become strong future leaders (House et al., 2001), with only 1 woman choosing to step down from leadership.

As identified within the findings AHT/DHTs are considered the future headteachers of education, but the women's journey to 'becoming' a leader has not supported that aspiration and only 2 of the women intend to move to headship. Career aspirations to be headteachers were identified within their narratives, but their aspirations have changed as the pressures of the role and their family circumstances change. A key finding of this study is the realisation that the leadership programme of NPQH is not supportive in gaining headships and contrasts with earlier views from Muijs and Harris (2003), with work life balance being a key component. 9 of the women had children and they spoke candidly of the difficulties associated with having a family and being a school leader.

9.2.3 How do women AHT/DHTs identify with their professional and family roles (RQ3)

The findings identified a complex convergence of the professional and family roles, with their working identity shaped by a variety of external and internal forces. The women shared multiple selves within their narratives, including being partners and mothers, which caused a feeling of being torn between their identities and an oscillation, which agrees with Chagger (2013) and Guihen (2017), who noted self-doubt in evidence in their secondary school leaders. Through the process of becoming a leader the women experiment with differing persona's supporting Mischenko et al. (2017) and Lord and Hall (2005) and Ibarra (2003) beliefs that individuals identities change over time. This includes ceasing outdated identities as the AHT/DHTs make sense of their evolving possible selves. The fragility of the women's identity within their differing roles was an unexpected finding but supports Ibarra's views regarding the difficulties of lingering between identities as change occurs over time.

The women experienced a fragmented self as they balanced their teacher identity and leader identity and professional self-doubt was evident, supporting the views of Collinson (2003) and Alvesson et al. (2008). This oscillation appears to be a contributory factor in choosing to stay as AHT/DHTs rather than commit to headship, which was unexpected finding and demonstrates a lingering between identities (Ibarra, 2003). Even then anxiety and indecision remain as the women consider new possibilities. For the women with children their fragmented identities shaped their career identities, with positive and negative influences, but the women felt a pull between their family roles and their professional roles. This juxtaposition between the two identities led to a great deal of reflection within the women's own narratives.

Identity regulation identified the route towards headship being considered difficult. Self-doubt continued to be evident, and acts of imitation (Ibarra, 2003) were invoked, to support the women to assimilate their multiple selves and identify as both a leader and a family member as their identity remains in transition. It was a common theme for the women to feel they were acting the part of being a leader, using previous positive and negative role models as guides. But if their transitioning identity was compromised or challenged this led to a loss in confidence and further insecurities, until the AHT/DHTs felt able to review their choices and set out to test their role identities once more. The impact upon their professional and family roles of being leaders is indicative of a fragmentation within their identities, with a feeling of guilt being commonplace as family life was usually placed secondary to their professional life.

Identity anxiety was an unexpected finding within the study, with the AHT/DHTs perceiving other teachers and headteachers knew more than them and that they were being judged negatively for this oversight. Within their personal life a confliction in identities was evident with the adoption of multiple-selves (Jones, 2016) and appears to last beyond their children growing up and is an important finding to support the work of Nyberg and Sveningsson (2014).

9.2.4 How do women leaders perceive their career ambitions have been shaped by their gender (RQ4)

This study identifies AHT/DHTs perceive their careers have been shaped by their gender, particularly the perceived bias they experience in comparison to males. Gender is enacted within daily life (Bradley, 2007) and affects relationships, actions, and language for both sexes. Teaching remains a gendered career (Blackman & Jarman, 2006) and evidence of traditional feminine stereotypes remain, with males being considered more competent and agentic and hence more effective leaders (Spence & Buckner, 2000; Prentice & Carranza, 2002; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004; Lueptow et al., 2000 and Koenig & Eagly, 2014). Whilst other studies (Maniero & Sullivan, 2005) identified managers within other professions might leave their roles due to difficulties balancing their family and work commitments, this does not appear significantly within the current study. Chagger (2013) noted a similar finding within secondary school leaders but raised the issue of the AHT/DHTs inadvertently blocking aspiring leaders from the opportunity for career progression, if the women remained in their current role. Whilst this study did not explicitly seek to explore this area, it might be suggested that if primary school AHT/DHTs continue to move away from headship roles, they too will inadvertently block the career progression of others. This finding might benefit from further studies in England.

The women's views suggest they perceive males as more likely to attain headship or senior leadership positions than females. The women viewed unconscious bias regarding specific gender traits as continuing to enforce gender stereotypes (Spence & Buckner, 2000; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004; Lueptow et al.,2001 and Koenig &Eagly, 2014). The data indicated a belief that the structures and practices enacted within a school environment are more supportive of male behaviour traits. These traits were perceived as being necessary for leadership, but when these traits are demonstrated within women's behaviours they can be viewed as less desirable

Ridgeway and Correll (2004) and Ridgeway (2011). Males were viewed as more confident, more likely to challenge decisions rather than accept the status quo, supporting Butler's (1999) views of gender as a performative social construct.

The data demonstrated work-life balance was perceived as a barrier to undertaking a headship. As the main care giver, the women shared their belief that their family life would inevitably be negatively impacted by their professional role. This had therefore caused them to reflect upon their career decision to become a headteacher and led to a decision to remain as AHT/DHTs. One implication of this finding is that the rise in the number of women within education who are choosing to work part-time or wish to become co-heads (section 7.2.2.) may continue. The women wish to be positive role models for other women coming into the profession, indicating it is possible to be a partner and mother, through reduced hours but not commitment to the role.

9. 3 Original contribution to knowledge

This thesis claims to make methodological, theoretical and empirological contributions to the existing understanding of primary school leadership in England:

I. Wengraf's (2001) BNIM approach is, to the researcher's knowledge, one of the first attempts to explore individual narratives from 10 AHT/DHTs, working within primary education in England. The resulting individual career journey narratives elicit deep and rich data regarding leadership, identity and gendered careers. The narratives they share seek to address a significant gap within the understanding of female school leaders. Wengraf's BNIM approach ensures the narratives given are uncontrived from the researcher's perspective and seek to give a fresh approach to females leading within primary schools.

II. It is believed, by the researcher, to be one of the first attempts to explore how AHT/DHTs construct their identities and makes an original contribution to knowledge. It brings a new understanding regarding the fragmented sense of self the AHT/DHTs experience and demonstrates a lingering between identities. This seems to indicate a fragmented sense of self has resulted in a lack of AHT/DHTs moving forward to headship, which contributes to new knowledge in this specific area and provides opportunities for further studies to be undertaken to support the retention of future female leaders.

III. This study has built upon the existing understanding of how AHT/DHTs experience becoming a leader. Given the numbers of female leaders leaving the profession it is an important element of leadership, if future training builds and develop this new knowledge. The perceived lack of positive leadership role models, the issues of balancing work life alongside a leadership role remain a significant barrier within primary school leadership. Empirical contributions from the women suggests a stagnant and disillusioned profession. The NPQH programme was set up to address the issues of leadership, but for the women in this study it does not support their journey to leadership. The new knowledge gained will support leadership programmes, identify elements which might support changes in policy and practice and shine a greater spotlight upon how the NPQH might develop further, when supporting female leaders continuing to headship.

