The principal behind the report.

An exploration of the evaluation perceptions of British Schools Overseas' principals

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctor of Philosophy is entirely my own work, and that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: 

ID No: 16212824

Date: 8th September 2021

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I have travelled the world.

It is always fun to take home a story and recall an experience for the imagination of others.

This Doctor of Philosophy degree has been a fun trip. I have enjoyed the research road immensely.

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Finally, my eternal love to my dearest wife, Áine, whose unwavering support and immeasurable patience is a continuing gift. Together, we have travelled the world.

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Glossary of Terms

AGBIS	**Association of Governing Boards of Independent Schools**
AoBSO	**Association of British Schools Overseas**
BSME	**British Schools in the Middle East**
BSO	**British School Overseas**
CIS	**Council of International Schools**
COBIS	**Council of British International Schools**
DfE	**Department for Education**
DIT	**Department for International Trade**
DoE	**Director of Education**
FOBISSEA	**Federation of British International Schools in South & East Asia**
FOBISIA	**Federation of British International Schools in Asia**
GCSE	**General Certificate of Secondary Education**
GIAS	**Get Information About Schools**
GSA	**Girls' Schools Association**
HMC	**Headmasters' & Headmistresses Conference**
HMI	**Her Majesty's Inspector**
HR	**Human Resources**
IAPS	**Independent Association of Prep Schools**
IB	**International Baccalaureate**
ISC	**Independent Schools Council**
ISI	**Independent Schools Inspectorate**
ISLLC	**Interstate Schools Leaders Licensure Consortium**
ISSR	**The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations**
KPI	**Key Performance Indicator**
LAHC	**Latin American Heads Conference**
NCE	**National College of Education**
NCSL	**National College for School Leadership**
NLE	**National Leaders of Education**
NPQH	**National Professional Qualification for Headship**
NQT	**Newly Qualified Teacher**
OECD	**Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development**
Ofsted	**Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills**
SCIS	**Scottish Council of Independent Schools**
SEC	**Special Education Committee**
SEF	**Self-Evaluation Form**
SoH	**Society of Heads**
TES	**Times Education Supplement**
VAL-Ed	**Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education**

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Abstract

The principal behind the report.

An exploration of the evaluation perceptions of British Schools Overseas' principals.

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Thousands of schools across the globe call themselves 'British', but there are only a limited number that are officially recognised by the Department for Education (DfE) in England under the British Schools Overseas (BSO) voluntary inspection scheme. Approved inspection providers accredit schools and publish a report on their findings making BSOs comparable to independent schools in England. Details of BSOs are publicly recorded in a database called 'Get Information About Schools' (GIAS) alongside all other DfE recognised schools. The BSO inspection scheme and the locations in which BSOs are found around the world provides the backdrop to a context where comparatively little is known about the principals of BSOs, about how they are evaluated and about their evaluation perceptions.

This socially constructed phenomenological inquiry explores the evaluation experiences of a sample of BSO principals from six different countries. Themes and interpretations are drawn from data gathered in semi-structured interviews conducted directly with the principals. Survey responses, document analysis and extensive field notes as well as the views of a number of experts in the field are also used. The findings indicate that BSO principals are evaluated for a variety of reasons in a range of settings, where evaluation methods are influenced by how school ownership is structured, by competencies in evaluation ability and by how the results are handled. The findings also point out challenges to the overall BSO inspection scheme.

The strength of this study is its exploratory nature which is significant for international school leadership, for principal evaluation and for those who have a wider academic interest in international education. This report on the evaluation perceptions of BSO principals contributes to a previously limited corpus of knowledge on the subject.

Chapter 1 Introduction to the study

1.1 Introduction

The international schools' sector has grown dramatically in recent years. It is a complex landscape and finding a suitable definition for the sector is a challenge. The range and type of schools that are found in the environment are problematic to classify and this is further compounded by multifarious contexts. The British School Overseas (BSO) is a particular type of international school that is accredited by the Department for Education (DfE) in England under a voluntary schools' inspection scheme that was introduced in 2010. The formal leader of the BSO is the principal. This study centres on the evaluation perceptions of the BSO principal.

As a relatively new sector, there is not much known about BSOs and there is limited knowledge about the principals of BSOs. As the formal school leader of a BSO, the principal can be compared in the literature to other school leadership types including those found in national settings. At the same time, the BSO principal leader holds fundamental differences to other forms of school leadership, not least in its lack of definition. The context places these principals in schools that are found in a range of different countries and yet their schools are accredited in England under the BSO voluntary inspection scheme. The report that is generated following this voluntary school inspection must reflect the extent to which the British character of the school is evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching and student achievement. The inspection report also considers the school's leadership and management. A successful inspection leads to an accreditation by the DfE that sets BSOs uniquely apart from other international schools.

The research will explore the evaluation understandings of BSO principals and attempt to interpret what they are saying about those understandings. To help the inquiry, an attempt is made to develop a working definition for the BSO principal within its own context. In the course of the investigation, the principals' evaluation perceptions begin to emerge and, in the interest of coherence, these perceptions are framed under four broad headings that includes governance, procedures, capacity and the way results are used (OECD, 2013). This process reveals the ways that BSO principals are evaluated in

their local contexts and, at the same time, illuminates what informs their evaluations, which offers some challenges to the overall BSO sector. The evaluation understandings of these principals are significant not only for the BSO sector but also for the wider landscape of school leadership, of principal evaluation and the international schools' environment.

This introductory chapter provides a brief overview of the study. It explains the rationale, the research questions and the scope of the research followed by an introduction to the theoretical framework. The significance of the study is further explained. The chapter completes this introduction by providing a brief synopsis of the overall structure of the study.

1.2 Rationale

There are two factors that influence the decision to conduct an investigation into the evaluation perceptions of BSO principals. One factor is influenced by this researcher's experience of working as a school principal in the state sector in Ireland. This is a system where the formal evaluation of school principals is underdeveloped (Hislop, 2013). Other countries are known to conduct comprehensive school leader evaluations (Donaldson, Mavrogordato, Youngs, & Dougherty, 2020; Eddy-Spicer, Bubb, Earley, Crawford, & James, 2019; OECD, 2013; Pashiardis & Brauckmann, 2008), but the formal evaluation of the school principal's performance is arguably not a feature of the principal's working life in Ireland.

Another factor is this researcher's experience of working as an international school principal in a number of BSOs in different countries. In adapting to these environments, it became obvious to this researcher that there were many possibilities for principals to be evaluated. At the outset, the evaluation of BSO principals in their roles appeared to be due to the nature of the schools themselves. The BSOs were fee paying and independent with a commercial aspect. The schools were located internationally where expectations of their principals appeared to transcend business, cultural, pedagogical and operational landscapes. The schools' ownership and governance structures were diverse. Yet, these schools underwent a voluntary inspection scheme where the standards on which they were judged made them comparable to independent schools that are found in England. The

overarching influence on this inspection scheme was developed in the British education system in England over a period of thirty years.

The contextual diversity of these schools is intensified further as it appeared that, despite having a common inspection system, there was a variance in how BSO principals were assessed in their roles. The range of influences on these principals' evaluations makes their perspective relevant. A justification is created for investigating the viewpoint of these principals as the literature has very limited knowledge about their evaluation perceptions. Attempting to find the truth about the evaluation perceptions of BSO principals and interpreting what they are saying about evaluation might be of benefit to those systems that evaluate their principals and to those that do not evaluate their principals. These aspects provide a rationale for examining a previously underexplored area of research.

1.3 The Research Question

Research is defined by Creswell (2014) as "a cyclical process of steps that typically begins with identifying a research problem …" (p. 11). The identified research problem in this investigation is that not much is known about the evaluation perceptions of BSO principals where the methods and possibilities for evaluation appear diverse. The evaluation of a BSO principal is a phenomenon that is experienced by relatively few people. There are a limited number of principals that lead accredited BSOs at any point in time. Uncovering the truth about their evaluation perceptions requires an interrogative focus. Therefore, the research question is: "What are the evaluation perceptions of BSO principals?". Two further subsidiary questions are required in order to give foundation and context to the main question. The first subsidiary question is: "How are BSO principals evaluated?". The second subsidiary question is: "What informs BSO principal evaluations?". In attempting to answer these questions, the scope of the research needs to be established.

1.4 The Scope of the Research

On making some initial enquiries regarding the research problem, it became clear to this researcher that the landscape in relation to the topic of school principal evaluation was broad and that there was a variety of interpretations in relation to the evaluation of principals. It also became obvious that the

concept of principal evaluation, particularly from an international perspective, might be different to what was found in national systems. In the literature, principals in national systems did not appear to have a universal method for their own personal evaluation (Donaldson et al., 2020; Radinger, 2014) and there was limited knowledge about evaluation from international school principal environments. It appeared from the perspective of this researcher, who had worked in an international schools' environment, that there were a diverse number of possibilities for the principal to be evaluated. The extent of the research problem therefore required scoping in order to legitimise the research as the BSO is located internationally and thousands of international schools identify as 'British' (ISCResearch, 2020a). In order to research the principals of BSOs, it was important for this research to identify the accredited BSOs where they worked. Despite the limited knowledge about the evaluation environments in which these BSO principals operated, schools that identified as BSOs had at least undertaken a school inspection for their accreditation. This BSO accreditation was therefore able to provide the starting point from which to accurately scope the problem.

BSOs are accredited by a government in England that provide a legitimate, stable and continuous education to its own country. These are important aspects in scoping the research. However, legitimacy is a socially constructed perception (Suddaby, Bitektine, & Haack, 2017) and it is based on accepted norms and beliefs in how things are done and how they are viewed. These aspects in the evaluation of organisations provides stability and continuity (Mertens & Wilson, 2018; Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). This is an important perspective for institutional organisations, such as schools, as it provides meaning and a stability to social life (Scott, 2014).

A contrasting perspective is that BSOs do not have legitimacy as they are found in complex international environments. This complexity is often manifested in consistent change such as the turnover of staff and students leading to notions of disruption, re-organisation, lack of authenticity and a fluidity that is sometimes found in complex theory (Byrne & Callaghan, 2013). These aspects create a challenge in trying to bring order and stability to any system including the scoping of a research problem. There are many countries around the world that have underdeveloped education systems and that do not have the required stability to conduct evaluations in such complexity. However, the British government arguably provides the accreditation of BSOs with a legitimate and stable system despite

the complexity of these international environments. This aspect provided the relevance for examining the principals of accredited BSOs as a legitimate group. Therefore, the scope of this research is focused on the principals of accredited BSOs.

Having established the focus, a suitable framework was required in order to achieve coherence in the report. This was accomplished by adapting a conceptual framework originally designed by policy analysts who researched evaluation and assessment policies, including those for school principals, across a number of countries (OECD, 2013). The use of broad headings such as governance, procedures, capacity and the way that results are used helped to capture themes as they emerged from the data. Understanding why the BSO is a legitimate environment became foundational to understanding why the BSO principal was a legitimate research possibility. This perspective, combined with the adapted conceptual framework, helped to confine the scope of this inquiry.

1.5 The Theoretical Framework

Ontologically this inquiry is based on researching the evaluation perceptions of BSO principals about which there is very little previous knowledge. The aim is to explore, understand and describe the realities of their evaluation experiences and to interpret what they are saying about those realities by extracting meaning. This is a qualitative perspective that is based on the social construction of knowledge. The emergence of the knowledge signals the inductive approach that is taken. Describing the lived experiences of this community of principals and isolating their evaluation experiences is arguably best suited to a phenomenological approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach includes using direct quotations and transcripts as a way of including the voices of these principals. The focus is to gather rich experiential data from a well situated sample (Dibley, Dickerson, Duffy, & Vandermause, 2020). However, while phenomenological research relates lived experiences, there are other aspects that sometimes relate more than the lived experience in itself. Consideration for these aspects is also relevant to provide context to the understanding and helps with making sense of the experience. It is therefore important to this inquiry that the researcher, having lived the life of an international principal, highlights any underlying bias in describing the phenomenon and provides for ‘abstemious reflection’ as described by Van Manen (2014). Guidance for analysing the emerging

themes is provided by Braun & Clarke (2013) who identify six phases in thematic analysis. Several data gathering instruments are used in the research including an online survey, a semi-structured interview, audio notes, field diaries and document analysis of officially published reports and records.

1.6 Significance of the Study

There is very limited research about the evaluation perceptions of BSO principals. Evaluating a school principal's worth to an organisation can be challenging (Donaldson et al., 2020; Fullan, 2018a; Goldring, Cravens, Porter, Murphy, & Elliott, 2015; Grissom, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2015; Leithwood, 2019). The deep connect between the business of being a school leader and the business of the institution itself is complex.

BSO principals work in an international context that is complex. The environment has many differences to arguably more stable national perspectives in areas such as culture, pedagogy and language. The debate in favour of examining the evaluation perceptions of BSO principals is to place a spotlight on a phenomenon that is relatively underexplored and under-represented in the corpus. Drawing from the perceptions of BSO principals is an arguably fresh approach that has significance to the world of school principal evaluation, school leadership and the international schools' environment. Despite the complexity of the environment, there is a chance that there is value in the findings of this investigation for those who have stable and continuous environments from which to conduct principal evaluations.

1.7 Thesis Structure

This thesis consists of seven chapters. This first chapter has introduced the study, explaining the rationale, the research question, the scope of the research and the significance of the study. It also introduces the theoretical framework and outlines the structure of the thesis. Chapter two relates the historical and locational contexts for the BSO principal. The historical background is traced to transformative changes in the British education system from the late 1990s. The locational context places the BSO in the ill-defined international schools' sector. The context also introduces the BSO voluntary inspection scheme.

Chapter three is a review of the literature. Understanding the BSO principal may arguably only be gained by examining comparative forms of school leadership, as the literature is extremely limited with regard to BSO principal leadership. An attempt is made in this chapter to situate the BSO principal in the literature. Perceptions of efficacy and excellence are examined with regard to school leadership as are concepts of evaluation and evaluation standards around the world. The challenges in evaluating the formal school principal leader are discussed as attempts continue to try and find a robust system for school principal evaluation.

Chapter four focuses on the methodology adopted, the philosophical approaches and the research design. The data collection and analysis procedures used in the study are outlined and the reasons behind the various approaches are explained including the ethical considerations, sample selection, triangulation and quality control.

Chapter five outlines the findings of the study. The themes from the data are brought together under four broad headings in order to interpret the evaluation perceptions of the BSO principals. Environment includes themes regarding the structure of BSO ownership where four variants of ownership are found to exist in this sector. These variants influence the governance of the schools and the evaluation perceptions of the principals. Procedures for evaluation emerge to reveal the motives for BSO principals' evaluations and the methods used to conduct them. Capacity reveals perceptions about the abilities for evaluation among those taking part. The way results are used uncovers the principals' perceptions of sharing, fairness, accuracy and how they remain upskilled and supported in their work. The way results are used also incorporates an analysis of BSO inspection reports and a document analysis of how BSO data is recorded.

Chapter six provides a discussion of the findings under the four broad headings that have already been described. In this chapter the argument is also developed towards a definition of the BSO principal.

Chapter seven concludes the research and includes the contribution and limitations of the study. It also makes some recommendations for further research and ends with a reflection on the study. The references and appendices are located at the end of this thesis.

Chapter 2 Background and Context

2.1 Introduction

Two significant contextual aspects of the contemporary BSO have helped to form its identity as we know it today. The historical context derives from a series of transformative changes that took place in the British education system over a period of 30 years, at a time when tradition and choice continued to sustain demand for an independent school system. The locational context for the BSO is found in countries in different parts of the world, but not in England. These locations provide the environment in which the BSO principal is evaluated.

This chapter begins by outlining how dramatic educational change influenced school leadership in England from the late 1980s. These developments were concentrated on the state sector but they also affected private independent schools that later began to expand abroad. Internationally, private independent schools from England competed with other school types that, in many respects, were similar to their own systems. The diverse international schools' landscape in which these private independent schools find themselves has grown dramatically over recent decades and has become a multibillion-euro industry (ISCResearch, 2020a).

This chapter explains how attempts to classify the growing international schools sector are complex and are still evolving (Bunnell, Courtois, & Donnelly, 2020; Hayden & Thompson, 2013). In this environment, British international schools are a model where instruction is conducted through the medium of English. Although their accountability structures are disparate, British international schools have managed to find support among the public, among the business world and in diplomatic circles. This chapter reveals how some British international schools are recognised officially by the DfE in England under the BSO voluntary inspection scheme (DfE, 2016b). This formal acknowledgement by the British government characterises these schools as BSOs and recognises them exclusively among international schools by accrediting them side by side with comparable institutions in England. Questions at the heart of this research investigate how the principals of these BSOs perceive their evaluation processes and how these processes inform their leadership and work experiences.

2.2 The Influence of Educational Change on School Leadership in England

To examine the genesis of the BSO model, this contextual overview commences in the 1980s. This was a time when a series of statutory changes transformed the way schools in England operated. Arguably, the most important piece of legislation in this period was the Education Reform Act (Parliament, 1988). This was followed, in 1992, with the creation of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) to replace Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) as the national schools' inspectorate. In his annual report 1993/94, the Chief Inspector of Schools Chris Woodhead mentions how the introduction of accredited inspection providers in the previous year had helped with the work of Ofsted inspectors (Ofsted, 1995). Qualified external organisations were allowed to tender for contracts to inspect schools and to become approved inspection providers. Ofsted, who monitored the work of these inspection providers, were pleased with their progress: "Our monitoring of inspection in all types of schools shows basically a positive picture" (p. 8).