IV. The data from this study demonstrates the complex career journeys for women primary school leaders and shows that women's careers do not always follow a smooth career path. They came to the role of DHT/AHT from different backgrounds, often juggling family and work. The women appeared to need flexibility, experienced guilt over their career choices and family trade-offs, perceived unconscious bias, and the

precariousness of realising any future aspirations due to this being reliant on support from the headteacher. This new knowledge makes contributions to the difficulties women face and the knowledge is an important element in supporting women to both become and remain as leaders within primary education. Future policy and practice need to support both male and female educators to have greater awareness of their role and responsibility within the leadership system, but especially headteachers to understand their crucial role within bringing forward future female leaders and how they are significant role models and can demonstrate unconscious bias towards women.

V. This research has built upon previous understandings regarding gendered career trajectories and the challenge women face, which includes perceptions held by women that they do not fit the masculine stereotype of a leader. This study did not show bias exists, it shows the women perceive this to be the case, but the facts behind this were not further investigated as part of this study. This study has enhanced the understanding regarding unconscious bias related to gender and the traits that are considered necessary for effective leadership and how they might be considered in action within the primary school environment, today. This new knowledge is an important element regarding gendered careers and an area that will benefit from further research if a comprehensive understanding of perceptions regarding stereotypes is to be challenged and built upon, both for future women leaders but also serving headteachers of both sexes.

VI. The research provides a window into the specific difficulties for women AHT/DHTs, as main carers and addresses a theory-practice gap. Whilst balancing family and professional responsibilities and the lack of flexibility when considering appointing headteachers, particularly adding to the debate regarding co-headship. Little research regarding co-headship has been undertaken previously and this study provides evidence that supports the movement towards part-time headship. Given the difficulties over the

last few decades in filling headteacher vacancies, it seems a significant piece of new knowledge that will inspire further research within the area of female school leadership, within both primary and secondary education.

9.3.1 Limitations

The qualitative approach and sample size had certain limitations relating to wider generalisability of these results. This research, whilst impactful and contributing to new knowledge, is a small-scale study limited to 10 female AHT/DHTs in Hampshire, Berkshire, Surrey and West Sussex working within Local Authority or Academy primary schools and hence the findings are not specifically applicable to other areas or educational establishments.

This study does not aim to make wide generalisations for AHT/DHTs from its findings, as it would compromise the epistemological approach underpinning the interpretive stance. The research had a small-time frame, with the findings being extrapolated from within a small moment in time and were gathered prior to the Covid-19 global pandemic and are therefore time bound.

Given the researcher's positionality as a senior primary school leader, it might have been perceived by the AHT/DHTs that there was an inherent bias and due to the Hawthorne Effect, they might have believed specific answers were being sought. To manage the risk a participant information sheet was provided (Appendix III). To build trust each participant was spoken to over the telephone before the interview and any additional questions the participants had were addressed, specifically related to confidentiality and how their data would be used.

The research focus was through social identity theory, but the data might be interpreted through other theoretical lenses to cover differing areas of interest.

9.3.2 Implications and recommendations for policy and practice

It is hoped the results of this study will prove enlightening and beneficial for both school leaders, but also the wide educational establishment, to illustrate the contribution this study makes to the deeper and richer knowledge of AHT/DHTs working within primary schools in England. In addition, the study acknowledges the research process upon both the participants and the researcher.

The BNIM interviews provided a unique opportunity for the women to narrative their complex career journeys, experiences, and aspirations. Several of the women shared that they had never told anyone else their leadership journey, once the interview had concluded. Interestingly, a DHT made contact after the study, to share that she would be looking for opportunities to ask her staff to share their personal journey in a bid to help her support their leadership aspirations more. The process was felt to have been cathartic and enabled a sifting and sorting of her own career pathway and inadvertently caused her to have even greater reflection on aspects of the leadership journey that she had shared. Hence if policy and practice surrounding primary school leadership is to be advanced a greater acknowledgment of women and their role within primary education needs to be addressed including:

I. Policies to explicitly identify timescales for remaining within the role of AHT/DHTs before moving to headship, this might encourage a greater number of women to apply for headship or open-up further opportunities to other aspiring leaders.
II. If AHT/DHTs are not more effectively supported with their progression to headship the national headteacher shortages will continue. Whilst it has implications from a school level perspective, it is likely to perpetuate the belief that being a headteacher is not desirable as a career option for those future leaders.

III. If policies and practice within the teaching profession do not move forward to embrace the issues surrounding part-time headships, a career framework for aspirant headteachers, efficacy of the NPQH and the difficulties women leaders face in comparison to their male colleagues, then the ongoing issues regarding recruiting and retaining women for headship will remain challenging.

IV. CPD is crucial for leadership. If serving headteachers are not fully cognisant of their key role as role models in supporting AHT/DHTs to headship, opportunities will continue to be missed in coaching and mentoring the headteachers of the future.

The following recommendations are given:

I. Changes to policy regarding expectation of leadership progression within the role of DHT/AHT. A time-bonded window of pre-headship coaching and mentoring to be identified, following completion of NPQH.

II. Leadership practice needs to support career development trajectories to address the shortage of headteachers nationally, through greater training, continuing professional development, coaching, or mentoring opportunities from headteachers to their AHT/DHTs. This might include mentoring for both headteachers and AHT/DHTs and leadership shadowing opportunities within other schools to see how they develop their leadership pipeline.

III. Headteachers might benefit from further CPD to support them to have a greater understanding of their professional role in supporting AHT/DHTs towards headship.

9.4 Recommendations for future research

As previously mentioned there remains a dearth of research regarding primary school leaders, within England (section 2.3). This therefore provides ample opportunities for future

researchers to build upon this current study and seven areas are suggested for future study within leadership:

I. This current research remains a small-scale study involving 10 women AHT/DHTs in the South of England but the findings suggest a stagnant and disillusioned profession. Further research would be recommended with a wider number of participants across England. This would enable an interrogation regarding any queries related to location and hence identify if regional variations are in play.

II. A qualitative male study could shed light on similarities or dissention within male and female primary school leadership issues. As this research study examined the female AHT/DHTs perspective it might prove efficacious to undertake a similar study with male AHT/DHTs. Undertaking this type of study would provide valuable enrichment of the data regarding barriers and enablers for all AHT/DHTs considering a move to headship.

III. A longitudinal study involving AHT/DHTs career trajectories over time could focus upon initial ambitions and hence the decision pathway chosen, with a reflexive approach to their decisions.

IV. An evaluation of leadership programmes within England might further support the career progression framework for aspirant leaders, particularly related to the efficacy of the NPQH programme, in ensuring candidates are supported and coached to attain headship positions within a specific time frame.

V. It is recommended that further research be undertaken in the following areas: co-headship; a framework for headteachers to support the headship ambitions of their aspirant headteachers; the efficacy of NPQH as a pathway to headship and gender bias within policies and practice.

VI. An intersectionality study to establish BAME women's leadership experiences. 2 women within the study were from a BAME background, but this was not a focus of the study and played no part within the invite procedure.

9.5.1 Positionality

As a member of a SLT, researcher positionality provides a unique perspective and supported the building of trust with the AHT/DHTs. This element was crucial to encourage the women to share their personal narratives and feel able to do so without judgement or bias. The candid and reflective narratives shared by the AHT/DHTs is a sign of this trust. Trust between a researcher and a participant requires explicit and positive expectations regarding the intentions of the research (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013).