In 1996, the Blair government's renowned declarations of "education, education, education" signalled that school improvement and school performance were to become a national priority. Government investment began to accompany increased demands for ever greater levels of accountability among state schools (Blair, 1996). Under the re-elected Blair government in the year 2000, schools deemed to be underperforming were allowed a fresh start by legislation (DfE, 2014b). To differentiate such schools from local authority schools, they were dubbed 'academies'. Although these academy schools were funded by the DfE, they were also required to seek a private sponsor to run them. Soon, any school could apply to become an academy if their governors found a suitable sponsor under certain conditions. The main motivation for schools to become academies was access to additional funding and increased levels of autonomy (DfE, 2014b).

As an explicit acknowledgement of the importance of the principal, or headteacher, in this school improvement initiative, the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) was established in 2000 (NCSL, 2012). Four years later, the *National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers* was published (DfE, 2004). These standards aimed to create exemplars of headteachers' performance requirements at a time of continuing educational reform and further responsibilities were placed on headteachers.

From 2005, school inspection reports were openly published and they included judgements on the leadership and performance of the schools' headteachers. By this time, headteachers were encouraged to keep a Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) in which they could provide visiting Ofsted inspectors with contextual and procedural information about their schools (MacBeath, 2006).

The following year, the NCSL formed a new entity known as *The National Leaders in Education* (NLE). The aim of this body was to bring together identified school leaders who were deemed to be high performing with a view to encouraging a system of mutual support among them (NCSL, 2012). In order to become an NLE, a headteacher needed not only to be the leader of a school with the highest Ofsted grading but also to have the necessary skills to train other colleagues. In seeking, therefore, to understand what Ofsted required in its inspections processes, many such headteachers trained to be inspectors.

The NCSL also developed a new development programme for headteachers called *'The National Professional Qualification for Headship'* (NPQH) (NCSL, 2012). Completing this programme became a mandatory qualification for new headteachers. However, following the global financial crisis in 2008, the NCSL no longer operated as an independent organisation. By 2012, it had lost most of its funding and became part of the DfE. Today, the NPQH qualification is no longer mandatory.

A review of the first decade of the new century highlights that a significant number of government-led school effectiveness initiatives were introduced. These developments were arguably driven by a realisation that schools in England were not doing as well as expected, when compared internationally, in reports published by *The Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA) (Adams, 2013).

Subsequently, the DfE began to encourage effective school leaders in successful schools to operate as conduits for strengthening the work of less successful schools giving rise to a practice of system leadership (NCSL, 2012). During this time, school leaders became increasingly accountable for the outcome of school inspections and for the quality of the education provided to students. This augmented accountability increased the risk of dismissal for headteachers particularly in cases where schools were shown to be significantly under-performing. As successive British governments sought to reduce the influence of local authorities in the school system, the concentration was focused on

greater collaboration among schools (NCTL, 2014). After a comprehensive review in 2014, the *National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers* were updated to shape headteachers' own professional practices, to support headteacher recruitment and to inform headteacher appraisal (DfE, 2015). School governance arrangements also changed during this time. Groups of academy schools clustered together to form 'federations', that were overseen by a single governance body called a 'trust'. The role of the headteacher broadened to encompass that of systems leadership and some headteachers became chief executive officers (CEOs) of their federations. Other headteachers were chosen to remain in charge as headteachers in their individual schools where they came subjected to increasingly rigorous accountability measures. Academy schools implemented the national curriculum autonomously and they had the freedom to set their own salary scales for school staff. The issue of pay in academies is still a continuing concern for reformers (DfE, 2019a). By 2020, the changes to the system resulted in over 8,000 academies providing education for 3.8 million children in England (DfE, 2019a). The expectations placed on headteachers and the way in which they carried out their work changed dramatically.

This complete transformation of the state school system also impacted on the private independent school sector. In order to provide consistency with the demands on the state sector, the Independent School Standards Regulations were introduced in 2015 to ensure compliance among independent schools (ISSR, 2014).

2.3 The Private Independent School

The *private independent school* is a school that is independent in its governance and finances. Some slight variations are noted with regard to the term in some countries (CAIS, 2020; NAIS, 2020; UKISD, 2019). In Canada, for example, independent schools refer to elementary and secondary schools that are run on a not-for-profit basis (CAIS, 2020). These types of schools follow the requirements of the province in which they are located, but they are not answerable to the provincial Ministry of Education.

In the United States, private independent schools own, govern and finance themselves (NAIS, 2020). They are not subject to government oversight, but they are accredited to one of a number of

accreditation agencies. The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) is one such organisation (NAIS, 2020).

In the United Kingdom (UK), private independent schools are fee paying and they are governed by a board of governors. They are subject to oversight by the DfE under the Independent Schools Standards Regulations (ISSR, 2014; UKISD, 2019). Some private independent schools are well known and have long historical traditions that date back centuries. Eton College (founded 1440), Harrow School (founded 1571), and Winchester College (founded 1382) are among the most well-known.

In order for private independent schools in England to be officially recognised by the DfE, they must become members of one of a number of membership associations that serve their needs. Notably, it is the headteacher who is recognised as the association member and not the school (ISC, 2021a). These associations are members of an umbrella group known as '*The Independent Schools Council'* (ISC).

2.4 The Independent Schools Council

The Independent Schools Council (ISC) is an organisation that was set up to promote the needs of the independent education sector (ISC, 2021a). According to its website, ISC member schools "educate more than 500,000 children in the UK" and this represents approximately 80% of the students in the independent school sector (ISC, 2021a). In October 2018, the ISC published a commissioned report entitled '*The impact of Independent schools on the UK economy*'. This report examined the impact on the wider UK economy of its constituent association members (ISC, 2019b). The report stated, that in 2017, the ISC organisation of schools contributed over £11bn to the UK economy. Furthermore, in 2020, with over 532,000 students enrolled in 1,377 schools, the ISC accounted for six per cent of the entire school population in the UK (ISC, 2021b).

This latest ISC commissioned report was published at a time in Britain when there was continuing concern about a cultural class divide (Harris, 2018; Kynaston & Green, 2019), particularly in the wake of the Brexit referendum in June 2016. The vote in the Brexit referendum, in which 52% of the British public favoured to leave the European Union (EU), raised significant class and culture issues especially with regard to education and schooling. Part of the debate around the Brexit vote focused

on those members of society who had attended private independent schools and on their influence on the country as a whole. During this period, two key politicians in the UK, both of whom attended Eton College (Reeves, Friedman, Rahal, & Flemmen, 2017) found themselves on differing sides of the Brexit debate. David Cameron, the former Prime Minister who was an advocate for the UK remaining within the EU, was opposed by Boris Johnson who supported the leave campaign. Boris Johnson was elected UK Prime Minister on 24 July 2019.

An organisation that is concerned with social mobility called *'The Sutton Trust'* tracked the educational backgrounds of those who were considered influential in UK public life in areas such as law, the military, medicine, journalism, politics, business and the civil service (Kirby, 2016). The report found that these areas of society were dominated by individuals who had attended private independent schools. The Sutton Trust report articulated the concern that, in order to influence the direction of the country, one must have attended a private independent school.

The choice of schooling, and the influence that this may bring to bear, became an issue for school reformers. The perceived capacity of private schools to adapt better than those in the state sector to societal demands for greater academic success gave fuel to the notion that private schools were creating better life chances for their students (Kynaston & Green, 2019). It was also perceived that private schools were not as subject to reform measures as their state counterparts. This was not a new debate and was openly criticised by the British playwright, Alan Bennett, who railed against the inequalities of the British education system in a widely covered lecture at Cambridge University in 2014:

> "My objection to private education is simply put. It is not fair. And to say that nothing is fair is not an answer. Governments, even this one, exist to make the nation's circumstances more fair, but no government, whatever its complexion, has dared to tackle private education" (Milmo, 2014).

At the time of researching and writing this report, many other aspects to this debate are still noted in UK society, particularly in England, where the subject remains topical. The perception exists, for example, that state school students were more disadvantaged than private school students during the summer examinations of 2020 at the height of the global Covid-19 pandemic (Williams, 2020). After

the written examinations were cancelled, students in private independent schools were perceived to have received higher calculated grades because their schools were believed to be higher performing than state schools.

2.5 The Associations

In order for the school to be recognised by the DfE, the headteacher of a private independent school is required to be a member of an accreditation body known as an 'association'(ISC, 2019a). There are currently seven '*Heads' Associations'* that are members of the ISC (Table 1). Each association has its own executive committee and the members of the associations make up the ISC board of directors. The membership acceptance criteria involve an accreditation visit to the headteacher's school by association members where an assessment of the headteacher's professionalism and integrity is conducted. The headteacher is also required to provide a school inspection report that is deemed acceptable to the association. Evidence of academic standards is provided along with a subscription fee that is generally paid by the school.

Table 1 The Heads' Association Members of the ISC

Girls' Schools Association (GSA)	The main association to which headteachers of girls' senior independent schools belong (GSA, 2019)
Headmasters' & Headmistresses' Conference (HMC)	Represents the interests of over 280 headteachers of private independent boys', girls' and co-educational senior schools both in the UK and abroad (HMC, 2019).
Independent Association of Prep Schools (IAPS)	Comprised of over 600 headteachers of independent schools for children aged 2 to 16+ in the UK and abroad (IAPS, 2019).
Independent Schools Association (ISA)	Represents over 500 headteachers of independent preparatory, senior and all-through schools (ISA, 2019).
The Society of Heads (SoH)	Membership includes the headteachers of independent schools of all sizes many of which are boarding schools (SOH, 2019).
Association of Governing Bodies of Independent Schools (AGBIS)	An organisation representing the interests of governing bodies of ISC schools where the headteachers are already members of ISC Associations (AGBIS, 2019a).
Independent Schools' Bursars Association (ISBA)	A body supporting over 960 members of independent schools as businesses and charities (ISBA, 2019).

Other organisations cannot become direct members of the ISC, but are allowed to join as 'affiliates' (ISC, 2019a) (Table 2).

Table 2 ISC Affiliate Organisations

Council of British International Schools (COBIS)	Promotes the interests of British overseas schools. Accreditation includes an inspection by an approved BSO inspectorate, and/or compliance with their own accreditation scheme (COBIS, 2017).
Boarding Schools Association (BSA)	A UK association for both the independent and the maintained sectors (BSA, 2019).
Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS)	Represents the interests of independent schools in Scotland (SCIS, 2019).
Welsh Independent Schools Council (WISC)	A consultative and advisory body for independent schools in Wales (WISC, 2019).

2.6 The Governance of Private Independent Schools

One of the membership organisations that represents the interests of governing bodies of ISC schools is the Association of Governing Bodies of Independent Schools (AGBIS). Formed in 2002, following the merger of the historical Governing Bodies Association (GBA) and The Governing Bodies of Girls' Schools Association (GBGSA), AGBIS provides private independent schools with a set of guidelines for governors and a framework for good practice based on related legislation (AGBIS, 2019b). According to AGBIS' guidelines, the governing body is responsible for the aims and the overall conduct of the school. The guidelines state that members of the governing board should come from a diverse variety of backgrounds and should offer appropriate levels of knowledge to assist decision-making. Regarding the role of parents, the guidelines suggest that it is beneficial to have some parents involved on the board, but not "too many" (p. 7) as they need to have "sympathy" (p. 7) with the longer-term aims of the school and not simply the period during which their children are attending. Despite the wide diversity among independent schools, the guidelines state that "the responsibilities of their governors are broadly similar and regulatory requirements apply equally to all independent schools" (p. 4).

The guidelines refer to the chairperson of the governing board as the 'Chair', and to the headteacher as the 'Head'. The Chair is described as having a "vital role as critical friend in supporting, guiding and liaising with the Head". In order for the board to function effectively, the Chair must be aware that "authority lies with the board collectively" (p. 11). The guidelines affirm that the governing body is "concerned with aims, policies and plans" (p. 19), while the Head and the senior team "manage and administer the school with the support of the governors, while recognising their accountability to the governors" (p. 19). The guidelines state that the relationship can be complex and that it is important that the Head "should not feel under constant, critical scrutiny and should be seen to have wide discretion in leading the school and determining its character, consistent with delivering the agreed overall strategy" (p. 20).

The guidelines advise that statutory policies are required for the operation of the school by legislation under the Independent School Standards regulations (ISSR, 2014) and their execution are subject to inspection. In terms of the evaluation of the headteacher, the guidelines recommend that the relationship between the governing body and the Head should be a discussion with "a generous recognition by the governing body that the Head has full freedom of operation in the discharge of responsibility within an agreed strategy" (section 3.27, p. 22). It is deemed as good practice "to conduct a performance review of the Head" every two or three years (section 3.27, p. 22). The guidelines also give instructions on how this review should be conducted as a matter of good practice stating that it is a requirement that the performance of the headteacher should be reviewed, and that a 'framework of performance' should be clear from the day that the headteacher is appointed (p. 49).

In terms of the underlying principles for a performance review, AGBIS guides that the purpose of the review should be both positive and objective. The gathering of a broad range of evidence from different viewpoints is encouraged by AGBIS and feedback should be constructive and periodic. Following these procedures, according to AGBIS, should leave the headteacher clear about performance in order to be in a position to prioritise next steps "usually linked to the school's strategic / development plan(s)" (p. 49).

The guidelines also provide direction on when the performance review should take place, recommending that this should be bolstered by internal reviews. It is recommended that the

performance review should include the views of “a range of stakeholders”, including those of the governing body (p. 50). The review should also include school performance data indicating student outcomes and student progress against previously agreed targets. The outcome of an internal review should be discussed between both parties recommending that the full review should most likely include an external assessment and a self-evaluation as an essential part of that process. Where necessary, both parties should agree specific focus areas for a follow-up review. The way the report is to be structured should be agreed before signing it off, according to the guidelines

With regard to the governance of private independent schools in England, AGBIS has a significant influence over its own membership. However, despite having some overseas schools in their membership, AGBIS’ actual influence over the governance of schools abroad requires research.

2.7 The Charitable Status of Private Independent Schools

The ISC reports that 73% of its schools are charities (ISC, 2021b), even though members are private independent schools where tuition fees are charged. Some of the reasons for this can be ascribed to an historical legacy where benefactors supported schools as part of their charitable aims. In modern times, charities can take advantage of various tax concessions, which is arguably significant.

The Charity Commission in England regulates charities under the provisions of the Charities Act 2011 (Government, 2011). The role of the Charity Commission includes deciding whether organisations are charitable and whether they provide a public benefit (Commission, 2021).

In the statute, the definition of ‘public benefit’ was unclear. So, the Charity Commission issued a guidance document to charities in 2008. Following a judicial review brought by the ISC, and reflected in Part 17 of the Act (Government, 2011), the Charity Commission provided updated guidance in 2013 (Commission, 2021). This clarified the manner in which independent schools, that were registered as charities, might make provision for the benefit of children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Provisions included offering bursaries, allowing state sector pupils to use their educational facilities, sharing knowledge with state schools and setting up partnerships with state sector schools. It was left to the trustees of each school to decide how the provision would be made. In

a recent annual census (ISC, 2021b), the ISC reported that their schools had established 11,720 partnerships, raised over £11m for charities and provided £440m in means tested bursaries.

To pay for bursaries and other acts of public benefit, some private independent schools broadened their traditional fundraising models (ISC, 2021b). They began to generate new revenue streams by moving into the international schools' sector. The intent behind some of this activity was made explicit in a report by 'The Financial Times', where representatives from one private independent school stated that part of the fee from consultancy services earned by opening a new school in China was 'to fund bursaries for poorer pupils in the UK' (Wright, 2017). However, schools also document their overseas work in their financial submissions to the Charity Commission. The reasons for another school's expansion outside the UK is expressed in its financial return that was sent to the Charities Commission (Commission, 2021). This 2019 financial return (Haysmacintyre, 2020a) stated that 'overseas income 'was used to support;

> "the ongoing leadership development and training programme for senior staff members of the schools in the UK and overseas, for ongoing development of best practice throughout the family of schools, to assist the facilities improvement programme in the UK, and to help support the College's areas of public benefit".

Some private independent schools do not have to be located in England in order to be registered as charities. A private independent school located in Greece avails of the benefits of UK charitable status on a £14m income by retaining a registered office in London (Catherine's, 2019). There are different perspectives on why private independent schools can register as charities and it has been a topic of debate in England (Henry, 2018; Higgins, 2021; Turner, 2021).

2.8 Private Independent Schools Expand Abroad

According to the ISC, members of their association operate 81 campuses overseas that are responsible for the education of over 52,000 students in 2021 (ISC, 2021b). Some of these campuses are established under franchising agreements with local operators. There are many aspects to franchising (Hoy, Perrigot, & Terry, 2017) and it can be defined as "a strategy for cloning a business through the replication of proven business and management systems" (p. 1). Bunnell has written extensively about

the replication and franchising of private independent schools abroad. He argues that this is done so that schools can increase their revenue streams in England (Bunnell, 2008, 2014, 2019). Franchising has become an increasingly important aspect of the private independent school sector with many schools evolving into large international operations (Bunnell, 2014, 2019). Since the year 2000, Bunnell has identified three growth waves of the opening of branches of British private independent schools overseas (Bunnell, 2008; Bunnell et al., 2020). Well-known schools, such as Dulwich College, franchise their brands to local investors in the Middle East and China for fees based on royalties and percentages of tuition fee income (Haysmacintyre, 2020b).

However, the existence of large international educational companies operating in the same arena as these franchised private independent schools is also relevant. These are businesses that replicate schools based on British models across the world, but they do not have franchising agreements with existing private independent schools in the UK. Activity among these types of corporations is significant financially and is evidenced in the stock market listing of the Hong Kong based British company Nord Anglia Education (NYSE:NORD) (Bloomberg, 2020). It is also evident in the proposed selling of shares by the Dubai based conglomerate GEMS Education (Parasie & Nair, 2020). This latter sale is expected to raise up to $200 million.

Little attention is being paid to the implications of the development of these different models of British school for the theory and practice of school leadership. This is a lacuna that this study seeks to address.

2.9 Headteachers Follow Schools Abroad

Attractive opportunities are, arguably, created for school leaders by the global development of these types of British school models. The number of headteachers who are familiar with the English system and who opt to work abroad in schools increased substantially in the past few years (Lynch & Worth, 2017). This arguably creates leadership retention and recruitment challenges in the UK, popularly referred to as the ‘brain drain’(Henshaw, 2018). The school leaders bring with them the skills and practices they learned as part of the transformation of English education following policy changes in the 1990s and the introduction of the Education Reform Act in 1988 (Parliament, 1988). Their

knowledge of the National Curriculum for England (2014) that was established under the same Education Reform Act (1988) has a fundamental impact on the type of influence brought to bear by British modelled schools on the international school sector.

2.10 The International School Sector

In order to understand the context facing these British headteachers, or principals, we must first consider the international school sector in its entirety. Academic research into international schools is very limited (Bunnell, 2019; Bunnell et al., 2020). It is a similar tale for international school leadership.

Bunnell (2014) has argued that the multitude of different institutions that use nebulous terms like 'international school' and 'international education' have made it difficult to agree on definitions. The international school is described as an enigma that eludes accurate description (Salter, 1999). There is little consensus around the terminology, so that even the term 'international' has different meanings (Carder, 2013).

Bunnell has attempted to reframe the notion of international schools by proposing the term 'international schooling', as distinct from 'international education' (Bunnell, 2014). He argues that the latter has connotations for Higher Education and the wider landscape of the business of education. In his writing about the 'field of international schooling', even the term 'field' does not have "exact classification and categorization" such is the diversity and ambiguity of this subject (p. 1).

ISC Research (ISCResearch, 2020a) provides data that attempts to quantify the international schools' market, but such is the pace of growth and change that its own researchers in the field have resorted to using loose terms and descriptions. In its website, ISC Research considers a school to be an "international school" in its data, if it meets certain criteria (ISCResearch, 2020b):

> "If the school delivers a curriculum to any combination of pre-school, primary or secondary students, wholly or partly in English outside an English-speaking country, or, if a school is in a country where English is one of the official languages, it offers an English-medium curriculum other than the country's national curriculum and the school is international in its orientation".

However, locations such as Anguila and Zimbabwe are among a wide array of nations where English is one of the official languages (WorldAtlas, 2018). From this perspective, the 'international school' is conceptualised as a term that requires further research and definition.

Despite the problems with definition, attempts have been made to 'group' the international school sector into types. Hayden & Thompson (2013) proposed a categorisation of international schools (Table 3). In their study, they identify Type A as being the traditional form of international school catering for expatriates who are globally mobile. They identify Type B as those schools that focus on more ideologically based sentiments. They also identify a newer model, Type C, that is based on schools with a commercial footing aimed at host country nationals (Hayden & Thompson, 2013).

Table 3 International School Types (Hayden & Thompson, 2013, 2016)

Type A Schools	the 'traditional' form of international school catering principally for globally mobile expatriates
Type B Schools	the more ideologically focused schools, founded for that particular purpose and not created to respond to a market need
Type C Schools	the newer, non-traditional type of international school aimed largely at host country nationals and, very often, operated on a more commercial footing than Type A and Type B schools
Type C subtypes	Subtypes of Type C that can be categorised separately.

Later this work (2013) is extended and these researchers acknowledge that the Type C category incorporates numerous groups of commercially operated schools, or subtypes, that could be represented separately (Hayden & Thompson, 2016).

2.11 English Medium International Schools

Richard Gaskell is a market researcher and contributor to conferences attended by principals of international schools for many years. He acknowledges (Gaskell, 2016) that since 2000 there has been a "staggering growth" in the numbers of international schools as the "market continues to expand at pace" (p. 24). In 2000, ISC Research reported that there were 2,584 schools worldwide that presented their curriculum wholly, or partly, in the English language (ISCResearch, 2020a). These schools were known as 'English medium' international schools and they represented 969,000 students and 90,000 staff with a fee income of $4.9bn. In 2020, the number of English medium international schools that present their curriculum wholly, or partly, in English is 11,616 schools worldwide serving 5.98m students, and employing 554,000 staff, with a fee income of $54.8bn (Table 4).

Table 4 The growth of English Medium Schools 2000-2020

Year	2000	2020
Schools	2,584	11, 451
Students	969,000	5.82m
Staff	90,000	554,000
Fee Income	$4.9bn	$54.8bn

As has already been mentioned, the growth in this sector has led Bunnell to write a number of texts (Bunnell, 2008, 2014, 2019) that seek to act as a 'marker', or milestone, in order to record the extraordinary speed of advancement of this diverse and imprecisely defined education sector.

2.12 International Demand for the National Curriculum for England

Much of the limited research on English medium international schools focuses on schools offering the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum framework (Hill, 2007, 2012; Lee, Hallinger, & Walker, 2012). Recent years, however, have seen a growth in demand for schools offering the National Curriculum for England (Parliament, 1988). There is great demand in overseas locations for principals who arrive directly from England with knowledge of the National Curriculum for England (NCE). Principal positions are widely advertised by international recruitment agencies online (Tes, 2021).

These developments are important as they have facilitated British principals to work in international schools that are using the NCE, or versions of it, which is familiar to them. Much of the interest arguably comes from private education providers. They have attempted to import not only national systems like that of England but also varieties of curricula from the United States, Canada, and Australia into other countries (Verger, Lubienski, & Steiner-Khamsi, 2016). These providers try to meet the requirements of parents who are seeking a private education in those curricula for their children.

Where demand is high for a British education, knowledge of the NCE is deemed as crucial for principals in some countries and of central importance to the success of some schools. Those schools that offer the NCE, in this ambiguously defined sector, operate in a wide variety of local inspection systems. These inspection systems are disparate and diverse. They represent an array of complex arrangements filled with challenges for NCE schools relating to legitimacy and accountability. Legitimacy is an important element for NCE schools. Legitimacy helps to make distinctions from less desirable counterparts (Suddaby et al., 2017). Locations like the United Arab Emirates locally inspect schools that teach the NCE under their own inspection framework (KHDA, 2021), which is modelled on the DfE's education inspection framework (Ofsted, 2019b). Support for the development of this particular inspection system comes from consulting charities based in England, such as Education Development Trust, who have been working on developing inspection systems in countries, such as those in the Middle East, since 2007 (Trust, 2021). However, the number of schools that use the NCE exclusively and internationally is difficult to ascertain, but is continually in growth mode. The number of English medium schools being established increased by 349% between the year 2000 and 2020 (Table 4). Not all of these locations avail of consultancies from England and not all of them teach the NCE exclusively. How the NCE came to be adopted internationally as a curriculum framework and methodology requires further research. However, in attempts to differentiate themselves from other international schools, some schools have found endorsement among the public, the business world and in diplomatic circles.

2.13 The Endorsement of English Medium International Schools

There is no global authority on whether a school may describe itself as 'international'. The growing body of international schools in this educational environment is astonishingly diverse in terms of its ownership, philosophy and leadership (Bunnell, 2014). Despite the growth of accreditation in international schooling, the sector remains "a largely deregulated, unmonitored and decentralized field of educational activity" (p. 155).

A limited number of organisations and institutions have attempted to bring order to the context of international schools. Accreditation is offered by membership associations such as the Council of International Schools (COIS, 2021), whose vision is to inspire the development of global citizens. Some discussions are also concentrated on defining a sector using the vision and goals of the International Baccalaureate (IB) as a curriculum framework (Hill, 2007, 2012; Lee & Walker, 2018). Walker argues that schools that do not offer the IB framework cannot truly be considered international schools, but are 'outposts' of private independent schools (Walker, 2016).

While there may be some validity to Walker's argument, there are international schools offering the NCE that have no connection with private independent schools. Companies such as Nord Anglia (NordAnglia, 2020) and Orbital Education (Orbital, 2020) operate schools that do not have franchising arrangements with private independent schools in England. Providing a curriculum that includes examinations towards 'Advanced-Level' certification (A-Levels) and the General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE), or iGCSE (the international version), is considered a growth factor by many schools (Bunnell et al., 2020). The linking of secondary school qualifications to entry requirements for UK third level institutions is a significant factor in this context. In addition, international schools that offer the NCE are differentiated by these offerings. They are facilitated in the provision of secure and trustworthy ways of conducting such examinations by The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), which regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England (Ofqual, 2020). Qualifying schools are allowed to establish centres to sit these examinations and are given a specific examination centre number (JCQ, 2020). Provision for monitoring the examinations internationally, on behalf of Ofqual, is offered by private specialist organisations at qualifying centres located in overseas NCE schools (Edexcel, 2020; OxfordAQA,

2020). While the numbers are difficult to verify, the acceptance of these examination centres abroad by Ofqual ensures the public's endorsement of these schools.

Discussions on what differentiates international school provision also focuses on the business aspect of marketising education as a global industry (Bunnell, 2019). There is an increasing demand in the corporate world for international schools offering the NCE. Large education businesses have acquired schools, and groups of schools, for hundreds of millions of dollars. The CEO of a British education company based in Hong Kong argues that the value of this method of education is linked, as discussed above, to the access it gives to desired third level institutions: "The thing that an English language education offers is recognisable qualifications for most of the world's leading universities" (Jones, 2018). This pathway of entry, through accredited examinations, to British universities has not gone unnoticed by ambitious parents in many countries and this has led to the burgeoning expansion of the international schools market: "A prominent factor behind that has been a growing preference among wealthy families – notably in East Asia – to shun their own state schools in favour of an English language education at an International School" (Jones, 2018).

The growth in the business aspects of this form of international education has also come to the attention of the British Government after Britain voted to leave the European Union in June 2016. The Department of International Trade (DIT) was established 'post-Brexit' to identify Britain's commercial strengths and to help companies export abroad. One government adviser commented on how education became one of over a dozen subsectors being examined for growth by the DIT: "I think it is pretty amazing that education is considered as a key export given its size" (Nott, 2019). The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education reported that the UK was an approved third level accredited course provider for 22% of China's Transnational Education partnerships (QAA, 2017). In the spring of 2018, Prime Minister Theresa May led a large trade mission to China, agreeing post-Brexit deals worth £9bn. During the mission, the UK government announced 'a series of new educational links between the countries' (Hawks & Clark, 2018). This was at a time when some significant investments were being made by British companies such as Nord Anglia Education (NordAnglia, 2020) and Orbital Education (Orbital, 2020). One 3,500 student school, in which this researcher worked, was acquired by Nord Anglia in 2017 to add to its growing portfolio of schools.

The attractiveness of the venture hinged on the number of new students being registered at the school for up to three years before attending. This aspect, combined with a large kindergarten, helped create a pipeline of 'sales', or tuition fees. Other aspects, such as offering the NCE and having a recognisable British school management structure, also influenced the decision-making process. Nord Anglia, as of 2020, has 66 premium international schools based in 29 countries across four continents (NordAnglia, 2020). According to their website, Orbital Education specialises in 'English National Curriculum' schools and was awarded the 'Queen's Award for Enterprise: International Trade 2019' (Orbital, 2020). ISC Research reported that 81 ISC member schools were operating overseas campuses with a further 113 schools that were members of ISC associations and were educating over 52,000 students (ISC, 2021b). A report in one publication commented that British private independent schools dominate the English medium international schools sector (Santry, 2018).

Further endorsements help to differentiate English medium international schools as a sector. These endorsements are given by other well-established and accepted forms of legitimacy, such as that given by The Council of British International Schools (COBIS) which is an affiliate of the Independent Schools Council (ISC, 2020). COBIS has 270 overseas British schools in its membership and claims to have a student population of over 167,000 in its member schools across 80 countries (COBIS, 2020). The organisation offers an accreditation system for international schools called 'The Patrons Accreditation and Compliance'. This accreditation allows international schools to be recognised as 'British'. The DfE does not officially recognise this accreditation system designed by COBIS, but it is acknowledged as a further effort to bring order to the field. The CEO of COBIS stated in 2019: "We know that 55 of the current world leaders have been through some form of British education, 38% of Nobel Peace Prize winners again have had a British education, 160 countries worldwide follow our GCSE's and A-Levels". He argued that; " Our heritage, our innovation, our reputation, is certainly unquestioned" (Nott, 2019). In an arguable attempt to progress his organisation's accreditation ambitions with the DfE, the CEO questioned how British schools could continue to maintain their reputation and quality, and how they could continue to scale up as demand for the British brand of education increases.

An analysis of the potential for increasing the business aspects of British education is warranted. The provision of education overseas makes a significant contribution to the UK's soft power in international relations. More than 3,000 British school campuses overseas generate income streams of over £18bn (ISCResearch, 2019). As described earlier, this activity is deliberately encouraged as an export market by the British government. The notion of 'soft power' as coined by Joseph Nye conceptualises the export growth of 'British ethos' in terms of creativity, fashion, sport and education (Nye, 2009). This soft power can also be conceptualised as social and symbolic capital (Bunnell et al., 2020). Gardner-McTaggart (2018) equates some international private independent schools with high value social capital. This takes diverse forms in different countries but, in general, the student who avails of a private British education is more likely to attend higher status universities in the UK (Gardner-McTaggart, 2018).

The endorsement of some qualifying overseas British schools is also supported by the private independent school associations in England. Schools overseas are accepted into ISC affiliated associations such as the Independent Association of Prep Schools (IAPS) and the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC) who now have an international membership division (HMC, 2019). Thanks to these associations' organisational ties and recruitment channels, private independent schools can 'funnel' relationships between their schools and high-status universities (Green, 2016). Further endorsement is provided by a range of support consultancies, such as Educational Success Partners (ESP), who guide and 'empower' British schools worldwide (ESP, 2020). Additionally, associations, such as COBIS and the HMC, have strong social networks in British government circles. Executives from COBIS provide advisory and support services to British government interests, such as the DIT Education Sector Advisory Group (COBIS, 2020). The educational background of individuals who are influential in UK diplomatic circles dominate the alumni of schools that are members of associations, such as the HMC, as referred to earlier in The Sutton Trust Report (Kirby, 2016). Prominent politicians and former politicians from England are members of the governing boards of some overseas schools (College, 2021). This support provides endorsement to British schools operating abroad.

However, despite the fact that there are thousands of schools across the globe who call themselves ‘British’, or ‘English medium’, and despite their endorsement from a range of different areas, there are only a limited number of British schools officially recognised by the DfE in England (DfE, 2019b).

2.14 The British Schools Overseas Inspection Scheme

In an effort to place some regulation on schools identifying as ‘British’, the UK government established a voluntary inspection scheme in September 2010 (DfE, 2016b; Ofsted, 2011). Following an inspection, schools accredited by the DfE are officially recognised as ‘British Schools Overseas’ (BSOs). Accredited BSOs are held on a register of schools and are listed on an official public database called *‘Get Information About Schools’* (GIAS) with all other recognised schools in England (DfE, 2019b). In order to be registered on this public database, BSOs take part in a voluntary inspection scheme that is based on the DfE’s education inspection framework (Ofsted, 2019b). Before undertaking an inspection, schools must first have their membership accepted by a membership association (DfE, 2016b). There are various membership associations and schools operating internationally can apply for membership of COBIS (COBIS, 2020), of the Federation of British International Schools in Asia (FOBISSEA, 2020), of the British Schools in the Middle East (BSME, 2020), of The Latin American Heads Conference (LAHC, 2020), of the National Association of British Schools in Spain (NABSS, 2020) and of the Association of British Schools Overseas (AoBSO, 2020). Sometimes schools apply for membership to two or more associations, but at a minimum they apply to the association that serves their location. These associations provide a range of services to schools including the right under certain conditions to apply for a voluntary inspection under the BSO scheme (DfE, 2016b).

Each year the DfE approves a number of independent inspection service providers to inspect the schools in accordance with the standards developed for BSOs (DfE, 2016b). The DfE commissions Ofsted to monitor the work of these inspection providers. In 2020, approved inspection providers included companies such as Penta International (Penta, 2020), Education Development Trust (Trust, 2021) and the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI, 2021).

An agreement of understanding drawn up between Ofsted and the inspection service providers acts as a framework for communication and for working arrangements (Ofsted, 2012b). As part of the agreement, each inspection provider conducts inspections using their own inspection framework that is approved by Ofsted. These inspection frameworks must be based on the education inspection framework used in England (Ofsted, 2019b).

The inspection frameworks use a specific set of standards that was developed for BSOs (DfE, 2016a). These standards are modelled on those standards that were developed for independent schools in England (ISSR, 2014). Using the standards in a BSO inspection enables comparisons to be drawn between the school abroad and independent schools in England. Among the standards is an explicit standard relating to leadership and management. This standard provides for comparisons to be drawn between the principals and leadership of schools overseas and independent schools in England. BSO accreditation is required to be renewed every three years.

As it is each school's choice to be inspected under the standards, the inspection providers are paid privately by the school being inspected. The inspection providers produce a report for each school inspected and that report is published on each inspection provider's website. If the school reaches the required standard, then the school can become an accredited BSO. This allows the school to be officially registered as a 'British School Overseas' on the DfE's official GIAS database (DfE, 2019b). The main intention of the BSO standards is to inform the parents of students in BSOs how the standards of their school compare with the same standards that apply to independent schools in England. Inspection reports help to inform parents, and prospective parents, about the quality of educational provision within the inspected school.