The privilege of listening to the individual women's career narratives has been transformational to my own understanding of leadership. Original assumptions have been both challenged and upheld through the conceptual framework. Hearing the women sharing their perceptions regarding the difficulties and bias they face in their roles, together with the knowledge of the disillusionment of women choosing to become headteachers, has broadened my horizons towards further independent educational research, with an intention to share ideas, collaboration and support new and more experienced teachers to become more research focussed within their practice.

9.5.2 Research reflection and outcomes

Research has been widely conducted in the past regarding AHT/DHTs and headship within secondary schools. Whilst primary school AHT/DHTs have had little focus and the continuing issues with recruitment and retention to Headship make this a subject of importance and future focus. This study involved the BNIM approach to gain a deep and rich understanding of primary school leaders. This unusual methodological provided the women the opportunity to

share their career journeys frankly, without being guided by specific questions or hidden agenda. This enabled a clear and unfettered view of primary school leadership.

The primary school education sector remains a female dominated profession, despite policies and progression within gender in the wider sphere. Yet, the data confirms the difficulties the women encounter in attempting to attain the position of headteacher, in comparison to males. Identity plays an important element in the career journey for AHT/DHTs and the sense of comfort they gain from a headteacher they trust and a school that has familiar systems and processes. The AHT/DHTs demonstrate ambition due to the commitment regarding their professional development in undertaking NPQH programmes or other leadership courses. Yet this is insufficient in supporting AHT/DHTs to apply for headship due to the wider environmental pressures, such as juggling family and work commitments. An intransigence towards embracing co-heads as a positive change in leadership structures is a barrier to well qualified and focussed women, applying for headship. Hence the culture within primary schools is not conducive to nurturing females to headship and a wider study of AHT/DHTs working within primary school in England would be needed to corroborate the findings.

This study claims to make an original contribution to existing research within the field of female primary school leadership. Extending the knowledge regarding how women experience 'becoming' a leader, how they identify with their professional and family roles and their perception of how their career has been shaped by their gender. This brings uniqueness to the subject of women and school leadership.

9.6 Summary

This study sought to gain an in-depth understanding as to why female AHT/DHTs are not choosing to apply for headteacher posts. The BNIM approach was undertaken to elicit data

rich narratives and uncover the wider plots within the individual stories. The exploration of each of the women's career narratives uncovered the complex barriers and enablers for AHT/DHTs becoming headteachers. It is argued this study builds upon knowledge regarding the impact of gender, identity and gendered careers regarding the career progression of AHT/DHTs working in primary schools. This study confirms complex and often oscillating elements interplay in the women's decisions. Whilst this study is small-scale and limited in its undertaking, the rich narrative's undertaken using the BNIM approach has attempted to bring new knowledge to an area of education which has received little recent research. This new knowledge will have implications for primary school leadership and future educational policy to support the progression to headship and open greater discussion surrounding the barriers and enablers identified.

Marla when considering her future shared:

"*I am settled, and I am calm, and I have a husband and a house, and I have a good job and I like the people I work with so there is no need to be proving it to someone else … who is acknowledging it anyway?".*

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List of Appendices

Appendix I – List of Acronyms

AHT – Assistant Head Teacher

BERA – British Educational Research Association

BNIM – Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

DfE – Department for Education

DHT – Deputy Head Teacher

FLT – Future Leaders Trust

GTP – Graduate Teacher Programme

LSA – Learning Support Assistant

NASENDCO – National Award Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

NCSL – National College of School Leadership

NPQH – National Professional Qualification for Headship

NQT – Newly Qualified Teacher

OFSTED – Office for the Standards in Education

PGCE – Post Graduate Certificate in Education

QTS – Qualified Teacher Status

RQ – Research Question

SCITT – School Centred Initial Teacher Training

SENDCo – Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinator

SHEIOT – Situational Happening Event Incident Occurrence Time

SIP – School Improvement Partner

SLT – School Leadership Team

SQUIN – Single-Question Initial Sub-session

TES – Times Educational Supplement

TLR – Teaching and Learning Responsibility

UPS – Upper Pay Scale

Appendix II - Transcription Symbols

For purposes of anonymity, all interviewees, school names, work colleague's names are identified by pseudonyms in the transcripts.

The Jefferson Transcription System Symbols were used:

(.)	a micropause of no significant length
(0.7)	a timed pause – long enough to indicate a time
[ ]	square brackets show where speech overlaps
> <	arrows showing the pace of speech has quickened
< >	arrows showing the pace of speech has slowed down
( )	unclear section
(( ))	an entry requiring comment but without a symbol to explain it
Underlining	denotes a raise in volume or emphasis
↑	rise in intonation
↓	drop in intonation
CAPITALS	louder or shouted words
(h)	laughter in the conversation/speech
=	will be at the end of one sentence and the start of the next. It indicates that there was no pause between them
:::	indicate a stretched sound

,	slightly rising in intonation at end of tone unit
?	high rising intonation at end of tone unit
.	falling intonation at end of tone unit
!	animated intonation
…	noticeable pause or break within a turn of less than one second
-	sound abruptly cut off, e.g. false start
italics	emphatic stress
:	colon following vowel indicates elongated vowel sound
::	extra colon indicates longer elongation
()	parentheses around low key intonation (sotto voce)
/ /	words between slashes show uncertain transcription
/?/	indicates inaudible utterances: one ? for each syllable
{}	words in these brackets indicate non-linguistic information, e.g. pauses of 1 second or longer (the number of seconds is indicated, speakers' gestures or actions
.hh	inhalation (intake of breath)
hhh	aspiration (release of breath)
t	tongue click
'hehe'	laughter, for each syllable laughed a 'heh' is transcribed

Appendix III – Participant Information Sheet

Researcher: Charmaine Lynch **Email**:

Supervisor: **Email**:

Participant Information Sheet – Sept. 2016

Dear DHT/AHT

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study about the reason assistant and DHT heads may or may not choose to move to headship within the primary education, in Hampshire.

What is the study?

The study is for an EdD thesis that I am undertaking at the Institute of Education, University of Reading. It aims to investigate the different barriers and enablers for assistant and DHT headteachers, moving towards headship. In addition, it will ask current headteachers for their views on headship appointments. By investigating current patterns, it attempts to gain further insight into barriers and enablers to those considering appointment of the position of headteacher.

Why have I been chosen to take part?

You have been invited to take part in this project because you are currently either DHT or AHTteacher, working within the primary phase. I would like to know your views regarding the barriers and enablers to becoming a headteacher.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether you participate, but I am interested in your views. You may withdraw from the project at any time, without any repercussions to you, by contacting me using the details above.

What will happen if I take part?

You will be sent a consent form in September 2016 and then a 1:1 interview will be arranged at a time and place at your convenience, between October and December 2016.

The interviews will last approximately 40 minutes. You will be asked about your views on your current role and the barriers and enablers to senior teachers moving in to the role of headteacher. This meeting may be recorded, if you agree to it. Any information you give will only be used for this research and your name will not be used in any way.

It is your choice to take part in this study and any information shared will not be personally linked to you. A summary of responses will be shared with you upon completion of the project, if you would like.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part?

Any specific identifiable information you give will remain confidential and will only be seen by myself and my supervisor. You will not be named in the final thesis and a pseudonym will be chosen, although some of your ideas/suggestions may be used. Taking part will in no way influence the way you are treated.

I anticipate that the findings of this study will be useful in identifying the barriers and enablers to the role of headship, within primary education. A summary copy of the findings of the study can be made available by contacting me by email or phone.

What will happen to the data?

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence, and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private. Anything you say will be kept in a password protected computer and only my research supervisor's Dr Karen Jones/Dr Chris Turner and myself, will have access to the records. The data will be destroyed after 5 years.

The data will be presented in my EdD thesis and possibly in subsequent academic publications.

Consent for the interview will be by completion of a consent form. I do hope that you will agree to take part in this exciting study.

This application has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

If you want to ask anything about the study, please contact me via email.

Thank you for your time.

Appendix IV - Consent Form

I have read the Information Sheet relating to this project.

I have had explained to me the purposes of the project and what will be required of me, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the Information Sheet in so far as they relate to my participation.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw them from the project any time, without giving a reason and without detriment.

I have received a copy of this Consent Form and of the accompanying Information Sheet.

Please tick as appropriate:

I consent to take part in an interview as outlined in the Information Sheet ☐

I consent to the recording of this interview as outlined in the Information Sheet ☐

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Appendix V– Ethics Approval Form

University of Reading
Institute of Education
Ethical Approval Form A (version May 2015)

Tick one:
Staff project: _____ PhD ____ EdD ✓

Name of applicant (s): Charmaine Lynch

Title of project: Women Leaders: Gender and identity

Name of supervisor (for student projects): Dr Karen Jones

Please complete the form below including relevant sections overleaf.

	YES	NO
Have you prepared an Information Sheet for participants and/or their parents/carers that:		
a) explains the purpose(s) of the project	✓	
b) explains how they have been selected as potential participants	✓	
c) gives a full, fair and clear account of what will be asked of them and how the information that they provide will be used	✓	
d) makes clear that participation in the project is voluntary	✓	
e) explains the arrangements to allow participants to withdraw at any stage if they wish	✓	
f) explains the arrangements to ensure the confidentiality of any material collected during the project, including secure arrangements for its storage, retention and disposal	✓	
g) explains the arrangements for publishing the research results and, if confidentiality might be affected, for obtaining written consent for this	✓	
h) explains the arrangements for providing participants with the research results if they wish to have them	✓	
i) gives the name and designation of the member of staff with responsibility for the project together with contact details, including email . If any of the project investigators are students at the IoE, then this information must be included and their name provided	✓	
k) explains, where applicable, the arrangements for expenses and other payments to be made to the participants	n/a	
j) includes a standard statement indicating the process of ethical review at the University undergone by the project, as follows: 'This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct'.	✓	
k)includes a standard statement regarding insurance: "The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request".	✓	
Please answer the following questions		
1) Will you provide participants involved in your research with all the information necessary to ensure that they are fully informed and not in any way deceived or misled as to the purpose(s) and nature of the research? (Please use the subheadings used in the example information sheets on blackboard to ensure this).	✓	
2) Will you seek written or other formal consent from all participants, if they are able to provide it, in addition to (1)?	✓	
3) Is there any risk that participants may experience physical or psychological distress in taking part in your research?		✓
4) Have you taken the online training modules in data protection and information security (which can be found here: http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/imps/Staffpages/imps-training.aspx)?	✓	

5) Have you read the Health and Safety booklet (available on Blackboard) and completed a Risk Assessment Form to be included with this ethics application?	✓		
6) Does your research comply with the University's Code of Good Practice in Research?	✓		
	YES	NO	N.A.
7) If your research is taking place in a school, have you prepared an information sheet and consent form to gain the permission in writing of the head teacher or other relevant supervisory professional?	✓		
8) Has the data collector obtained satisfactory DBS clearance?	✓		
9) If your research involves working with children under the age of 16 (or those whose special educational needs mean they are unable to give informed consent), have you prepared an information sheet and consent form for parents/carers to seek permission in writing, or to give parents/carers the opportunity to decline consent?			✓
10) If your research involves processing sensitive personal data[1], or if it involves audio/video recordings, have you obtained the explicit consent of participants/parents?	✓		
11) If you are using a data processor to subcontract any part of your research, have you got a written contract with that contractor which (a) specifies that the contractor is required to act only on your instructions, and (b) provides for appropriate technical and organisational security measures to protect the data?			✓
12a) Does your research involve data collection outside the UK?		✓	
12b) If the answer to question 12a is "yes", does your research comply with the legal and ethical requirements for doing research in that country?			
13a) Does your research involve collecting data in a language other than English?		✓	
13b) If the answer to question 13a is "yes", please confirm that information sheets, consent forms, and research instruments, where appropriate, have been directly translated from the English versions submitted with this application.			
14a. Does the proposed research involve children under the age of 5?		✓	
14b. If the answer to question 14a is "yes": My Head of School (or authorised Head of Department) has given details of the proposed research to the University's insurance officer, and the research will not proceed until I have confirmation that insurance cover is in place.			
If you have answered YES to Question 3, please complete Section B below			

Please complete **either** Section A **or** Section B and provide the details required in support of your application. Sign the form (Section C) then submit it with all relevant attachments (e.g. information sheets, consent forms, tests, questionnaires, interview schedules) to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration. Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.

A: My research goes beyond the 'accepted custom and practice of teaching' but I consider that this project has **no** significant ethical implications. (Please tick the box.)	
Please state the total number of participants that will be involved in the project and give a breakdown of how many there are in each category e.g. teachers, parents, pupils etc. 6 women DHT/AHTteachers working within the primary phase.	
Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words noting: 1. title of project - Women Leaders: Gender and Identity 2. purpose of project and its academic rationale 3. brief description of methods and measurements 4. participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria 5. consent and participant information arrangements, debriefing (attach forms where necessary)	

[1] Sensitive personal data consists of information relating to the racial or ethnic origin of a data subject, their political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, sexual life, physical or mental health or condition, or criminal offences or record.

6. a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with then. 7. estimated start date and duration of project

B: I consider that this project **may** have ethical implications that should be brought before the Institute's Ethics Committee.	n/a

Please state the total number of participants that will be involved in the project and give a breakdown of how many there are in each category e.g. teachers, parents, pupils etc.

Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words. 1. title of project 2. purpose of project and its academic rationale 3. brief description of methods and measurements 4. participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria 5. consent and participant information arrangements, debriefing (attach forms where necessary) 6. a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with then. 7. estimated start date and duration of project

C: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

Note: a signature is required. Typed names are not acceptable.

I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm that ethical good practice will be followed within the project.

Signed: Print Name Charmaine Lynch Date 16th February 2018

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE ETHICS COMMITTEE

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed: …… Print Name……. Date…….
(IoE Research Ethics Committee representative)*

* A decision to allow a project to proceed is not an expert assessment of its content or of the possible risks involved in the investigation, nor does it detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility which students/investigators must themselves have for these matters. Approval is granted on the basis of the information declared by the applicant.