Some advantages accrue for schools from BSO accreditation. Schools are allowed to place the BSO accredited logo on their websites and other forms of marketing material. Another advantage for schools with BSO accreditation is that they earn the right to take newly qualified British trained teachers (NQTs) through their induction into the teaching profession as they would if they were based in a school in England (DfE, 2018). Newly qualified graduates can travel abroad to work in accredited schools in order to pass their induction into the profession. Furthermore, the scheme also allows BSOs to enable experienced graduate teachers, who do not have a UK recognised teaching qualification, to

pursue a path towards ‘Qualified Teacher Status’ (QTS) in England. This is achieved through an ‘Assessment Only’ (AO) route in partnership with an approved appropriate body (DfE & NCTL, 2018). Those who gain QTS, via this route, are allowed to teach in England. The assessment of these NQTs and graduates is partly monitored by the BSO principal.

An essential element of a BSO inspection is considering the extent to which the British character of the school is evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for pupils and pupils’ achievements (DfE, 2016b). The British ‘character’ of the school is derived from the meaning of the term ‘British values’ that was first defined in the 2011 ‘Prevent Strategy’ and was presented by Lord Carlile to the British parliament (Carlile, 2011). The Prevent Strategy was formalised to help both independent and state schools in England in promoting British values. It guides the understanding of their responsibilities with regard to the prevention of terrorism and extremism. This guidance sets out the duty of all state and independent schools in England to ‘actively promote’ four British values of democracy: the rule of law; individual liberty and mutual respect for, and tolerance of, those with different faiths and beliefs. The guidance was further clarified by Ofsted’s Chief Inspector of Education (Spielman, 2018b), who confirmed that schools hold responsibility for the job of promoting British values and equalities. This responsibility includes promoting the freedom of belief, and the acceptance of the equal rights of women and minority groups. Thus, by achieving the standards laid out for BSO accreditation, schools can demonstrate that they provide a British education with British values that has similar characteristics to an education in an independent school in England.

2.15 The Nature of British Schools Overseas Inspections

When evaluating schools, BSO inspection service providers follow guidelines that are based on the education inspection framework used in England (Ofsted, 2019b). This framework for inspections is conducted under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005 (DfE, 2005); Section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 (DfE, 2008); the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (DfE, 2006b) and the Childcare Act 2006 (DfE, 2006a).

During BSO inspections, visiting inspectors must interpret grade descriptors in relation to pupils’ age, stage and phase of education. Key judgements are made on the overall effectiveness of the school

(Ofsted, 2015b). The leadership and management; quality of teaching, learning and assessment; personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils, and pupil outcomes all come under the scrutiny of the BSO inspectors. In making their judgements, BSO inspectors use a four-point scale that categorises grade descriptors into interpretations of outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate. These grade descriptors are not a checklist. Inspectors are encouraged to adopt a 'best-fit' approach by using their professional judgement against the standards (DfE, 2016b). If a school does not achieve the required standard for leadership and management, then the overall effectiveness of the school is judged as inadequate and the school is not accredited as a BSO.

Ofsted are commissioned by the DfE to monitor the work of inspection providers in the independent sector in England. It is also commissioned by the DfE to monitor the inspectorates of BSOs. Under Section 107 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 (DfE, 2008), the Chief Inspector of Education is required to report annually to the UK Secretary of State for Education on the quality of the inspection work carried out on independent schools in England by the inspectorates. In November 2018, Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman wrote to the Secretary of State for Education outlining the 'increasingly limited value' of these annual reports to the Education Secretary under the existing commissioning arrangements (Spielman, 2018a). She outlined how the existing arrangements were unable to provide a reasonable level of assurance about the quality of the inspectorates' work. She stated that this was due to spending cutbacks by the DfE, who had commissioned Ofsted to carry out the monitoring work.

With regard to monitoring the work of the BSO inspection providers, the Chief Inspector issues a different annual report to the Secretary of State for Education on the quality of the inspection work that is carried out by the approved inspectorates in accrediting BSOs (Ofsted, 2011, 2012a, 2013, 2014, 2015a, 2016b, 2018a, 2018b, 2019a). A document analysis of these Chief Inspector's reports for this research reveals some quality issues about how the inspectorates carried out their work. The extent of the impact of the quality concerns and the effectiveness of the overseas inspection providers requires further research. However, some of the issues and concerns raised are outlined in the next section.

2.16 Ofsted Annual Reports

As previously stated, the BSO voluntary inspection scheme was established in 2010. In the first year of the operation of the scheme, six independent inspection service providers were approved to carry out inspections on the schools (Ofsted, 2011). Nine inspections were completed by the end of that first academic year. According to the Chief Inspector's annual report in that year, an analysis could not be made of the performance of each of the inspection providers because the of the low number of inspections conducted. As part of the agreed arrangements, Ofsted monitored two onsite inspections that year (Ofsted, 2012b). The intention from then was to publish individual reports for each inspection provider in the years ahead (see Appendix R).

In the second year, and subsequent years, of the operation of the scheme up to 2019, the Chief Inspector's annual reports reveal that Ofsted were happy that the scheme could operate effectively (Ofsted, 2012a, 2013, 2014, 2015a, 2016, 2018a, 2018b, 2019). However, Ofsted could not conduct a full analysis of the performance of the inspectorates in any of those years due to the low volumes of inspections. Some concerns were raised by Ofsted about the variation in format, structure and reporting detail of the BSO inspection reports. Ofsted stated that, in some monitored reports, not all forms of evidence had enough detail to confirm the judgement grades given and that they hadn't enough detail to show that the BSO standards were being met. Ofsted also stated that the way that the inspectorates reached their qualitative judgements in some monitored reports was inconsistent and lacked clarity. The consistency regarding how inspections were conducted from one inspectorate to another was also a concern in several monitored reports. Among some of the recommendations in the Chief Inspector's annual reports were that the overall judgements about each school inspected should match the inspection reports' summary and that some inspection reports should be clear about recommendations for improvement in each school. It was also recommended that inspectorates should provide enough evidence in the reports to show how the standards were being met.

From 2010 to 2019, the DfE commissioned three onsite visits by Ofsted and continue to commission only a select few reports to be analysed and monitored. While all the reports were analysed at the end of the academic year 2011/12, this monitoring activity has remained consistently low between 2012

and 2019. There were four off site reviews of the evidence base for judgements during the scheme up to 2019.

As stated, Ofsted is commissioned by the DfE to carry out monitoring on the independent inspection providers. However, the level of monitoring of the BSO Inspection Scheme appears low. This perspective is consistent with concerns expressed in 2018 by the Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman in relation to inspection monitoring of independent schools in England (Spielman, 2018a). The low level of monitoring by Ofsted on the activities of the inspection providers under the BSO scheme requires further research.

2.17 A Change of Focus in the Standards

Over the period from 2010 to 2019, the number of BSO inspections conducted reached a peak in the academic year 2016/17 with 71 school inspections (see Appendix R). In the following academic year, there was a change of focus following the introduction of the protected characteristics section of the UK Equality Act into the standards (Act, 2010). This amendment led to a reduction in the demand for BSO inspections and accreditation.

Successful BSO inspections offer an international school accredited BSO status for a period of three years following its last inspection (DfE, 2016b). However, due to a proposed change in the standards indicated by the UK government, and due to take effect in September 2017, inspectors were expected to see evidence of the promotion in teaching of 'protected characteristics' as part of the UK's Equality Act (Act, 2010). Protected characteristics legislation protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in the wider society of the UK under nine protected characteristics, including sexual orientation. A BSO cannot gain accreditation unless all of the standards are reached.

By becoming a focus during inspections, the promotion of protected characteristics caused a predicament for many BSO schools in Islamic countries, and became a challenge for principals, where the promotion of LGBT education contravened local laws and customs (TIME, 2016). 'LGBT' is an initialism for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender identities. For schools in these Islamic countries, the promotion of such aspects in their curriculum would mean immediate closure of the school and the possible imprisonment of the school management and the principal. If schools did not produce

evidence of the promotion of protected characteristics, then they would be deemed to fail to uphold the essential British characteristics element of an inspection and would not achieve accreditation. The position taken by the DfE regarding this aspect of BSO inspection threatened the validity of the BSO inspection scheme in these predominantly Islamic countries. However, this viewpoint also created new opportunities for some of the membership associations to seek new accreditation pathways or to design their own accreditation system. The most notable was COBIS who proposed and began to implement their own external accreditation system (COBIS, 2017). The previously mentioned 'Patron's Accreditation and Compliance' system is still in use today, but it does not bring the same advantages as the BSO scheme and is not officially recognised by the DfE.

Following lobbying by the membership associations, the protected characteristics evidence requirement was changed in November 2018 and announced at an Association of British Schools Overseas (AoBSO) membership conference in London (AoBSO, 2018). In an open letter to BSO schools, Lord Agnew, who was the Undersecretary of State for Education, wrote that those institutions that had satisfied every other standard apart from the criteria regarding protected characteristics would be awarded BSO accreditation (see Appendix A). This change required that schools provide evidence of local laws being an impediment to the standards being met and a statement would be inserted in the report to reflect that aspect.

This move by the DfE and Lord Agnew was further supported by the UK's Export strategy in their Brexit departure policy paper that set about promoting British education overseas as a global export offering (DIT, 2018). In March 2019, the DfE and the DIT supported the BSO Inspection Scheme as one of their 23 Actions in their International Education strategy (DIT & DfE, 2019):

> DfE, working with DIT, will coordinate efforts across government and key sector bodies to promote the quality and safety of our schools, both in the UK and overseas, by advocating the British Schools Overseas Inspection Scheme. We will encourage independent schools to have a better understanding of guardian arrangements, learning from those schools that do this well and the important role of the accreditation bodies (section 4.4 Independent Schools. Action 13).

The support of the British government in facilitating the BSO Inspection Scheme with a way around the inspection standards outlines the importance that the British government bestows on the BSO sector. Being part of government policy signals the legitimacy of the continued expansion of the BSO sector and the continued comparability of BSOs to private independent schools in England. BSO schools are found in many countries around the world (see Appendix B). By default, the legitimacy of the BSO principal is also secured by the British government's support.

2.18 The BSO Principal

The historical context of the BSO highlights the background and circumstances that helped the establishment of a set of standards that accredits the schools that are led by BSO principals. While we have established the legitimacy of the historical and locational contexts of the BSO, it is also relevant that the role of the BSO principal can be established in its own right.

The standards for BSOs include a specific standard for leadership and management and that acknowledges the leadership of the BSO (DfE, 2015, 2016b). The BSO principal is often referred to in BSO inspection reports and they are explicitly named on the DfE's GIAS database alongside the principal of every other accredited school in England. This acknowledges the status of BSO principals and legitimises their presence (DfE, 2019b). Facilitating the induction of newly qualified teachers and the assessment of new graduates into the English education system supports the professional perspective that the DfE holds for the BSO principal (DfE, 2018; DfE & NCTL, 2018). The acceptance of the BSO principal into school membership associations in England also bestows legitimacy on this principal (HMC, 2019; IAPS, 2019). The endorsement of BSO schools where BSO principals work and where the British government has placed part of its international export strategy acknowledges the unique role of the BSO principal (DIT & DfE, 2019). The BSO principal is in a unique position to cultivate soft power, which is acknowledged as an essential driver of British exports (Gardner-McTaggart, 2018).

All of this evidence provides for the existence of the BSO principal. Yet, the BSO principal has remained largely hidden from view. Comparatively little is known about the role and this study aims to address some gaps in the knowledge by exploring the evaluation perceptions of the BSO principal.

The next chapter will review the current literature on the role of school principal leadership. It will explore the landscapes of evaluation, and in comparative terms, with what is known about the evaluation of the BSO principal.

2.19 Summary

This chapter has outlined the historical and locational contexts of the contemporary BSO principal. The introduction of the Education Reform Act (1988) transformed the school system and influenced educational leadership in England. Private independent schools were subjected to new standards and further legislation that challenged their charitable status, even though they were regulated by a number of membership associations that continuously advocate for their autonomy. Their expansion abroad into the diverse world of international education contributed to a global recognition of their offering. They were replicated and franchised in a growing industry that encompassed and mixed their offering with that of many other models. British schools abroad subsequently turned to their own national curriculum and their own government for support in differentiating themselves with a unique voluntary inspection scheme.

The introduction of the BSO voluntary inspection scheme in 2010 found favour among traditionalists who wished to preserve the 'Britishness' of the private independent school abroad. However, aspects of their quality assurance aroused some concern among those who monitor their evaluation. Such is the pace of change in international education that advocates for the BSO voluntary inspection scheme needed to adapt the scheme in order for it to survive by successfully lobbying the British government to intervene. BSO accreditation remains the only way for a school overseas to be formally recognised as 'British' by its own government. This unique sector is the locational context of the BSO principal. It is the BSO principal's perceptions of their evaluations that is the focus of this study.

Chapter 3 Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

Establishing the historical and locational context of the BSO is an important step in furthering the knowledge about the BSO principal as the school leader of a BSO. The overall aim of this study is to explore the evaluation perceptions of BSO principals and that includes discovering how they are evaluated. The literature on BSO principal leadership is very limited so, for the purposes of this research, it is only by examining comparative types of leadership, and how they are evaluated, that some understanding may be gained about this unique international principal.

In the first section of this literature review, an overview of leadership and school leadership outlines the conceptual realisations, the underlying theories and the qualities that characterise the practice of school principalship. Typologies of leadership are examined due to their importance and relevance. Repositioning the role of the individual principal leader in this section reveals gaps in the knowledge, particularly when the environment transcends national boundaries.

In the second section, efficacy and excellence in school leadership are addressed. Here, the growing ambition to improve student outcomes portrays desirable concepts of school leadership that are often found in the principal as an individual actor.

The third section considers concepts, such as evaluation and standards, and the determination to apply performance standards in seeking accountability. It appears that there is no singular agreed method to evaluate the school principal, but attempts have been made to measure the role, not least empirically. Some evaluation opportunities for principals are touched upon, but these are clouded by issues with finding suitable tools with which to design an effective evaluative framework.

To complete the review, conclusions are drawn from the literature that attempt to fill some gaps in the knowledge.

3.2 Leadership

The concept of leadership is difficult to define. Yet, a significant amount of time has been spent seeking ways to develop an accepted definition. Leadership has a ubiquitous appeal and leaders start

out naked and new-born just like everyone else. How some people lay claim to the concept is challenging to answer as there is a mixture of perspectives from which leadership is approached. Larry Cuban (1988) argues that there is a lack of clarity in the understanding around the concept of leadership, and quoting Bennis, he states that hundreds of definitions of leadership demonstrate that there is "no clear and unequivocal understanding as to what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders" (p. 190). Cuban and Bennis aren't alone in this concern as there are others who declare similar troubles (Bennis & Nanus, 2007; Bryman, Collinson, Grint, Jackson, & Uhl-Bien, 2011; Gronn, 2009; Northouse, 2019; Yukl, 2010, 2013). It is argued that many interpretations of leadership exist with "each providing a sliver of insight but each remaining an incomplete and wholly inadequate explanation" (Bennis & Nanus, 2007: p. 4).

The difficulty with defining leadership has not prevented researchers and writers from attempting to describe it in all of its complexity. Among the first, and still influential, models of leadership proposed is one that sees leadership as something inherently linked with the personal character and characteristics of the individual who is leading. Loosely described as the 'Great Man Theory', this approach was popularised in the late 19th century by Thomas Carlyle and versions of it continue to be the focus of popular interest across many sectors today (Bass, Stogdill, & Bass, 2008; Northouse, 2019; Zaccaro, Dubrow, & Kolze, 2018). One strongly identifiable feature in social and political contexts is the ability to communicate and rouse the public with important deeds and statements. In 1963, Martin Luther King's 'I Have a Dream' speech may be considered one of the more famous of public sermons that portrayed this capacity (King, 1963). More recently, leaders like Ardern - Prime Minister of New Zealand - have shown undeniable community based concerns in a pandemic stricken planet and she is arguably admired for such action (Chapman, 2020). Others, like Johnson in England, have managed to steer their ships away from communities to 'Brexit' their affairs, therefore causing some divided opinions among their neighbours (Armstrong, 2017; Shipman, 2016). While leaders like these are viewed differently by the world at large, the reality is that sometimes leaders are chosen by their populations which supports the view that, as a concept, leadership is discretionary (Yukl, 2013). It can be a choice that followers have, which is helped if the leadership holds a vision (Bolman & Deal, 2017). In this perspective, effective leaders are sometimes required to "articulate a vision" (p.

338). This view also supports the notion that the absence of a shared vision means that organisations will perish (Gill, 2011). Sometimes a change of leadership is required for the organisation to survive. But having a common vision also arguably encompasses ethical perspectives and, yet, even these are sometimes challenged by perspectives of moral complexity (Ciulla, 2014). This is a viewpoint where ethical leaders might be seen as unethical in certain circumstances like, for example, those who lead differently in extreme life or death situations during times of war (Holenweger, Jager, & Kernic, 2017). The perspective is that changing the sights and sounds of the leadership environment can change the idea of leadership.

Radical views of the concept are those that see leadership as conforming to centralised expectations (Hoyle & Wallace, 2005). Gronn (2003) might be shown to agree with this notion by dismissing common perceptions and suggesting that leadership is a "vehicle for representing organisational practice" (p. 267). This view is expanded later by others who equate leadership to a neo-liberal object. This is a perspective that sees leadership as a fashionable commodity 'to desire' and an object 'of desire' in the domain of positional prestige (Gunter, Courtney, Hall, & McGinity, 2018). The exclusivity of leadership is a belief that the concept is viewed as an elite practice, that it is luxurious and that it has become objectified. Leadership conceptualised in this way is strewn with privilege and cultural replication cloaked in ideas about social empowerment (Gardner-McTaggart, 2018). An antithesis to this entitled lens is argued by Heffernan (2019), who advocates for subverting traditional power dynamics towards improving the world. However, it is Fullan (2018) who encourages harmony as a better feature by "minimizing the counterproductive actions and specializing in the generative actions that yield positive results" (p. 19).