Appendix VI – Participant Transcript

Sally

SQUIN - Tell me about your career within teaching: Okay ↑ mmm (:::) (0.3) I came to teaching as a mature entrant (0.2) entrant (0.2) yeah ↑ < > (0.3) I'd been (0.2) done various things before > < (0.2) before here. Previously I was editing and copywriting mainly for err (:::) (0.5) government organisations including the department for education but before that I was > < umm (:::) several years in the city at the stock exchange > < and so that led to the writing thing > < when I had small children and came into teaching ↓. Ummm (:::) (0.4) prior to that I've taught in Japan ↑ but not as a qualified teacher ↓ (0.2). Ummm (:::) and then I worked for a diamond company in marketing so I had a very sort of ↑ (0.4) varied path into teaching. Ummm ↓ (:::) (0.7) so why did I do it (0.2) end up as a teacher↑ < > ? Ummm (:::) (0.2) I'd got small children I ummm (:::) (0.3) I became a School Governor first of all ↑. Umm (:::) (0.5) when <u>my</u> <u>children</u> started primary school I became involved in the school PTFA I just felt I was spending quite a lot of time around schools and in schools > < and I had done the teaching in Japan (0.2) I was 2 years teaching in Japan. My degree was French so I'd spent a year as a teaching assistant in a school in France for that year long time ago but I (0.2) I'd sort of been in and out of schools ↓ ummm (:::) (0.6). I went back to the City (0.3) with my children quite young and I was commuting in so it was like a (0.9) well an hour and a half I s'pose (0.5) there and back ↓ ummm (:::) (0.2). It worked with one child but it didn't work with two ↑ > < ummm (:::) (0.4) . So I had to make some kind of career child and so I kinda thought well actually I quite like being in schools and I'm interested in education so I did umm (:::) (0.2) (s) (0.2) what's called SCIT (*School Centred Initial Training*) course (0.3) it was one of the (0.2) = there are a lot of SCIT's now and most teachers train through a SCIT. Ummm (:::) it was one of the first ones in 2002 ummm (:::) I did that (0.4) that was a <u>really</u> (0.3) <u>difficult</u> <u>year</u> because I was living in XXX and because the SCIT's had only just started up they didn't

have many placement schools so my placement schools were in XXX ↓. So (0.3) er (:::) (0.4) that was tricky ↑ (0.3) and a long day (s) but it was 9 months so (0.3) = ummm (:::). So then I went straight into a primary school and stayed there (0.9) (s) too long probably (0.3) I'm trying to think how long I was there (0.3) 9 years probably in that one position ↓ ummm (:::) (0.5) and I think that was probably because it kept changing (0.4) it's an Outstanding school and its now become a teaching school a big primary school 500 children ummm (:::) (0.6) there were lots of opportunities really and I went from class teacher to taking on whole school responsibilities ummm (:::) (0.2) year 3/4 lead … phase leader ummm (:::) (0.3) and then it got to a point < > (0.2) and I loved the school loved it ↑ (0.4) quite challenging kids ↓ lots going on all the time really loved it > < . But it got to a point because I'd gone into teaching quite late ↓ I was at an age where I thought I don't really want to move but I'm going to have to move quite quickly or I've left it too late and I started to look around and thought well (0.2) I don't want to move across because I like it here so I'm going to have to do something a bit more ↓ (0.4) so I started looking at Deputy Headships and ended up here. So it's only my second school but I've been (0.5) = I'm coming up to my 6th year here ↑ so that's where I am now ummm (:::) (0.3) I joined this school XXX as an SENDCo/Deputy Head which at the time I had to do the SENDCo Award (0.2) which again is another (0.5) back to Uni again to do that (h) ↓ (0.4) = but it was too much and the school was getting bigger and it was a 1 form entry expanding to 2 form entry and we've now got 430 children so were quite a big school ummm (:::) (0.2). After a couple of years it became obvious that as our school was getting bigger the deputy position and the SENDCo wasn't feasible ummm (:::) (s) (0.4) so here I am now ↑. I do (.) do some teaching ↓ but it is a non-teaching post but I do (0.2) I'm doing booster groups and learning support teaching and probably about 6 hours a week ↓ umm (:::) (0.3) though ummm (:::) (0.5) I've done other things because here I'm heading up the RE and I did that in my last school as well. We've had 2 Ofsted's since I've been here ↑ (.) umm (:::) (0.6). I am

now ummm (:::) (0.4) there's an award RE Equality Mark and I'm now an assessor for that (0.4) I suppose I've been here as deputy yes (.) I should (0.4). I've thought I should perhaps move on ↓ and I was a couple years ago (0.4) I'd done the NPQH ↑ I've done that I went to 2 headships. The first one I went to I was offered and then decided not to take it for various reasons ↓ and the second one I didn't get and (0.5) actually I'm (0.3) getting into the same (0.2) rut ↓ (0.3) not rut (.) that's negative but the same pattern (0.5) every time I think perhaps I should move on something quite exciting happens that I want to get my teeth ↑ into and I think I don't want to leave this half done ummm ↓ (:::) yeah (0.5). We've just (0.2) cos I've travelled a lot national and global learning is a big thing of mine so ummm (:::) we've just got the International Intermediate Level and we are going for the full which we hope to get in a few weeks (0.5) so we have made links with schools and Skyping schools in France and loads of things going on (0.3) links > < with schools in Ghana (0.3) I'm behind all that and driving it (0.2) I think again I'm quite (0.5) I love it that's one element of the job but ummm ↓ (:::) (0.3) you know it's something I just don't want to leave (0.5) right now. I'm probably thinking do I stay here until I retire or do I look into something probably linked to what I was doing before and education (0.4). I'd quite like to go into something with writing again I'd do anything (0.2) any written stuff that comes out here I do but also that was my previous (0.5) my Masters was in Journalism and Writing (0.5). So is there a way I can link those up? (0.3) = but we'll see but at the moment I've got loads to do here and (0.6) I'm very happy ↑.

I think I am quite self-driven ↑. I mean I (0.3) I am sort of a person (0.5). I do like change (0.3) which seems ridiculous after being in one school for 9 years and this one for 6 ↑ but I think I'm (0.2) I s'pose I'm quite (0.6) pragmatic. I do ermm (:::) (0.2) yeah ↓ (:::) (0.3) you know when putting the strategies together I'm looking for ways for the school to move ummm (:::). I'm the sort of person who has lots of things going on outside of school as well so (:::) (0.3) yeah (:::) (0.5) I think ↓ yeah (0.8).

You talked about being a school leader and having your own children: My children are now in their 20's but when I trained they were 6 and 7 ↓ yeah (0.3) so that was quite tricky with that commuting thing (0.2) family life ↓. Well I mean no (0.5) they have both graduated and are back at home now and so (0.5) they are independent > < but my husband is just used to me being busy and doing stuff ↑ and he works from home so that helps < > and we have two really lively dogs, we have a horse, an allotment and loads of things going on ↑ > < (0.8). Ummm (:::) (0.4) yeah I'd do a lot of swimming and cycling so it does fit in and I don't (0.6) I go to bed quite late ↑ and people think why do your emails come at midnight and that's awful ↓ and I shouldn't do that but that's my work pattern and people think I'm working until midnight (0.3) but I'm not I'm going home at 6pm and then doing all the other stuff I want to do ↓ and then I might (0.3) you know ↓ (0.2) go back to the computer about 10 o'clock (0.2) = ummm (:::) (0.4) that works for me ↓ (0.5) ummm (:::) (0.4). I think here I haven't had that much management (0.6) people management training or experience before I came here. I joined under an interim head and the person who recruited me rang me the following week and said 'Actually I'm not going to be here when you start so there's going to have to be an interim head ↑' (0.4). So 3 weeks after I'd joined the school it went into Required Improvement which was probably the best thing that could have happened > < because it then gave us like ummm (:::) (0.6) a clean slate to start (0.2) building it up ↑ < > and it made that change a lot easier because it was very easy then to say to people 'Look (0.2) you know what you're doing doesn't work so were going to have to make a lot of changes around here'. So people either came on board or they didn't ↓ umm (:::) (0.3). Then I had a head (0.5) had a new head starting who was in her second headship and she's quite a lot younger than me but she's been in teaching all her life and we're very different < > and I think that's (0.2) that's what probably works ↑ umm (:::) (0.3). Actually I s'pose now the time will come when (0.5) I s'pose you know those people say that when you feel you can do it better than the person doing it then it's time to move but

actually (0.6) I (0.2) I take over parts of the school she's not so strong at and she does her bits and we kind of meet in the middle and that's how we operate quite well ↑ (0.4). People are always saying we are very different.