It appears therefore, in summary, that leadership is a concept that is woven repeatedly by situational perspectives depending on the context over time. This view has befuddled the dictionary makers to such a degree that some wonder why we bother defining leadership at all (Ladkin, 2020). While it is less argued that leadership matters (Mabey & Knights, 2017), it is not easy to articulate a definitional panacea to everyone's satisfaction.

3.2.1 *The leadership of schools*

In the domain of education, the traditional view of school leadership is one of an individual task that is reserved for the most senior designated person. Strikingly, that sentiment of the authoritative leader manages to persevere as the most constant image (Avery, 2004; Fullan, 2018b). However, subtle shifts have ensured that leadership, originally formed from the personal characteristics of the single individual, now also includes actions and behaviours (Bush, Bell, & Middlewood, 2019; Fullan, 2018a; Gronn, 2011; Leithwood, Sun, & Pollock, 2017). This broadening of the concept has compelled scholars to classify a range of leadership models that is found among schools. Presented as theoretical typologies, many of the models are partial, or limited, and have to be considered alongside each other. While not an exhaustive list of typologies, this next section outlines some of the most common models (Bush & Glover, 2014; Leithwood, 2019).

3.2.2 *Some typologies of school leadership*

Transformational leadership is a typology introduced by Burns in his seminal work 'Leadership' (Burns, 1978). It occurs when people who are bound by a mutual purpose engage with each other. This viewpoint, which is sometimes found in schools, looks to "raise the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both the leader and the led" (p. 20). Further conceptualisations over subsequent decades have now defined a formula for developing commitment and capacity in followers to perform beyond normal expectations leading to the overall achievement of the group's goals (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Leithwood, 2019; Lynch, 2012; Prasertcharoensuk & Tang, 2016).

Transformational leadership has found increased significance in school improvement frameworks where the concept has also been linked with transactional leadership (Desravines & Fenton, 2015). This perception offers rewards in exchange for the services of the follower in the interest of improvement. Transactional leadership is motivational, but its characteristics are shorter lived than transformational leadership (Northouse, 2019). Other considerations see the transactional leader as more concerned with following the rules than with changing the organisation (Hussain, Abbas, Lei, Haider, & Akram, 2017). As a result, the transactional leader establishes and standardises strategic behaviours that help the organisation achieve its goals through "reciprocal relationships toward knowledge sharing" (p. 8).

Another typology is moral leadership, which is strongly linked to transformational leadership, but it is different in its approach to integrity. Morality aligns to integrity, which is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles (McFall, 1987). While transformational leadership can sometimes be directed at less admirable aims, moral leadership is described as a spiritual leadership that is fixed to an ethically robust system that is steady over time (West-Burnham, 1997). The endurance of moral leadership is highlighted in Australia where obstacles to educational inequality are overcome for the benefit of indigenous students (Keddie, 2016).

While transformational leadership might have a coexistence with moral leadership, it also has a relationship with instructional leadership. Together these two perspectives substantially influence performance in schools (Marks & Printy, 2003). The notion of instructional leadership is a model that has generated extensive research in education. However, the results from empirical studies that measure the direct effects of instructional leadership on student performance have been small, mixed and inconsistent (Ball, 2012; Century & Cassata, 2016; Feldhoff et al., 2014; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood, 2019; Malloy & Leithwood, 2017; Wu, Hoy, & Tarter, 2013). While the results in these studies may have been modest and even undervalued by themselves, it is their aggregation in the various studies that presents the overall contribution to success (Leithwood, 2019). Contextual differences, role variations and the methodological differences of the measured principals in these inquiries explain the inconsistent and mixed outcomes. However, evidence from centralised school systems shows that even when principals are encouraged to shape their schools with a contextualised focus, they are reluctant to move away from managerial mindsets (Bush, Hamid, Ng, & Kaparou, 2018; Kaparou & Bush, 2015).

The notion of a managerial type of leadership points to tasks and behaviours, so that the endeavours of others might be facilitated (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999). Bush warns that if this style is applied too enthusiastically, then there is a risk of failure when the subordinates are in professional roles (Bush, 2011). He states that qualified individuals prefer to “own” innovation and change (p. 50). However, despite these concerns, Bush still concludes that managerial leadership is an essential element for successful schools (Bush et al., 2019).

In the interest of achieving greater success, there are other typologies identified that see leadership spread across organisations and among people such as distributed leadership (Hargreaves & Ainscow, 2015; Harris & DeFlaminis, 2016; Leithwood, 2019). This typology does not imply that everyone is a leader, and that everyone leads, but rather reinforces the idea that there are multiple sources of leadership influences within an organisation that lead to the emergence of different forms of leadership. While distributed leadership has its strengths in schools, there is also a darker element that can quickly create territorial concerns and the loss of perceived control. This aspect has a potential to be a space for bullying and for creating professional victims (Polka & Litchka, 2008). Distributed leadership can also conflict with concepts of responsibility and authority in schools. School systems invest authority and accountability in the form of principals and, sometimes, accountability concerns among this group lead to the formation of obstacles and barriers towards the concept (Hartley, 2010). However, given that distributed leadership is a somewhat amorphous concept that does not come packaged as a distinctive framework (Cherkowski & Brown, 2013; Harris, 2013a; Malloy & Leithwood, 2017; Muthiah, Adams, & Abdullah, 2021), it is possible to view it as a mode of leadership that is applicable across a number of contexts.

An expansive view of all these different typologies is that of system leadership which, in schools, is portrayed as being in clusters, or networks, instead of the traditional single independent units (Boylan, 2016; Bush & Glover, 2014; Leithwood, 2019). In this perspective, leaders work beyond the boundaries of their own schools and help by making improvements across a number of schools, or a system. Augmented accountability has stressed the importance of leadership across larger systems (Pont, Nusche, & Moorman, 2008), where leadership can be found "both within schools and across schools" (p. 10). This form of leadership has focused on a concept that encourages overall improvement across regions and was widely adopted in the England (Mulford, 2008). Education leaders in England were urged to bring additional knowledge and experience to schools in their local areas (Hill, 2010): "It brings clear and dedicated leadership capacity to a group of schools…..it strengthens the operation of leadership teams"(p. 45). Endorsement of this model is argued by Hill, but the evidence is scant. There are also counter calls for a resistance to models, such as system

leadership, particularly those that incorporate role-labelling where attempts are made to stiffen organisational structures (Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2008).

A different approach to all of the other leadership concepts is that of contingent leadership (Leithwood, 2019; Warwas, 2015; Yukl, 2013). This view recognises the diversity of contexts in which schools exist and the variety of leadership styles that are adapted to any given context at any given moment in time. It acknowledges that there is no panacea when it comes to leadership and that a range of different approaches are valid (Leithwood et al., 1999): "… there are wide variations in the contexts for leadership, and to be effective, these contexts require different leadership responses" (p. 15). Leithwood, and his colleagues argue that context is contingent to the leadership utilised and the leadership adapts to the context. This view of the managerial aspects of contingent leadership are upheld in numerous studies where it is argued that the range of situations is too complex to rely on a standardised set of responses to circumstances (Leithwood, 2019; Warwas, 2015; Yukl, 2010, 2013).

In summary, therefore, as with the general concepts of leadership, educational leadership is subject to a wide spectrum of views.

However, despite system sharing, engaging across multiple sites, relabelling and distributing leadership within schools and across schools, there is no suggestion that the role of the formal leader is to become redundant (Harris, 2013b; Leithwood, 2019). Arguably, without the influence of the formal leadership position, some concepts such as distributed leadership cannot be sustained as most educational systems operate a model that sees all organisational change flowing through the office of the principal (Murphy, Smylie, Mayrowetz, & Louis, 2009): "These formal leaders are in a critical position to move initiatives forward or to kill them off quickly through their actions or slowly through neglect" (p. 181). The position of principal, as overall formal school leader, is of central importance to all typologies of leadership (Fullan, 2018b), particularly when it is focused on the core work of student growth (Heffernan, 2018b).

3.2.3 *The formal school leader*

Cuban (1988) identifies the various roles of the formal school leader, or school principal, which he encapsulates under the term 'principalship'. He argues that principalship is kept alive by those who see that "principals could do more than make sure that pencils were in classrooms, that the heat was

on in the winter, and that difficult pupils would have a place to go" (p. 58). Cuban points out that there is a perception of the school principal, as one "enmeshed in daily routines and driven by rules" (p. 65), and this arguably underestimates the potential of the role.

Recently, it has been a difficult task to characterise the practice of formal school principal leadership, but there are efforts to reposition that role (Donaldson et al., 2020; Fullan, 2018b). While leadership is fulfilled in many ways, in general in schools, there is no more than one overall school principal (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019; Fullan, 2018b; Heffernan, 2018b; Pont et al., 2008). However, even from a traditional perspective, the role of the formal principal leader has changed over time (Fullan, 2018b). Fullan (2018b) argues that:

> "They are expected to run a smooth school; manage health, safety, and the building; innovate without upsetting anyone; connect with students and teachers; be responsive to parents and the community; answer to their districts; and above all, deliver results" (p. 5).

Various titles are now used to describe the role and these depend largely on how it is viewed in the world (Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2008). The term 'principal' is arguably consistent with customs across many nations, but sometimes the terms school leader, director, headteacher and headmaster/mistress can be used, and are sometimes used, interchangeably. Terms such as formal leader, co-principalship, principals in charge of federations of schools, executive roles and system leadership have prompted Mulford (2008) to illuminate even newer terms such as "interactive professionalism" (p. 66). This term reflects an aspect of the role that plugs into many of the other professional players that surround it. More wide-ranging executive terms, such as that of a chief executive officer (CEO), are also used and are drawn largely from business environments. In many respects, the term used in any one context to describe the formal leader of a school appears to be a matter of style. For the purposes of this research, the term 'principal' is used throughout the study, except in direct quotes, to describe the designated formal school leader.

The terms that are used to describe the school principal, and the emerging demands of new and different perspectives of the practice of school principalship, have created issues for those attempting to analyse the school leader (Andersen, Bjørnholt, Bro, & Holm-Petersen, 2018; Chiang, Lipscomb, & Gill, 2016; Donaldson et al., 2020). Most of the perspectives regarding the formal principal leadership

of schools that is found in the literature are arguably based in national contexts. However, school leadership is also found in international contexts and this sector garners only limited attention in the literature.

3.3 International School Leadership

Cravens (2019) highlights that the context of international school leadership is "fertile yet under cultivated" in research (p. 1). Bunnell (2018) claims that international school leadership is a "very under-reported and under-theorized area of education" (p. 3). Lee & Walker (2018) declare that the "research literature on leadership in International Schools is thin on the ground" (p. 465). As the growth of international schools progresses in various parts of the world (Bunnell, 2008, 2014; Bunnell et al., 2020; ISCResearch, 2020a; Research, 2020), the importance of international school leadership gains more relevance.

International school leadership is a branch of school leadership that is influenced by the complex nature of its context and this in turn leads to difficulties in defining the sector (Bunnell, 2019; Cravens, 2019; Hayden, 2006; Hayden, Levy, & Thompson, 2015). Attempts have been made towards the conceptualisation of international school leadership by applying its context as a touchstone (Lee et al., 2012; Lee & Walker, 2018; Lee & Wright, 2015). These attempts however are tortured by its "messy, fluid, and unpredictable nature" (Cravens, 2019: p. 3). It appears that seeking an understanding of the nature and practice of international school leadership is difficult given the paucity of knowledge on, and research about, the topic.

Therefore, it can be argued that the subject of international school leadership is somewhat of an outlier in research in education. Such perspectives are often considered helpful to the general field of study because they offer difference (Babbie, 2015). They provide cases for research that "do not fit into patterns of mainstream attitudes and behaviors" and help to improve the understanding of more conventional arrangements (p. 196). Evidence of the existence international school leadership is provided in the membership of international school associations, where international school principals are registered as individuals (AoBSO, 2020; GOV.UK, 2021b; HMC, 2020; IAPS, 2020). The

leadership of international schools are also evaluated by a number of international school accreditation systems (AoBSO, 2020; COBIS, 2020; HMC, 2020; IAPS, 2020).

Having earlier engaged with some typologies of leadership (Bush et al., 2019; Leithwood, 2019), it appears that many of the known models of school leadership are inherent in international school leadership (Lee et al., 2012; Lee & Walker, 2018). A multisite case study conducted by Lee et al., (2012) on international school leadership noted "stories of distributed instructional leadership" (p. 685) and "contextualised" practices (p. 686) that would be an indicator of contingent leadership. Similarities to baseline notions of transactional leadership are also evident (Amzat Ismail, 2017; Warwas, 2015; Yukl, 2013). It is known that principals travel overseas to carry out their work (Henshaw, 2018; Weale, 2019) and are arguably paid a premium for their expertise.

Nevertheless, despite being ill-defined and under-reported in the literature, this study has earlier revealed one context that creates the capacity to examine the concept of international school leadership further. The BSO exists as a distinct international constituency whose historical and locational contexts have already been established in Chapter 2 of this study.

3.3.1 *Situating the BSO in the literature*

Apart from a range of opinion articles by the publication formerly known as '*Times Educational Supplement'* (TES), and now an online educational publication, there is a paucity of research relating to BSOs and their leadership (Tes, 2021). As discussed earlier, the international schools' environment is complex and ill-defined. Furthermore, there are no scholarly references to the BSO sector and there are no definitions to be found in the literature. Yet, as a sector, BSOs are accredited by the DfE as a comparable actor to schools that are found in England (AoBSO, 2020; Ofsted, 2016a).

In a search of a range of databases for this research during April 2021, there are no scholarly references to accredited 'British Schools Overseas' between 2010 and 2020, including Educational Resource Information Centre (ERIC); Education Research Complete (EBSCO); Academic Search Complete; British Education Index and Business Source Complete databases. This did not change when the terms 'BSO inspection' or 'British School Overseas leadership' or 'BSO principal' or 'BSO head teacher' was applied to the search. A Google Scholar search points to 'British Schools Overseas – Standards for Schools' (DfE, 2017) and 'British Schools Overseas – Standards for Inspectorates'

(DfE, 2014). While these documents provide some valuable information about the standards that are provided by the DfE for the BSO inspection scheme, they are the only two reference items retrievable from information databases and they offer limited scope, or academic value, about the realities of the day-to-day experiences in these schools.

In attempting to place a frame around the BSO sector in an international context, and as discussed in Chapter 2, BSOs can be considered under Hayden & Thompson's (2013) typologies of international schools (Table 5). In their research, Hayden & Thompson argue that Type C international schools can incorporate a number of different sub-types that would be better represented separately (Hayden, Levy, & Thompson, 2016).

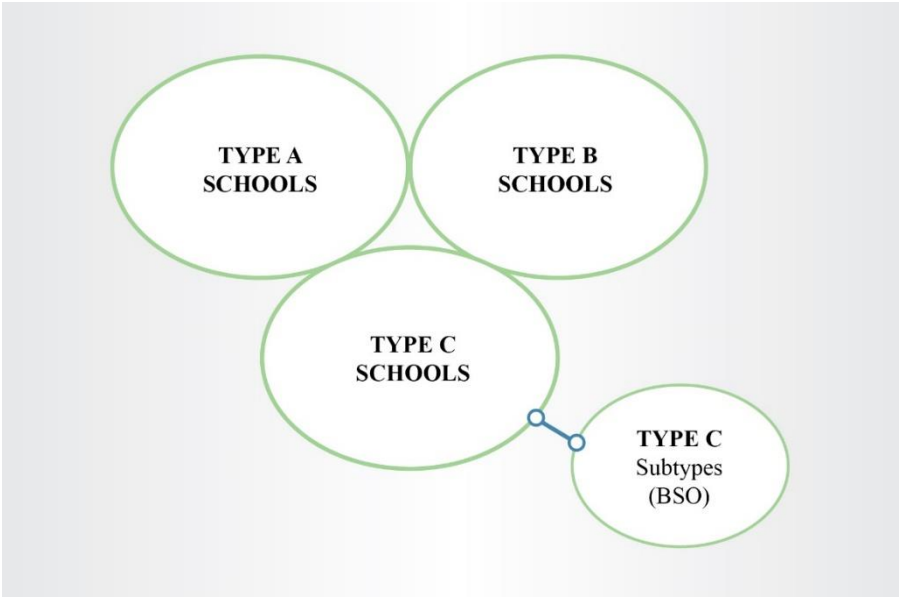
The findings in this study will show later that BSOs are international schools that are more focused on host country nationals than globally mobile expatriates (Chapter 5). The findings will also show evidence that they operate as commercial organisations, which is significant. While these aspects might appear to direct BSOs towards a Type C category, a voluntary accreditation every three years by the DfE makes BSOs uniquely comparable to accredited independent schools in England. This aspect develops the argument for their inclusion as a sub-type of Type C in Hayden and Thompsons framework (Table 5).