You talked about completing your NPQH so what will be your next step?: People keep asking me ↑ and actually (0.2) umm (:::) (0.2) a couple of the (0.6) I have (.) have been approached by the Diocese to say is that something (0.2) and that sort of put (0.6) they said to me I'm not sure they are just saying it to me (0.4) they are so short of heads (0.3) ummm (:::) 'There's a headship coming up would you consider?' umm (:::) (0.4) and actually I've said 'No' ↓ mmm (:::) (0.2) = last year I said no because I've got too much going on (0.3). I'm feeling (0.3) I do feel really positive about it every day and I enjoy coming in ↑ (0.4). I do take work home ↓ but I think if I didn't enjoy it mmm (:::) (0.2) I'd be reluctant to do that (0.2) I mean I'm not (0.7) I do do my emails on my phone as they go across because (.) I just want to be on top of it and know what's going on ↑ (0.5) mmm (:::) yes. We have a good senior management team of the head, myself, the business manager, three key stage leaders so early years, key stage one and key stage 2 (0.4) umm (:::) (0.3) yes I'm looking for opportunities where (0.4) some of the things I'm doing can ummm (:::) (0.2) be delegated and also to look for sustainable management so if I do go someone is able to (0.4) in the same way the head does. Last year the head had a secondment to another school for a term so I was in charge for the term (0.3) so that was great > < and it's good to know you can do it ↑ (0.3) umm (:::) but it didn't make me feel that's right and I can do it (0.4) and I need to go somewhere else ↓. And part of it is that (0.3) I feel (0.5) that I have made quite a lot of changes here ↑ (0.3) and I suppose (0.5) if I'm honest the energy I get (0.3) I've got a lot of energy ↑ but ehhhh (:::) (0.4) going somewhere else which I feel I've got to start the whole (0.2) whole thing again getting it how I want it (0.2) I'm just not sure I'm feeling that at the moment ↓ < >. The landscape is changing ↓ (0.5). Who knows we're not an academy so there

is a lot of pressure to join an academy trust so (0.3) I s'pose < > the back of my mind I'm hoping if we do that there might be other opportunities to go across other schools or other opportunities for coaching, mentoring that kind of role ↑ umm (:::) (0.6). I know that I won't be retiring at 60 because I won't be able to afford to ↓ (0.3) but actually what else am I going to do? (0.7). More and more people are staying > < on so (0.2) we have several staff over 60 here (0.3) yeah ↑ (0.5) they all have mortgages so what do you do ↓ (0.2) younger staff are saying they've got to work until they are 67 so (0.4) so I think people are looking a bit more long term. People are really passionate about what they are doing and they need to be here ↑ (0.3) but part timers no matter < > how committed they are they are not in the loop all the time if they are not here (0.3) and things get missed ↓ and I think good people want to be here all the time ↑. They have to try and keep up and their job share teacher obviously are meant to (0.5) and that happens quite well in most cases and there are little slips and (0.5) or someone comes and says 'That's not how I wanted it done' and you think well ok but if you were here it would have happened > < (0.3) yeah (0.3) I don't know but ummm (:::) (0.6) . So that's why I'm still here and I am satisfied with what I am doing ↑. As a woman in primary teaching I do know a few men in primary teaching > < and I know it's a cliché but I do wonder somehow (0.2) how some of the males have got to the position really ↑ (0.3) you know (0.3). Head of my last school (0.5) great business man ↑ but umm < > (:::) (0.6) I didn't work with him as a teacher but all the teachers who were there said he never once marked a book or put up a display ↑ and yet after a year becomes a deputy headteacher ↓ and that does happen ↑ and I think in schools it is the character at the top of the school (0.2) who leads the school > < and their personality that comes through the whole culture ummm (:::) (0.4) I'm not saying that's wrong ↑ but some of them have had a meteoric rise > < and if that is right for the school then (0.2) if they have driven it forward then ok ↓ (0.4) Ummm (:::) (0.5) I think the interest in schools and children probably (0.3) I don't know but that's sounding (0.6) = I was quite happy

in business as well ↑ so (0.3) and I do (0.3). I think I'm <u>really glad</u> I didn't come straight in and I remember when I graduated people were (0.2) I did French > < and there's not many jobs (0.3) people think umm (:::) (0.3) language teacher ↑ and quite a few people did go straight into schools (0.2). I remember (.) I did apply and got a place ↑ and then at the last minute I decided I didn't actually want to do this < > ummm (:::) ↓ (0.7). I think (0.4) it's (0.2) you just get <u>thrown</u> into that (0.2) you just go into that 'cos you think you can't do anything else (0.2) but I'm actually glad I've done other things because I think that experience does feed into (0.3) into school and I think schools are (0.2) and it (.) really annoys everyone ↓. But I'll still say it they are really <u>insular</u> ↓ and there's a lot of people that just go from school to college to school and (0.6) <u>teachers do</u> (0.3) it is hard work and no-one is saying it isn't (0.3) and people here do work long hours as they do in other schools but (0.3) <u>other jobs</u> are <u>quite hard work as well</u> ↑ (0.2) you know (0.3) it's not the only (0.3) there is this kind of view 'Oh it's teachers (0.2) they work harder than everyone else' ↓ (0.3) but there are other jobs around where the hours are long and you just get (0.2) whatever thrown at you the whole time ↑ ummm (:::) (0.3). But I do (.) do think a lot of that has fed into (0.5) for example governors meetings I quite enjoy being on the Resources (.) Committee and (0.2) and understanding the business side of the school which as a headteacher you have to anyway > < so (0.2) especially these days with the budgets (0.4) so cut and no money ↓. There is quite a lot about money on the NPQH and other leadership courses so that will help perhaps? We have 60 staff here (0.3) that's fine (0.4) and you get better at managing people and you know the people who are trying to <u>manipulate you</u> ↑ (0.4) (h) (0.3). Every school have staff who <u>don't pull their weight</u> and others that do (0.3) way above what they are expected (.) to do > < (0.2) ummm (:::) and you get (0.6) I suppose I've got (0.5) better < > at those difficult conversations as a leader ↓ (0.3) better at challenging people and I think I've found I need to be really busy to have those conversations > < because (0.2) I think if I think about it too long I can put it off < > and put