Table 5 International School Types adapted from Hayden & Thompson 2013, 2016

Type A Schools	the 'traditional' form of international school catering principally for globally mobile expatriates
Type B Schools	the more ideologically focused schools, founded for that particular purpose and not created to respond to a market need
Type C Schools	the newer, non-traditional type of international school aimed largely at host country nationals and, very often, operated on a more commercial footing than has tended to be the case for Type A and Type B schools
Type C subtypes	Schools that are a subtype of Type C e.g., BSOs

Therefore, from the perspective of the literature, and underpinned later by the findings in this study, accredited BSOs can be included in the literature as a sub-type of Hayden and Thompson's (2013) Type C international schools (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 International School Types including the BSO sub-type



3.3.2 *Situating the BSO principal in the literature*

As we have seen, there is a substantial body of literature that seeks to establish the importance of the formal school principal leader (Cuban, 1988; Donaldson et al., 2020; Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019; Fullan, 2018b; Heffernan, 2018a; Leithwood, 2019). Having traced the contexts of the BSO in Chapter 2, this study has established the reality of the BSO as a unique sub-type in the international schools' landscape. Within this frame, the historical and locational contexts of the formal principal leader of the BSO is also traced in Chapter 2. Despite very limited literature, the existence of the BSO principal is confirmed as a named real-world individual in several credible sources (GOV.UK, 2021b; HMC, 2020; IAPS, 2020). Arising from this contextual evidence, the BSO principal can be situated in the literature as an international school leader who is engaged in leading a BSO which is an international schools' sub-type accredited by the DfE in England. A more complete definition is proposed later in the discussion chapter for this thesis (Chapter 6). While it is relevant at this juncture to situate the BSO principal in the literature, it is the evaluation perspectives of the BSO principal that particularly forms the consistent focus of this study.

3.4 Conclusions on Leadership

This engagement with the literature has opened with an examination of concepts of leadership in order to gain a better understanding in comparative terms of the unique BSO principal. Attempts to classify and bring order to a multiplicity of interpretations about school leadership are portrayed in typologies by scholars. It appears that the formal school principal leader still holds a strong place within the organisation of schools, but the role has changed however and, in doing so, has developed to incorporate an expanded array of contexts. Lack of definition in some of these contexts, such as the international school sector, has illuminated forms of leadership that are under theorised.

The BSO principal is found therefore almost exclusively in an international context. In this study, an analysis of the international school sector has revealed that the BSO is a unique sub-type of the international schools' landscape. This study has also uncovered that the BSO principal, as the formal school principal leader of the BSO, is both unique and yet comparable, in many ways, to other forms of school leadership.

3.5 Efficacy and Excellence

As a comparative leadership form, the BSO principal may be considered in the same way as more conventional forms of school leadership in terms efficacy and excellence. It is widely accepted that capable and effective leaders are essential in schools (Donaldson et al., 2020; Leithwood, 2019; Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Robinson, 2013; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). It is also accepted that national and theoretical perspectives provide for the direct evaluation of school principal leaders (Crawford, Eddy-Spicer, & Earley, 2017b; Donaldson et al., 2020; Feldhoff et al., 2014; OECD, 2013) and this is helpful in further understanding how the evaluation of the BSO principal might be approached. Through these lenses, concepts of efficacy and excellence may also be applied to the evaluation of the BSO principal.

3.5.1 *Efficacy and excellence perspectives in school leadership*

Many of the basic tenets in the theories of effective school leadership have been known for years (Adair, 1993; Donaldson et al., 2020; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Matthews, Rea, Hill, & Gu, 2014; Portin, 2009) and it is considered that "leaders now have more autonomy than ever before in how they operate" (Matthews et al., 2014, p. 12). However, autonomy on its own is not always a recipe for success. One person's concept of an effective school can be another's vision of educational dysfunction (Salokangas & Ainscow, 2017).

Leadership in schools has many facets, and each feature can contribute uniquely to building a perception of efficacy (Davies, 1996; Leithwood, 2019; Pietsch & Tulowitzki, 2017; Sergiovanni, 1984). Sergiovanni (1984) argues that it is not often easy to identify what makes a particular performance excellent. The perspective of placing the credit on one particular aspect can sometimes obscure the multi-dimensional and holistic values of the concept of excellence. Davies (1996) argues that excellent schools are led by excellent principals and that good performers will drive out the more inferior. But, as the role has developed, the literature has noted that principals are expected to provide stakeholders with many things, not least providing clarity in complexity (Fullan, 2018a). There is also the perspective of raising achievement and outcomes for students that requires consideration (Leithwood et al., 2017; Matthews et al., 2014). Organisations also expect a leadership that functions sustainably and provides continuity over time (Hargreaves, 2005; Hargreaves & Fink, 2012). Leaders

are expected to narrow the bandwidth of ineffectiveness in and among classrooms (Reynolds, 2008). All of these aspects combine with a requirement to respond to the demands of their local contexts (DfE, 2015; Fullan, 2018b; Hallinger, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2017). Action research conducted in England found that personal traits including resilience, focus, courage and high expectations are important aspects in excellent principal leadership (Matthews et al., 2014).

There is a quality about excellence that exposes it to different understandings (Amzat Ismail, 2017; DfE, 2015) and thus, gaining a shared understanding is a key factor. For some scholars, producing this shared understanding of excellence is a product of transformational leadership (Andersen et al., 2018; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Prasertcharoensuk & Tang, 2016). Therefore, and particularly in schools, one is urged to be receptive to viewing perspectives of excellence through a range of lenses (Leithwood et al., 2017; Ofsted, 2019c). Oftentimes, this focus is directed to an analysis of outstanding school leadership (Dhillon, Howard, & Holt, 2020). In England, the term 'outstanding' invokes strong cultural and contextual impressions. As a measure of effectiveness, outstanding is the highest achievable grade in the scale used in the inspection of schools framework conducted by Ofsted (Ofsted, 2019c). The literature highlights that the accurate evaluation of excellence differentiates from those elements that are harvested from perception, reputation, folklore and myth.

3.5.2 *Perceptions of school leadership excellence*

Research inquiry identifies the most recognisable characteristics of excellence in successful school leaders. Studies about excellent school principal leadership have support in empirical evidence (Kane, 2017; Leithwood, 2019; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Northouse, 2019; Pietsch & Tulowitzki, 2017). However, there are also perceptions about school leadership that are not easy to measure and these are further challenged by the array of contexts in which the school leader is found. Accounting for all of these perceptions informs the search for excellence in school leadership.

The evidence of the impact of personal qualities that contribute to successful school principals is drawn from significant empirical research over many years. Gathered together, and succinctly explained in recent literature, the qualities are grouped under three types – cognitive, social and psychological (Leithwood, 2019). Cognitive qualities are those that are deeper than the "surface" traits

of intelligence and experience (p. 36). Cognitive characteristics include the ability to think about and connect to the overall system. This type of systems thinking is developed by understanding how the policies and practices of an organisation are affected by decision making. The problem solving capabilities of successful leaders run deeper than the benefits of mere experience and draw upon areas of specific knowledge and reasoning (Leithwood, 2019). Problem solving capacities include a range of processes such as interpreting the problem, determining the resources available, analysing the restrictions to solutions and developing solutions and contingencies (Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995). This process typically involves diagnosing and improving the status of current conditions in the direct environment.

Social qualities (Leithwood, 2019) refer to the ability to understand and empathise in interpersonal relationships and "to act appropriately on that understanding" (p. 38). Perceiving, managing and acting appropriately add to the notion of creating a positive emotional climate in an organisation. These are important drivers in assessing the impact of a school leader on operational performance.

Psychological qualities (Leithwood, 2019) encompass optimism, self-efficacy and resilience. Optimism is the habit of expecting success when addressing challenges. Self-efficacy is confidence in one's own ability to perform a task and it is most powerful when developed through networks of shared leadership. Resilience is the ability "to adjust easily to misfortune or change" (p. 40)

When cognitive, social and psychological qualities "act in synergy", they make large contributions to measuring leadership success (p. 39). The effects of these qualities are only visible after accumulating many tiny empirically measured variables, with each responsible for its own effect (Leithwood, 2019). These "synergistic relations" (p. 8) inform leadership development and show that as a singular strategy mere training is unlikely to produce "significant gains in student achievement" (p. 8). In many respects, this perspective reflects the age-old question of whether leaders are born or made.

In attempting to find ways of measuring excellence in leadership, the literature points to an understanding that successful leaders, as discussed earlier, are also those who possess the social skills to motivate people to follow them. Examples are found in narratives about leaders who perform great deeds or who give great speeches. Leaders might also display clarity around priorities and possess a drive towards continuous improvement. Such perspectives sometimes also point to leaders who are

adaptable over time (Hargreaves & Fink, 2012; Moos, Johansson, & Day, 2011b). The time spent in the role and the experience of the principal are large influences on perceptions of successful leadership. However, the ability of the school leader to adjust and to maintain focus also points to a leadership that is often expected to be repeated.

In terms of achieving recurrent success, Handy (2016) describes a model of continual improvement as successive sigmoid (or s-shaped) curves. Handy argues that the way to continue to respond to success and the inevitable need to change is to start on another sigmoid curve just as the success is nearing its peak. It is a pre-emptive approach and, in some contexts, is often considered in the context of leadership change. Challenges are thus presented for leaders who may arrive at the peak of their careers and are enjoying the fruits of their success. For excellent principal leaders, successful practices are sometimes repeated by re-focusing leadership after an improvement cycle (Matthews et al., 2014). It seems that addressing complacency, in effective practices that are showing signs of decline, are as problematic as addressing improvement in failing schools.

The search for a panacea towards efficacy and excellence in school leadership is further challenged by the variety of contexts both in the setting where school principal leaders operate and in the personal characteristics that they bring to the environment. Studies on the role of the school principal state that if all leadership expectations were expected at the same time in the same ways, then the role would be straightforward and uncomplicated (Catano & Stronge, 2007). Nevertheless, a search for the features that underpin excellence is all consuming and even finding the personnel who possess those characteristics can be a challenge (Ofsted, 2016a). In his 2015/16 annual report, Ofsted's Chief Inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw advised the British government at the time to worry less about leadership structures and to be more concerned about leadership capacity: "No structure will be effective if the leadership is poor" (Ofsted, 2016a: p. 14). His concern was that schools were reporting difficulties in recruiting suitable and effective leaders.

3.6 Conclusions on Efficacy and Excellence

Thus, it may be argued from a structured consideration of the literature on successful leadership that there are solid foundations on which the efficacy of the BSO principal may be based. However,

examining the effectiveness of the school principal leader on its own merits, aside from notions of excellence in school leadership, poses a challenging yet potentially rewarding task. It is evident that the concept of an effective school principal leader is wide-ranging and that it has developed considerably and consistently over many years. In comparative terms, it would appear that it should be no more, or no less, so for role of the BSO principal.

Perceptions of what makes any performance excellent are often subjective and as such, they are best judged when a shared understanding is reached. However, complexities arise from the variety of contexts in which school leadership is found. Seeking to view success in a school leader, such as the BSO principal, may well be possible but results are not easily identifiable in their own right. It is evident in the literature, in the empirical measuring of school principal performance, that the combination of the leader's many small influences and many small changes on the behaviours of others creates a large impact on the main assignment at hand, which is improved student outcomes. However, quantitative assessment on the school principal leader is a challenge by its very nature. In order to assess the multitudinous layers of principal expertise and principal efficacy, forms of evaluation that are not as empirically focused are sought to solve the problem. In the next section, we progress to seek some understanding about evaluation and how the concept might influence the evaluation of the BSO principal.

3.7 Evaluation and Evaluation Theory

Evaluation touches all aspects of human activity. It relates to everyday discourses, such as opinions about the food at a local restaurant to new ways of assessing large global programmes. Concepts of evaluation encompass a diverse range of sectors, nations and places (Mertens & Wilson, 2018; Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). Understanding the concept of evaluation is a key element in interpreting the evaluation experiences of the BSO principal.

The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (Sanders, 1994) states that evaluation is the "systematic investigation of the worth or merit of an object" (p. 3). Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) extend the Joint Committee's definition of evaluation by including generic criteria and stating that

evaluation is the "systematic assessment of an object's merit, worth, probity, feasibility, safety, significance and/or equity" (p. 11).

According to Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014), *merit* refers to a quality based on the standards of a particular discipline, for example the standards for effective teaching, so that it can be understood to mean "intrinsic excellence" (p. 9). *Worth* refers to "an area of clear need" and it is made up of the "combination of excellence and service" within that specific context (p. 9). Therefore, worth is in line with an *assessment of need*. A need refers to something that is necessary for "fulfilling a defensible purpose" (p. 9). A defensible purpose is a legitimate or desired outcome consistent with a philosophy or set of professional standards. *Probity* refers to having strong moral principles. *Feasibility* refers to the ease of applicability of the object's evaluation. Sometimes, this aspect may sometimes justify the stopping of an evaluation. *Safety* refers to the risk involved and takes account of appropriate safety checks. *Significance* refers to the influential importance of the mission of the object being evaluated. *Equity* is ensuring that the evaluation includes provision on a democratic basis for all members of society.

Evaluation has a relatively long history and has produced a number of foundational texts that provide a starting point for contemporary approaches. Stake writes of the importance of the evaluation of evaluations (Stake, 1967). Cronbach considers arguments about evaluation where questions about the concept are raised frequently (Cronbach, 1967). Scriven addresses the difference between formative and summative evaluation (Scriven, 1967), and Guba examines the critical appraisal of evaluations as a naturalistic paradigm (Guba, 1969). Later, there are debates on the breadth of evaluation. Scriven is determined to envelop the widest form of everyday use (Scriven, 1998), while Trochim disagrees and wishes to confirm its more academic purpose (Trochim, 1998). Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) argue that; "Evaluation is perhaps society's most fundamental discipline" (p. 3), while Mertens and Wilson (2018) explore the connection between the practice of evaluation and its roots in philosophy and theory. The concentration of most definitions in the literature appears to depend on the focus of the discipline it serves.

In summary, it can be said that proper evaluation encompasses all methods necessary to reach judgements that can be defended (Stufflebeam, 2001; Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). Therefore,

evaluators should be selective in their choice of methods, and if possible, try to develop a suite of methodological approaches designed to give a broad overview of the reality being evaluated. Additionally, the focusing of evaluation on the attainment of stated objectives, while practical and popular, can at times prevent the exploration of a more complex and less easily measurable reality. This latter point must be borne in mind when examining the modes and methods of evaluation applied to the complex reality of school leadership.

3.7.1 *Learning from evaluation's past*

Apart from some efforts at historical reflection (Shadish & Luellen, 2005; Skolits & Robinson, 2018), the field of evaluation has made relatively few efforts to record and analyse its past. This appears to have impacted the opportunity to learn valuable lessons that could contribute to future best practice. While there are more approaches to evaluation today than there have ever been, the field is still developing (Mertens & Wilson, 2018). Research reflections on evaluation approaches appear to be challenging, particularly when evaluating an evaluation as this creates a second task that is conducted in order to evaluate the first task. The perspective of evaluating the evaluation is not an easy concept, especially when attempting to satisfy the previously mentioned generic criteria of Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014).

Evaluation theory has informed the practice of evaluation but, arguably, it is feedback from practice that is required to strengthen the theory. Stufflebeam (2001) in his work *Evaluation Models* describes 'pseudoevaluations'. These are efforts that are driven by political motives that "fail to produce, and report, valid assessments of merit and worth to all right-to-know audiences" (p. 13). Among the pseudoevaluation approaches identified by Stufflebeam is accountability. He describes how the accountability approach narrows evaluative inquiry to questions about outcomes. A distinct disadvantage of this concept is found among politically driven agendas, where the implementation of accountability tends to arrive before needed instruments can be planned, tested and validated. In educational management, this is a familiar refrain. According to Stufflebeam, some politically driven pseudoevaluated accountability efforts in schools have led to "cheating to obtain rewards and avoid sanctions", and he argues that these aspects have frequently generated "bad teaching, bad press, turnover in leadership, and abandonment of the accountability system" (p. 20).

Real-life impacts are important to document and can affect practice at all levels of an educational system. A recent example of this can be seen in the English education system where the burden of accountability became a phenomenon. Attempts to satisfy performance requirements resulted in the emergence of a range of strategic and unlawful actions that included the illegal removal of students from school registers. (Done & Knowler, 2020; Long & Danechi, 2018). This phenomenon, which was referred to as 'off-rolling', was attempted in order to enhance school performance data. Therefore, while the need to evaluate across settings is one that is widely accepted, it is the way that this is done and the purposes that it serves that present the range of challenges. The way that evaluation work is done in school systems in general, and particularly relating to school leaders, is complex and requires the help of the evaluation community (McNamara & O'Hara, 2008). This reality will be analysed later in this thesis when the evaluation perceptions of BSO principals are explored. However, the manner in which the purpose and practice of evaluation has been conceptualised and operated over recent decades is examined next with a view to developing a perspective on its utility in a specific educational setting.

3.7.2 *Formative and summative evaluations*

Scriven (1967) was the first to mention the concepts of formative and summative evaluations. Formative evaluations generally offer a guide to those responsible for improving or developing the quality of that being assessed – the object of the evaluation. The object of the evaluation is the 'evaluand', except when it is a person who is labelled the 'evaluee' (Scriven, 1991). Summative evaluations typically draw together previous judgements to determine the benefit of an evaluand, or evaluee, and are restrictive towards development. Formative evaluations often form the basis for summative evaluations (Mertens & Wilson, 2018; Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014).

3.7.3 *Formal and informal evaluations*

The difference between formal and informal evaluations provide the foundation for the emergence of evaluation as a profession (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). Most people perform informal evaluations while making decisions about things that they observe, interact with or consider for purchase. However, the practice, while very normal, is prone to misinformation and errors of judgement. It is

also open to bias and lacks rigour. Thus, informal evaluations provide a weak basis for making important decisions. Formal evaluations, on the other hand, should be "systematic and rigorous" (p. 26). They should be relevant and designed to appropriate standards combined with accurate reporting to 'right-to-know' audiences.

3.7.4 *Methodology in formal evaluations*

In order to avoid quick spontaneous assessments, approaches have been found for dealing with theories of knowledge, research designs and evidence-based protocols. Scriven (2007) argues that a professional evaluation is done in a systematic, objective way and combines a degree of expertise that requires specific training. Evaluators are required to avoid using a favourite design in order to prevent unintended consequences occurring (Mertens & Wilson, 2018; Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). Different disciplines provide evidence-based evaluation methods with specific guidelines, or standards, to facilitate these methods. Places like Canada, the UK and Australia have developed evaluation standards. The UK Evaluation Society, for example, publishes good practice guidelines on evaluation in *The Magenta Book* (Treasury, 2020). While Africa used American standards as guidelines, they did not adopt them extensively due to differences in context (Mertens & Wilson, 2018).

3.7.5 *Perceptions of evaluation*

A *stakeholder* is described typically as anyone whose life is affected by what is being evaluated (Mitchell & Lee, 2019; Saraite-Sariene, Alonso-Cañadas, Galán-Valdivieso, & Caba-Pérez, 2020; Yarbrough, Shulha, Hopson, & Caruthers, 2010). When it comes to evaluating performance, different stakeholders have different perceptions of what that performance should be like (Andersen, Boesen, & Pedersen, 2016). In some organisations, a 'professional quality' is expected and "compliance with professional norms can be central" (p. 15). This is a perception of what individual professionals believe their profession sees as being desirable for their organisation. Quality is a relevant performance criteria (Walker, Jung, & Boyne, 2013) and professional quality becomes important where employees belong to occupations that are backed by sound theoretical knowledge. The defining feature of professional quality is the identity of the stakeholder (Andersen et al., 2016). This is a

matter of recognising who is "behind a given performance criterion" (p. 25). Grades of professional quality are the degrees to which individual professionals believe that this desirable condition is reached by their organisation (Andersen et al., 2018). To improve performance, a shared understanding of professional quality is important. Professionals follow their own norms and secure the changing role of their expertise by triangulating what occurs (Burau & Andersen, 2014). Thus, and importantly in the context of this research, a principal's perception of their own evaluation is required to be tightly aligned with a shared understanding of expectations. A misalignment in understanding can, arguably, lead to ineffectiveness in the evaluation exercise.

In many perspectives, it is standards that evaluate professional quality most often and performance is sometimes assessed in relation to standards. Standards are structurally designed in accordance with the context of the object being evaluated. The way in which standards have been designed and applied, in one way or another, impact how BSO principals are evaluated.

3.7.6 *Standards.*

Scriven argues that comparing an object's performance to a standard is an evaluation (Scriven, 1981, 2007). Standards can apply to a wide variety of environments and setting out the evaluation quality creates what is termed as a 'performance standard'. Some organisations evaluate the performance of their members using formally accepted performance standards (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014), such as typical accreditation evaluations that are based on clear criteria and "guidelines for self-assessment" (p. 27). Others increasingly believe that performance-based accountability drives behavioural change leading to new standards of good practice (Camphuijsen, 2020).

Yarborough proposes five attributes to help clarify standards and make them more manageable: *utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy* and *accountability* (Yarbrough et al., 2010). In this view, the most important element is clarifying linguistic terms in order to help with "communication about the nature and value of information to assist decision making" (p. xx). Another key feature of this perspective is to understand that "standards are not 'laws' but are voluntary, consensus statements developed with extensive stakeholder input, and then discussed, revised, and approved by the members" (p. xxii).

For most scholars, the notion of performance standards is the process of setting one or more cut scores against which the performance of something is judged (Kane, 2017; Scriven, 1981, 2007; Stufflebeam

& Coryn, 2014). A cut score represents two or more units of performance - for example, pass or fail. Multiple cut scores may also be adopted by using terms such as outstanding, good or satisfactory. Such classification methods are described as approaches that are either norm-referenced methods or criterion-referenced methods. Norm-referenced methods are constructions of the mean scores of other objects against which an evaluated object is compared (Scriven, 1991, 2007; Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). In this method, the evaluated object's score can be equal to, above or below the normative score. These are typically expressed in percentiles, which are the distribution of value units into 100 equal groups.

For criterion-referenced methods, the performance is judged against specific standards and does not depend on how other objects perform (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). Certain sports are assessed in this way, such as figure skating and gymnastics. There is criticism of this perspective in making judgements for reasons involving reliability, validity and transparency. The criticism may be exacerbated if the standards are not published prior to the evaluation. Problems may also follow when cut scores are introduced because, for example, the assessments may not reflect the needs of the beneficiaries. Sometimes, this view of evaluation is more suited to average performers rather than low or high performers. It may be the case that performers may feel demotivated if the cut score is not reached or exceeded. It is also possible that a performer's focus could be narrowed and this could lead to a discouraged response to opportunities in order to exceed (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014).

There are also perspectives where performance-based accountability systems drive behaviour towards performance-orientated tasks leading to improvements in centrally defined learning standards (Camphuijsen, 2020). In this view, setting standards for accountability can establish new norms of good practice and change how individuals go about their work. Such standards are often noted in school principal evaluation.

3.8 Evaluating the Principal

As the role of the school principal has evolved over time, the position has also become more complex and demanding (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Fullan, 2018a; Leithwood, 2019). These aspects have led to consistent challenges in evaluating the formal school leader. There is no singular method by which the

school principal leader gets evaluated (Catano & Stronge, 2007). It is conducted in a range of diverse ways, in a myriad of contexts, if it is conducted at all. The following section develops this notion and explores a sample of different modes of evaluation including those that have been adopted with the intention of drawing out common themes in the evaluation of BSO principals.

3.8.1 *The evaluation of leadership practices in the United States*

In the United States, the notion of evaluating the performance of school principals is arguably still quite emergent. The development of evaluation instruments arose from a need to standardise the work of principals (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Consortium, 1996; Derrington & Sharratt, 2008; Goldring et al., 2015; Grissom et al., 2015; Stronge, Xu, Leeper, & Tonneson, 2013). Initial approaches, produced in the 1980s, comprised of checklists, supervision visits and reviews for contractual purposes (Sun & Youngs, 2009).

In 2008, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) presented six standards to show how school principals should demonstrate proficiency in order to achieve certification to practice (Derrington & Sharratt, 2008). These new standards highlighted the inconsistencies of previous evaluation practices and deemed them to be overly, if not entirely, subjective. The need for more innovative assessment tools was also a focus. As acceptance of the standards grew, they started to be used in the process of principal evaluation and became the basis for the development of evaluation tools. These tools included the 360-degree, evidence based, multi-rater scale VAL-ED system (Porter et al., 2008).

The Vanderbilt Assessment of Learning in Education (VAL-ED) was developed in 2006 (Education, 2009) and has arguably become one of the most widely used measures of leadership performance assessment in the United States (US). It utilises an evidence based, multi-rater, 360-degree feedback perspective from teachers, supervisors and those whose involvement directly surrounds the principal. It assesses the behaviours of principals that are known to directly influence teachers' performance and in turn, influence student learning. In identifying two dimensions of leadership behaviour – core components and key processes - the results from a VAL-ED assessment consists of 72 items that produce an empirical diagnostic profile linked to the six ISLLC standards. The total score produces an effectiveness rating that is interpreted against a national representative sample that includes principals,

supervisors and teachers. Produced in a percentile rank format, the effectiveness scale runs from 1 (ineffective) to 5 (outstandingly effective). The percentile rank of 95 is approximately score of 3.0. However, even today, it appears that the implementation of measurement tools such as the VAL-ED varies considerably among different US states. Some evaluation tools still do not capture the essential features of the present-day principal position (Donaldson et al., 2020; Goldring et al., 2015; Youngs, Kim, & Mavrogordato, 2020). Teachers are often challenged in disentangling leaders' actions from their personality traits and often require training in how to interpret results. There is only limited research available on the impact of 360-degree evaluation systems used to make essential decisions about principal performance (Youngs et al., 2020).

3.8.2 *The evaluation of leadership practices in other nations*

In many nations, the evaluation of principals is used as part of a wider system of examination of schools (OECD, 2013; Radinger, 2014). Countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) recorded singular efforts at evaluating principals (OECD, 2013). Education authorities concentrated on principal evaluation systems as a means of improving schools, but questions remain about their methods and purposes (Faubert, 2009; OECD, 2013). Legislative and policy frameworks on school leader evaluation is not as common as that of teacher evaluation, but they are still implemented and are mandatory in a number of countries (OECD, 2013). This aspect illustrates the importance that education systems give to evaluating those in charge of their schools. Yet, despite this perspective, the frequency of evaluations varies greatly - from annually to every few years. There are a few countries where school principal evaluations are voluntary. Countries that do not provide legislation on the matter, such as Australia and Denmark, have instituted the widespread use of principal evaluation practices anyway. In the Netherlands, legislation regarding principal evaluation applies to some levels of education. In Canada, such policies and practices are implemented at a provincial level (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Leithwood, 2012, 2019; OECD, 2013; Portin, 2009).

The results of these school leader assessments are used for career advancement, professional development or, in some cases, a variety of incentives like an increase in salary or a once off financial bonus (OECD, 2013). While this, again, points to an accountability function in principal evaluation it

also creates a space to enact control or motivation. The most common response to under-performance in many of these country systems is further evaluation, promotion deferral or contracts denied. Sometimes suspension or dismissal options are used. For those who are performing, the rewards for high performance can be an effective motivational tool.

3.8.3 *The evaluation of headteacher performance in England*

In terms of its approach to accountability, the education system in England has been described as one of the most intense systems worldwide (Ozga, 2012). It is also recognised as being one of the most centralised systems (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019). Performance standards were created for principals, or headteachers, in an effort to define role expectations and set benchmarks for efficacy (DfE, 2015; Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019; Green, 2013). Structural educational changes by the DfE placed an obligation on school governing boards to have effective systems in place to deal with the management of headteacher performance (Employment, 2000). A *'governing board'* is considered to be a body to which the headteacher is accountable (DfE, 2014c).

In its guidance to schools, the DfE replaced the noun 'appraisal' with 'performance management' (Employment, 2000). Appraisal has long been considered a method of assessing individuals by using objective criteria in order to make a judgement about their performance (Mertens & Wilson, 2018; Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). Legal perspectives on appraisal in England shifted the concept from *'who'* was being rated to *'what'* was being rated (Fletcher & Williams, 2016). This new perspective became 'performance management' (DfE, 2015; Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019). Performance management (PM) is considered to be a process that examines a broad range of areas including human resources, financial and strategy management (Cardy & Leonard, 2015). In this view, effectively managing performance in an organisation "requires an understanding of the context in which the process occurs" (p. 3).

The PM of school leaders by governing boards became vital to the overall system in England, but there isn't a standardised template for conducting the evaluation. Initially, researchers noticed a distinct lack of understanding regarding the processes and outcomes for the system (Davis, Kearney, Sanders, Thomas, & Leon, 2011; Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019; Eddy-Spicer et al., 2014a; Goldring, Porter, Murphy, Elliott, & Cravens, 2009; Radinger, 2014). To ease concerns, governing boards were

encouraged to outsource the assessment of PM to an independent consultant, known as an '*external adviser'* (Crawford et al., 2017b). However, further challenges became apparent when the external adviser needed to be seen to add value to the process, as they would have to be paid. Additionally, insufficient numbers of external advisers were available to the system.

In England, external advisers are expected to act as an agent of the governing board to whom they deliver a report of their findings (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2014a). They are also required to declare any relationship with the headteacher to ensure transparency. Strong external advisers need to have the capacity to question, support and challenge the head teacher. The capacity to interpret student data is vital, as this is an area of identified weakness for some governing boards.

If learning to interpret and understand data is an issue for some governing boards, so also is understanding the links between headteacher pay and performance (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019). Governing boards sought information on benchmarking from similar sized organisations and requested direction in setting appropriate objectives. The management of relationships with the head teacher came under the spotlight, particularly if the head teacher was underperforming or was particularly talented. Replacing talented headteachers, who may be attracted to work abroad in larger roles or who may be leaving the profession altogether, has had an impact on the recruitment and retention of school leaders (Lynch & Worth, 2017).

3.8.4 *Evaluation as an opportunity for education authorities*

Evaluation systems have proved useful to national jurisdictions in training new leaders (Komives & Wagner, 2016). Taking notice of the things that contribute to leadership development is important for authorities instead of relying on chance or time to do the work. Evaluation systems also helped education authorities to establish pipelines of new leaders and develop potential in leaders (Leithwood, 2012). Identifying the potential in aspiring leaders through coaching, mentoring and developing skills impacts on the overall system. In this view, a positive framework for evaluation can have a powerful effect on facilitating ambition and early talent spotting brings rewards to the system in general.

National authorities have also learned lessons from evaluation systems where the prevailing practices in identifying underperforming teachers led to a noted disservice to students (Kraft & Gilmour, 2017;

Weisberg et al., 2009). A report called *'The Widget Effect'*, by Weisberg et al. (2009), claimed that too many teachers were getting high ratings in a careless process. So, in this instance at least, evaluation models helped to inform the accountability function for policy makers. Despite the many concerns and debates, evaluation frameworks have also found opportunities for principals.

3.8.5 *Evaluation as an opportunity for principals*

Sometimes, principals find themselves in no man's land in terms of evaluation and often receive only cursory evaluations in school inspections (Brown-Sims, 2010). There is also a deficit of research into how principals make sense of their work (Hardy, 2014). Yet, they are continuously subjected to pressures created by rapid school improvement measures (Heffernan, 2018a).

However, principals' personal evaluations come with many benefits including the encouragement of communication, the setting of mutual goals and the motivation to improve (Anderson & Turnbull, 2016; Brown-Sims, 2010; Heffernan, 2018a). Heffernan argues that evaluation helps school principals, who often lack the chance or don't seek the opportunity to get professional feedback from unofficial sources. Lack of feedback from sources, such as other colleagues, can lead to feelings of workplace isolation (Heffernan, 2018a).

Research on evaluation models used to measure school principals' practices and behaviours conclude that, in order to be effective, the evaluation needs to go beyond employment related matters. Instead, models should encompass professional development, accountability and school reorientation (Condon & Clifford, 2012; Goldring et al., 2009; OECD, 2013; Reeves, 2008). While this perspective provides useful opportunities for principals, it is acknowledged that making improvements is complex. Many education systems have reported concerns about the lack of sound instruments for assessing principal performance in the interest of professional development (OECD, 2013).

3.9 Issues with Designing a Suitable Evaluation Approach

It is the case that different evaluation tools, or instruments, measure different things. The literature cites issues and concerns not only in relation to the instruments, but also the approach of some systems in measuring principal effectiveness (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019; Grissom et al., 2015; Heffernan, 2018a). While improving school performance is expected of principals, these expectations

do not come with come with any plan to follow (Jones & Harris, 2014):

> "Improving school performance is an expectation placed squarely on the shoulders of principals but often this comes without any guaranteed solution, ready-made blueprint or failsafe model of improving organisational performance". (p. 481)

The need to design an evaluation system for principals may be attractive, and may have uses, but there are some fundamental issues in trying to solve the complexities involved in designing a suitable system. Pashiardis & Brauckmann (2008) argue that the purpose of the evaluation of principals is likely to be viewed differently "by national policy makers, school governors and managers, teachers, students, the parents of students and, of course, researchers ..." (p. 260).

Issues with designing a suitable evaluation approach include measuring the practices of principals and measuring the problem-solving abilities of principals. Contextually related issues include the capacity of local school boards to evaluate principals, the socioeconomic background of the school community and the need for understanding location. Different forms of leadership and the application of standards also influence principal evaluation. All of these issues converge to complicate attempts to design suitable ways of measuring principal effectiveness. With that in mind, this study proposes to examine each of these aspects in turn and to examine how each aspect impacts on the style and outcomes of principal evaluations.

3.9.1 *Evaluating the practices*

Due to the nature of their roles, many of the most important practices and behaviours of principals are not easily captured by common evaluation methods (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019; Heffernan, 2018a; OECD, 2016b). There is a limited evidence base that describes any of the daily leadership practices of school principals. As described earlier, school leadership depends on context (Harris, Leithwood, Day, Sammons, & Hopkins, 2007; Spillane & Diamond, 2007), and sometimes these situational contexts can only be witnessed from within the school itself. Accounting for, and observing, many of the non-routine practices of principals has led to complexities in properly measuring their performance.

3.9.2 *The problem-solving abilities of school leaders*

Problem solving expertise is explicit to the context in which it is learned and is most likely to be used in situations similar to that in which it was learned (Clifford & Ross, 2012). This problem-solving knowledge is then applied automatically to everyday problems. Newer principals may have a less well refined version of this contextual knowledge (Anderson & Turnbull, 2016). In some research this knowledge is thought of as a tool (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989). Therefore, it is useful for those who assess principals to have an understanding of how principals gain and use knowledge gathered in the location in which they work (Anderson & Turnbull, 2016; Condon & Clifford, 2012; Heffernan, 2018a).

3.9.3 *Local governance capacity*

School leaders are often predisposed to a subjective analysis of their work (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019; Pashiardis & Brauckmann, 2008). Evaluation systems are often not research driven, but are derived from localised opinions and methodologies for others to consider (OECD, 2013; Radinger, 2014). Elements of contextual decision-making may not be clear even to local stakeholders and this may leave opinions at variance with that of the principal leader (Polka & Litchka, 2008).

Cases are reported where stakeholders may not realise that problems arise due to the ability ceiling of the principal and a dearth of research exists regarding the performance capacity of principals generally, including exemplar displays of high performance (Condon & Clifford, 2012; Goldring et al., 2009). Oftentimes, circumstantial issues, or even personal characteristics, place principals in the lens of school boards much more so than their efforts to improve learning (Portin, 2009).

In the PM of headteachers in England, challenges that were identified included the voluntary status of the governing boards and the increasing breadth of their responsibilities (Crawford et al., 2017b; Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019). Attention is often given to issues about the capacity of volunteers to continue to be a critical friend when they are still expected to challenge school headteachers correctly (Young, 2017).