it off and think it could go this way (0.3) I'll find her when (0.4) oh no this isn't the right time (0.3) > <. But actually if I've got loads to do I've found for me (0.4) you've got to be really busy and go straight in and do it ↑ (0.2) umm (:::) (0.3) but it's < > yes (0.5) you can't really (0.3) well you can be ready for it but everyone is so different and so situations don't fit into the role play that you do on these courses (h) ↓ so (0.2) ummm (:::) (0.3) but I don't really know < >. I don't know whether being a fe (.) woman has any influence (.) I don't know < > ↓. Sadly we have only got 1 male teacher (0.3) who is leaving ↓ umm (0.3) the last school I came from I only worked with men because in each year group there was a man and a woman across the whole thing with a male headteacher and the more men you've got the more men are going to want to come and work there (.) > < I'm sure that happens ↑ < > . It's (.) it's got that kind of (0.2) we show lads round and they probably see loads of middle aged ladies and think 'This is so boring'↓ < >. At my last school and it's still the same so I'm told > < there is a man in every year group so until I'd come here I had only worked with men (0.3) in a primary school which is quite unusual yeah↓ (0.2) and that's fine < > 'cos I really like working with men ↑ but (0.4) mainly every single one of those men I worked with (.) 6 in 6 different year groups they let you have your own way > < (.) 'cos they don't want to do the planning. So if I wanted it done my way they would always be 'Yeah that's fine ↑' < > and that's the kind of person I am I s'pose < > (.) and rather than kick up that they are not pulling their weight I would rather do it > < and have it my way (0.5) umm (:::) and people say 'Why don't you make him do it↑? 'but I don't mind them having a go but if it's not what I want to use I will do it my way > < (h) but a lot of people are like that aren't they? So yeah ↑. People do say to me I only ask for help the way I want it ↑ (0.4). Maybe that's true < > and that's why they don't offer a bit more < > (0.3) mmm (:::) (0.5) . I do ask someone to help me and then go in and say 'That's great but (0.3) could we change it (0.3) could we just (0.2) oh (0.3) how about if we do it this way? ' ↑ They laugh about it but (0.6) they say they know I just want it to be done my way

(0.3) that's what I mean by help and I don't know (0.2). I think it's about standards but also as a leader it's about expectations ↓ (0.6). That's the thing with coming from a school which was Outstanding > < where we had children who were much more disadvantaged than the children here who used to do (0.3) and they still do better at that school ↑. But the school had those standards for everything and it was a bit like (0.3) umm (:::) (0.5) it was a bit regimental and nobody had a say (0.3) everyone just jumped to the dictator ↓ and that (0.3) I think lots of Outstanding schools are like that (0.2) . We've got one here in this area (0.2) that is like that with a leader who has been there for 20 years > < ↑ and if you don't like it there is another school down the road ↓ (0.2) where it is much more collegiate. Here where people do have a say (0.3) but what I've learnt and what the pair of us have learnt is that too much say you don't GET anywhere do you? Give people a voice and then they get upset if you don't do it their way ↑ ummm (:::) (0.4). Actually you need to be a leader (0.5) too much say and then you discuss it (0.2) and then you go round and round < > having the same discussion and we don't move forward ↓ (0.3) so I have seen you know that's a different style but (0.3) and that can be quite frustrating and that's what people say about me that I (0.5) that's why I want it how I want it because I've seen it done better ↓ and I know it's not good enough but (0.3). Yeah I have my vision ↑ (0.3) yeah (0.3) but with the Head I think we do complement each other (0.5) different strengths really so (0.3) and also she's been the Head for quite a few years so (0.2) there is loads to learn from her (0.3) very open ↑ (0.2) very (0.6) she has a daily impact on my leadership < > and she says lovely things like 'I'm just going to challenge you to think about that in a different way or to do that differently' ↑ and that's her way of saying 'I don't like that idea!' ↑ (h) (0.3). She challenges me to do that > < and that's (0.3) great ↑ (0.4) we read differently and she'll say 'Oh she means that (0.3)' and I'll say that she wasn't meaning that at all (0.3) that's what she is saying but not what she is meaning (0.6). So we are different yeah (0.3) she's lovely and smiley > < and yeah (:::) (0.4) great with parents and in

meetings (0.3) very articulate (0.5) but she is great and we are different and probably works well for the school < > . But if she was to leave now I would go for the Headship position ↑ because I like the school and I have looked round some and I was offered one and decided not to take it purely because (0.3) the main reason for that was the budget (0.3). It was in such a mess ↓ and I knew that they had something like 5 headteachers in 3 years ↓ (0.7) and (0.2) you know (0.3) < >. I just felt all the way they weren't telling me the truth and the school is now in a lot of problems > < ↓ (0.2) so (0.3) and the money as well (0.2). I still maintain that the money in leadership should not be on the size of the school ↑ (0.4) which it is the size of the school (0.5) it should be on the job in hand (0.3) it was a small school but had horrendous issues and problem (0.3) with hardly any children in it but for a reason (0.5) everyone leaving the school and they'd got no money ↓ (0.4). The job that was needing to be done was massive > < but they didn't want to pay the price ↑ and I've seen since it's fallen back (0.3) and been taken over by a big academy ↓ but emmm (:::) (0.5) I think the way people are rewarded in leadership in schools isn't quite right ↓. You can lead an Outstanding school for 20 odd years and it will just be ticking over but we have another school near here where a head walked into a job after the encumbent had been there 20 years and it's had Outstanding in every single (0.5) ↓ and actually the school works like clockwork ↑ (0.4) umm (:::) (0.3) you just have to make improvements (0.4). Whereas here (0.3) we came in here and we just had to start from the beginning again (0.3) restructured all the TA's and their working hours ↑ (0.2) had to come (0.4) in the nicest possible way (0.3) shift a few people ↓ and make it a bit difficult < > so people have to think is this where they really want to work because actually times were going to change and expectations were going to change ↑ > < and that's (0.4) all difficult because you are always working with the nicest people (0.3) ↑. Those people who are always lovely (0.4) < > sort of the joker of the staffroom and the one you see (0.5) bustling around (0.4) but the least effective teacher (0.3) no (0.3) so I don't know ↑ (0.5) < > . But I don't think it's

always about remuneration but I think the hours we put in (0.3) yeah you know everyone is here from 7:40am until 6pm every day and always taking work home ↓ > < (0.4). Last Saturday I was down in the town with the school and this Saturday it's the school fair (0.6) you know it's always (0.4) last night was the school disco and I think actually (0.5) my pay from when I left the City in gosh ↑ (0.5) 1997 or something (0.3) had hardly (0.4) is hardly more than what I was earning back then ↓ (0.3). Yes my job then was well paid < > but I think (0.2) the responsibility I have (0.2) it's huge ↑. It doesn't matter how much time you give it (0.3) the school could always take more ↓ (0.3) you never get to the end ↑ (0.4) it's always what job shall I do first (0.3). We were in a governors meeting the other day a Children and Learning committee (0.5) earlier in the week and it came round in the Agenda (0.3) and the Chair of Governors said 'This is still (0.4) this is the third meeting and this point hasn't been addressed' ↑. I said 'It's on my list but it keeps going down my list because in the scheme of priorities it's going down and down and down and if I don't put it on (0.5) the assessment on to the system (0.3) we're still doing the assessment but (0.3) it's not on the system yet and still being done in a different way (0.3) on a different system (0.5) that task is not crucial at the moment (0.3) ↓ and other things I have to do have to be done tomorrow' ↓. I don't think other people quite get that ↑ (0.5). I just got an email today that governors would like to put a strategy together and how about meeting at 8 o'clock next Tuesday? ↑ And then 8am (0.4) we (0.3) the Head went back and said she had a meeting and then it came back (0.5) no sorry it wasn't meant to say 8am it should have been 8pm for the meeting and would that be okay for everyone? ↑ The Head called me in and said could I give her some words to say in the nicest possible way 'No' ↑ because the diaries are full and we're not being in school from 7:45 and then starting a meeting at 8pm which won't finish 'til 10pm (0.2) you know > < ↑ . They are 2 hour meetings and then were back in school (0.5). When do we eat in that time? > < ↑ (0.3) You know it's just < > ermm (:::) (0.4) and the Head has a young (0.4) school aged child ↓ (0.2)

so it's not (0.5). They do take notice of staff wellbeing which is the funny thing ↑ (0.6). We put at the end 'As you know staff wellbeing is a big focus at the moment but we do think that should include management as well not just staff, teachers and TA's'. They talk the talk ↑ < > but actually to suggest a meeting at 8pm at the end of the summer term when the diaries are already full, on top of the school fair, the last two Saturday's staff have been working and we need to be more realistic" ↓ > <. We did get an email coming back saying 'Ooh sorry we didn't quite appreciate (0.6)'. But yeah the well-being is difficult ↑ ummm (:::) (0.4) = but then you are never going to get away from the planning and the marking which takes all the time (0.3) > < . We have tried different things < > (0.3) but parents (0.5) (s) I have just done someone's appraisal and she is leaving and going abroad (0.3) but she said it was the parents that were bringing her down (0.2) really ↓ (s). She is young and she is having children calling her by her first name and she mentioned it to parents and said 'My name is Miss …' but it's carried on and carried on ↑ < >. The parents say they can't see a problem as their child calls their friends by their first name > < so what's the problem? ↓ Well it's just not on is it? ↑ (0.4). Where has respect gone? ↑ < > Yeah it is parents and fact we've just put security locks on the door to stop parents getting into the building before 8:30 in the morning and after 4:30 ↓ because we have an after-school club which is open until 6pm. And you find parents in the classroom rifling through the drawers and books (0.3) trying to find whatever (0.2) > < and then wanting to have a word with the teacher (0.5) it's just got (0.3) no (0.4) parents getting into the building and picking arguments with teachers when they are on their own in the classroom ↓ and then coming to make a complaint (0.5) with parents then saying 'You're trying to keep the parents out that's not very community ↑ (0.5)'. But it is for staff security (0.3) keeping parents out < >. But yeah ↑ (0.6) it is parents (0.2). It is stopping teachers wanting to come to the area ↓ > <. We can't get NQT's ↑ < > unless they live in the area with their family (.) because property prices are so expensive (0.2). They are either living here

already or living with their parents (0.3) ↓. They can't move here (0.3) < > and they can't afford to rent ↓. We had one lad who was going home and he commuted a significant distance (0.2) > <. Three years ago, we actually ended up Skyping Australia and Canada to try to recruit but that didn't come to anything ↓. But I think everyone is trying everything ↑ > <. At my last school there was a Head who when the wife got married they kept the wife's flat and they would rent that out to three teachers at a reduced rate and bring them over from Ireland ↓. So that was (0.4) it is hard to get a teaching post in Ireland because they are quite well paid I think ↑ < >. One of the secondary schools here is doing something with housing (0.3) to get teachers (0.3). But it is expensive to live here ↓ and it's nice < > but it's not that exciting if you are young (0.4) if you are on your own it's a bit middle class ↓. We now take SCIT students from a local school but we are in their shadows and the parents move their children to that school in Year 3 or they use us as a holding station as they move down from London and they want to go to the other school and want to go there as it's more like a private school > < but they don't have to pay and they get the same deal without the fees of XXX or wherever ↓ . So, they come here and use us for a term or two terms and then they go ↓ (0.5) < > sometimes they've got SEND so we put quite a lot of interventions in place to support them ↑ and then they go (0.6) > <. Actually, that's where our young male teacher is going and we have trained him for a year and given him a day out of class each week and now he's off up there ↓ (0.3) > <. It just happens ↑ (0.3) < > but no we do try to keep the students. We do push the Christian ethos in the school and the Head is very (0.4) it's a conviction of hers and some parents and staff don't like that ↑ (0.3). But we are fully inclusive (0.4) but it does have an impact on some of the teachers who come to look round here ↓. The Head gives them the talk and she is like that (0.5) but if you don't like that then it's not the right school for you ↑ (0.3) no (0.2).

There are lots of the boring stuff (0.3) the admin stuff which seems to be part of the Head's job (0.5) sending back returns (0.3) all that sort of stuff (0.3). Spending a lot of time with parents

(0.4) which I don't mind but ↓ argghhhh (:::) ↑ (0.5). I sometimes (0.3) our Head is lovely and compassionate but I am getting to the point where I think the parents are starting to take over ↓ > < and I'm like ↑ (0.6) I can kind of do everything I want really and drive in the direction I want to take the school I feel and no-one is stopping me but I haven't got all the compulsory bits that go with it (0.3). Obviously, I have a lot to do < > (0.4) but there's a lot of stuff that as a Head you must MUST ↑ do but (0.3) I don't know (0.2) < >. I feel I'm working with someone who is very receptive to my ideas and hasn't once asked me to do anything (0.4) and I've been with her for 6 years but I said 'You've never actually given me a job to do anything have you?' ↑> < When I first started I thought mmm (:::) (0.4) is this (0.2) is there something I should be doing < > because no-one has every asked me to do anything (0.2) and it's just kind of evolved like that because she trusts me and (0.2) and (0.3) we take over areas that we (0.3) stronger at (0.5) < >. I'm more curriculum and the school teaching and learning side and we have (0.4) I hope ↓ a really creative curriculum (0.3) > <. We have a kid's kitchen, so the children cook ↑ (0.2) we do (0.2) on top of the DT we do cooking linked to it and different subject areas (0.3). All our English is linked to curriculum areas (0.3) it is a buzzy curriculum (0.3) so I do curriculum and assessment (0.3) some of the more SEND (0.5). I'm not the SENDCo anymore but we have a couple of children with some behaviour difficulties and I am a link person as I knew the families when the children were younger < > and we've kept that link and you know (0.5). I also work with the ELSA and who is going to have the ELSA stuff and any extra programmes that come in I do that (0.3). Whereas the Head is more to do with the governing I suppose ↓ (0.3) strategy but I also do that (0.2) . I'm quite good at the bigger picture > < ↑ and I do get irritated by detail ↓ (0.5). She's better at detail (0.2) ummm (:::) (0.3) yeah (0.3) but if we both did the same (0.4) (h) . The business manager is excellent ↑ and she comes in with anything to do with the school side (0.3) and she will just say "Why are you doing it like that and what is the point?" and she will look at the data and say

if that is that (0.2) and that is that (0.5) > < what is going wrong? ↑ Sometimes it's good to have someone look at it from a non-educationalist point of view and she's good like that and she's great with figures and is a scientist by background and she just sees it from a different ↑ (0.4). We are often going round and round and decide to get her in (0.5) so (0.2) yeah it is a team effort (0.3) yeah ↑ (0.4) yeah↓.