3.9.4 *Socioeconomic influences*

In studying the effects of socioeconomic contexts on the performance of schools, the manner in which a school governing board perceives its principal tends to reflect the way the board perceives itself in outlining priorities (James et al., 2011). One of the elements of how boards interpret performance has to do with the makeup of the board as a non-executive committee and the background from which it comes (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019). School board members can carry their own myths and folklore in relation to how evaluations should be carried out and this can cause difficulties in developing a particular framework for successful principal evaluation.

3.9.5 *The need for understanding location*

Context influences school principal leadership and its ambition to be effective (Bush et al., 2019). The size of the school and its governance influences the principal's evaluation. The makeup of the staff, the socio-economic background of the students and the cultural location are all deep influences on what needs to work. Smaller schools face different challenges to what larger schools might face (Clifford & Ross, 2012; Pont et al., 2008), and therefore, different approaches are required. The school's location and context influences the quality of the teacher who chooses to work there and so, lower socioeconomic cohorts of students are taught by less experienced teachers (Behrstock & Clifford, 2010). Contextual issues have created many complexities in school principal evaluation, not least in the need for understanding.

3.9.6 *Shared leadership formations*

It is important in evaluations to be cognisant of new forms of leadership, particularly that which may be shared (Fullan, 2020; Leithwood, 2019; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; OECD, 2008; Woods, Woods, & Roberts, 2018). It is also a requisite that school leaders concentrate on the core task - the improvement of teaching and learning (Heffernan, 2018b; Munby, 2019). An understanding of how shared forms of school leadership affects student learning in context is an influence on the design of evaluation systems.

Some interpretations of leadership formations recognise that the school principal is the one who distributes leadership (Harris, 2013a; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001). The organisational structures of the school context influences what is required and sometimes leadership stretches across

a number of actors (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). So, in trying to extrapolate the principal leader from the leadership group for evaluation purposes, accountability requirements may pose barriers (Hartley, 2010; Mulford, 2008). For example, encouraging principal leaders to distribute the leadership tasks may be restrained due to other obligations thrust upon them. Alma Harris has been attentive in describing distributed leadership with the caveat that it must be disciplined (Harris, 2013a). Evaluation designers are urged to reflect different styles of leadership formations, such as distributed leadership, in their arrangements.

3.9.7 *Applying standards*

Performance standards are a means of judging the effectiveness of principal leadership (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019; Green, 2013; OECD, 2013). The alignment of school principal evaluation with performance standards reveal issues regarding the breadth of responsibilities that school principals hold in comparison, arguably, to the narrow focus of performance standards (Catano & Stronge, 2007). Performance standards are not always reflected in evaluation instruments. Catano and Stronge (2007) found that the responsibilities of principal leaders are not always weighted equally, stakeholders don't always appreciate the complexity of the role and evaluation instruments are not tested on validated assumptions.

3.10 The Issue of Suitable Tools

While there appear to be issues with designing evaluative approaches, there are also challenges in finding suitable instruments with which to conduct evaluations. Tools that help inform principal professional development needs are a critical element in designing evaluation frameworks that are valid and reliable. Validity refers to the extent that an evaluation model measures what it is designed to measure, whereas reliability refers to the consistency of the results when the performance is repeatedly measured (Pashiardis & Brauckmann, 2008). However, many of the instruments, frameworks and methods that are used by local regions and nations are under researched (Maroy & Pons, 2019). Education authorities, sometimes, do not present any supporting evidence for the validity and reliability of their methodologies (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019; Goldring et al., 2008; OECD, 2013; Radinger, 2014; Spicer et al., 2014; Stronge et al., 2013; Sun & Youngs, 2009). Several popular

methodologies for evaluating the efficacy of the principal include appraisal frameworks, self-evaluation tools, gathering stakeholder viewpoints and measuring school effectiveness using school inspection visits.

3.10.1 *Appraisal frameworks*

Appraisals are generally carried out by evaluators for the purposes of performance management, employment decision-making and compensation (Crawford, Eddy-Spicer, & Earley, 2017a; Goldring et al., 2015; OECD, 2013; Porter et al., 2008). The training of evaluators focuses on developing competencies and, sometimes, piloting new appraisal systems before implementation. However, little is known about the methods by which evaluators or school leaders are trained in school appraisal methods (OECD, 2013; Radinger, 2014; Schleicher, 2012).

While research on the effects of appraisal in making leadership more effective is sparse, there is some evidence that an appraisal system does provide an opportunity for self-evaluation and professional development. These aspects influence practices and behaviours arguably leading to improved student achievement (Barbana, Dumay, & Dupriez, 2020; Parylo, Zepeda, & Bengtson, 2012). How principal leaders are supported is critical in light of greater autonomy, accountability and the increasing complexities of leadership. The support aspect also refers to the amount of effort and time it takes to carry out an appraisal. Some studies have revealed that the workload of the principal leader influences the amount of time spent on appraisal in order to make it effective (Pont et al., 2008). Other researchers have discovered a challenge in the scheduling of meetings among those charged with carrying out an appraisal (Spicer et al., 2014).

As the input of school leaders themselves is important, the creation of appraisal methods should include school leaders so that they can be part of the overall system of support (Clifford, Behrstock-Sherratt, & Fetters, 2012). This allows for further accuracy in achieving acceptable standards of effective leadership. While appraisal is an arguably popular tool, it appears to have many perspectives.

3.10.2 *Self-evaluation*

Self-evaluation is used commonly in principal assessments (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2014b; MacBeath, 2006; OECD, 2013). The process has many perspectives, but often takes the form of a self-reflection

online tool (Education, 2009). This tool includes the building of an evidence portfolio by using notes, by using a range of data, by using meeting minutes and by using photographs. While some self-evaluation tools are quite comprehensive and specific, there are differing views in relation to self-evaluation and building of portfolios. Self-reflection that includes the expression of views and critiquing are seen as good practice skills (Condon & Clifford, 2012). However, the preparation of portfolios and self-evaluation formats can require a considerable increase in workload from the principal. They can, sometimes, be perceived as a compliance tool for documenting past achievements or for setting future goals (Johnston & Thomas, 2005). In New Zealand, the principal's years of experience and the size of the school predicted over-rating of their effectiveness in self-evaluations (Sinnema, Robinson, Ludlow, & Pope, 2015). Principals who were more experienced and who worked in larger schools were more likely to rate their effectiveness as higher than perhaps perceived by others. There are other studies that show the opposite result. Some principals rate themselves lower that what their staff would say due to what was termed as a 'halo effect' (Moos, Johansson, & Day, 2011a). In many respects, the use of self-evaluation as a suitable tool in evaluating principal performance is influenced by data. In this perspective, sometimes data is not well understood. Training and support is required in the use of self-evaluation data in real life settings and it is argued that policy makers should avoid requesting too much data in order to simplify processes to improve student outcomes (O'Brien, McNamara, O'Hara, & Brown, 2019).

3.10.3 *Stakeholder surveys, interviews and questionnaires*

The provision of a voice to stakeholders such as teachers, students, staff and parents are all valuable in obtaining a panoramic view to provide the context and the perspectives of a school environment and its principal (Brown-Sims, 2010; Davis et al., 2011; Sun & Youngs, 2009). Multiple sources of appropriate data are useful and help to increase the validity and reliability of an appraisal. However, the question of subjectivity provides a challenge especially when there may be consequences for the principal. The evidence gathering is also demanding and this aspect arguably reflects a possible risk of an imbalance of power between the evaluee, the evaluator and the stakeholder. In human performance technology, perception analysis is a method that supports the investigation of accurate stakeholder perceptions (Pershing, 2006). Individuals and groups may have widely varying understandings of the

same situation and this may affect performance analysis. These aspects may pose a challenge for those analysing an individual's performance.

3.10.4 *School inspection visits*

School inspection, in most education systems, is used for controlling and promoting quality in schools (DfE, 2015; Ehren, Altrichter, McNamara, & O'Hara, 2013; OECD, 2013). However, there is limited evidence to support how inspections actually drive improvement. Inspection systems often report on the assessment of leaders and sometimes make judgements on leaders in an offhanded manner (Brown-Sims, 2010; Rotherham, 2010). It is a paradox that the practice of evaluating leadership by using a range of instruments during a school evaluation does not have much to present on its impact on those being evaluated (OECD, 2016a). School inspection designers are sometimes left to pick their way through a range of diverse personal opinions and recommendations in order to select the most appropriate system of evaluation for principals without having a clear idea of the impact.

A common approach to assessing principal effectiveness is conducted by measuring school effectiveness (Clifford et al., 2012). A school's effectiveness is the impact a school has on student achievement or test outcomes (Fuller & Hollingworth, 2014). A principal's effectiveness is the "the ability of the principal to affect changes in student test scores" (p. 468). Principal effectiveness is the expected effects of the principal's work on student learning (Clifford et al., 2012). Expected effects might include the way a principal influences school conditions by interacting with the community and by creating high expectations (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Effects may also include the way a principal influences the working conditions or instructional environment of the teachers (Leithwood et al., 2017) or the way the principal impacts teacher development (Ladd, 2011). In some contexts, the extent to which the evaluation of the school informs the evaluation of the individual school leader is reflected in a weighting given to the school evaluation in the appraisal process (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Crawford et al., 2017b; OECD, 2013; Sun & Youngs, 2009).

Using a school evaluation in the assessment of principal efficacy raises a number of important questions not least validity and reliability (Goe, 2007; Grissom et al., 2015). Standardised tests given to students to measure achievement were never intended to assess principals. The use of test scores in this fashion proceeds "with little guidance on how the measurement might best be accomplished" (p.

4). The publication of the 2020 Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) secondary school examination results, for example, created a perception that students received lower outcomes than they were expecting because of the school they attended (BBC.com, 2020). Moderation on the examinations by the SQA was linked to the past performances of the schools. When challenges like this arise, trying to ascertain how much of the past performance of the school should be attributed to the principal is complex (Grissom et al., 2015). In this perspective, principals would arguably need to have complete control over a range of variables that influence student achievement, such as demographics, facilities and parental support. Grissom et al. (2015) argue that; "disentangling the impact of the educator from the long-run impact of the school presents particular difficulties for principals because there is only one principal at a time in each school" (p. 4).

Other approaches are to assume that principal effectiveness can be measured by comparing prior student outcomes at the same school or measuring principal effects on student achievement in isolation from the effects of the school (Grissom et al., 2015). A substantial amount of longitudinal data is required to compare the impact of all of these principals. The effectiveness of the data becomes eroded as the principals in the different schools might not be considered as effective due to the higher effectiveness of preceding or following principals.

Grissom et al. (2015) claim that even the most refined and astute attempts to estimate principal effectiveness based on student achievement are erroneous and produce imprecise results. These scholars argue that using estimates, such as these, means that flawed signals are being sent to stakeholders about principal effectiveness. This might lead to unintended consequences and unwise decisions regarding the careers of principals. It might also, arguably, lead to very simplistic strategies that are unsubstantiated in the research or in measurement and statistics. Unless these types of issues can be addressed, Grissom et al. (2015) argue that school effectiveness and principal effectiveness are not equal.

Methodologies for evaluating the efficacy of the principal are not unfamiliar to the BSO principal, given the role's historical context in England (Chapter 2). This study has established that the BSO principal has some evaluation experience in the form of BSO inspections (DfE, 2020a) and in the form of association accreditation visits (HMC, 2020; IAPS, 2020). However, while gaining an

understanding from the literature continues about the methods of evaluation for complementary forms of school leadership, this study is exploratory and the way in which BSO principals in this study are evaluated is revealed later in the findings. Therefore, choosing a suitable framework from which to examine the methods used to evaluate the BSO principal is useful for this study.

3.11 Finding a Suitable Framework to Examine a Context

The BSO is a unique context and the BSO principal is a school leader in that environment. Finding a useful framework to conduct an exploratory study on the evaluation perceptions of the BSO principals is useful.

In 2009, the OECD embarked on a wide-ranging international review of the evaluation and assessment policies of school systems across 28 countries (OECD, 2013). In terms of the appraisal of school leaders, the organisation designed a framework to examine the challenges for the development of school leadership appraisal within each country. The challenges included the development of a clear understanding of effective school leadership and the issue of placing pedagogically driven leadership as central to leadership appraisal. Further challenges included providing school leaders with opportunities for professional feedback and using the results of appraisal as a motivational tool towards improvement for enhanced student outcomes. Four main aspects of the OECD (2013) conceptual framework design were adopted by others to help examine leadership appraisal issues within their own respective systems (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2014b; Hislop, 2013). These included;

- Governance
- Design
- Capacity
- The way results are used

Governance is the way in which the appraisal is organised and includes the setting out of the requirements for the appraisal design (OECD, 2013). It encapsulates the "distribution of responsibilities" for the appraisal as well as the objectives of whoever is carrying it out (p. 494). How autonomous, prescriptive or underperforming the school board tends to be or indeed how responsive it is to competition from other schools should be taken into account (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2014a). The

governance of the school can also reflect the overall system that implements the checks and balances required to operate a national education system (Hislop, 2013).

Design and procedures for appraisal include the particular characteristics and architecture of the appraisal (OECD, 2013). It includes aspects like frequency, criteria and reference standards. It also includes characteristics such as the alignment of instruments to the school development plan and the information that is sought as data inputs. Specific challenges to the design from other research include different styles of appraisal. This aspect reflects that principals sometimes perceive the notion of appraisal as politically necessary and that primary principals think differently about appraisal than their secondary colleagues (Goldring, Huff, May, & Camburn, 2007). Similarly, principals in advantaged schools spend their time on different activities, such as instruction and student management, to principals of more challenged schools. The operational setting up of appraisals prove challenging, where the scheduling of meetings causes frustration due to significant delays (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2014b). Defining individual objectives are sometimes challenged by objectives for the school as a whole, thereby leading to an overemphasis on the accountability function.

Capacity refers to the abilities of the appraiser and the abilities of the principal leader to take part in the appraisal (OECD, 2013). The capacity to use the results "for the improvement of school leaders' practices and behaviours" involves aspects of reform that are viewed through training or mentoring (p. 494). Capacity not only refers to the ability to appraise or be appraised, but also to the ability to conduct school self-evaluations. Successful school self-evaluations is considered an 'Achilles heel' in some contexts (Hislop, 2013).

The way results are used describes the way in which the results of the appraisal are used towards improvement (OECD, 2013). It refers to how the results inform feedback, professional development, employment status and career betterment. Some studies have found that the gathering of data is sometimes seen as relatively informal and the level of precision that is required in panoramic feedback is rarely used (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2014a).

The framework used by the OECD policy analysts differentiates between assessment, appraisal and evaluation (OECD, 2013) *Assessment* refers to judgements of student achievement. *Appraisal* refers to judgements on school-level professionals. *Evaluation* refers to the effectiveness of the school system,

policies and programmes. However, as stated earlier in this chapter, sometimes terms are changed to reflect the concerns of various contexts (DfE, 2015; Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019; Fletcher & Williams, 2016). Throughout this study, the term *evaluation* is chosen with respect to the assessment of BSO principals as the study is exploratory and there is a deficit of knowledge about the BSO principal. A pilot of one the data gathering exercises in this study confirmed that there is arguable confusion among participants regarding the term *appraisal*. Therefore, this study chooses to use the broader term 'evaluation'. Despite the slight variation in the definition of terms, an adapted version of the OECD (2013) conceptual design is considered useful for the purposes of this research in order to explore the evaluation perceptions of BSO principals. How this adapted version is used in this study is explained further in the methodology (Chapter 4).

3.11.1 *A context without formal principal evaluation*

In order to get a different perspective on school principal evaluation, perhaps the best place to look is arguably a context in which it does not exist. In 2013, Ireland held the Presidency of the European Union, as part of a rotation agreement with the other member states. In an education conference held during that time, the Chief Inspector of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in Ireland, Harold Hislop, reflected on his country's participation in the OECD review (OECD, 2013). He commented on its recommendations for improving Irish evaluation and assessment policies (Hislop, 2013). Of all the approaches recommended for countries in the domain of evaluation and assessment, Hislop considered the subject of formal teacher appraisal to be "the least developed in Ireland" (p. 17). He also recounted that there were "no regular formal performance appraisals or performance contracts for principals" (p. 18).

Hislop (2013) argued that the lack of a formal appraisal system in Ireland affected the capacity of the overall system to cultivate "collegial professional reflection" and that this arguably affected the capacity of principals to engage in collaborative, reflective and challenging conversations (p. 19). He also noted that "professional development for principals is much underdeveloped in Ireland" (p. 19). Considering the use of terminology in appraisals, Hislop (2013) argued that this aspect could cloud genuine improvement and could create obstacles for its success. He believed that a perspective where terms may get in the way could arguably lead to blindness around "the potential benefits of having a

more formalised professional appraisal culture in schools" (p. 18). Hislop (2013) referred to ongoing changes in the inspection system in Ireland that were leading to a more conscious approach towards accountability and improvement functions in school leadership. In this domain, he argued that standards were presented as "statements of practice" and that there was a greater emphasis on self-evaluation (p. 10).

Separately, a commissioned review of the Irish education system (Coolahan, Drudy, Hogan, & McGuiness, 2017) acknowledged that embedding different stages of improvement in a system, including leadership reform, was "desirable for success" (p. 146). A 'festina lente' (hasten slowly) approach was advised by Coolahan and his colleagues who argued for increasing the capacity in school leaders by providing robust quality assurance of their professional learning. This notion advocates that leadership learning occurs best in "communities of practice" and that leadership is chiefly associated with the actions of members of the community themselves (p. 105). The review stated that the wealth of insight and expertise accumulated by members of professional associations as "practitioners of educational leadership" is an invaluable resource for the professional development of school leaders in order to increase this capacity (p. 162). This is a fluid concept where "members of a genuine community of practice readily allow that a newcomer might in some particular respects be a valuable mentor to longer serving colleagues" (p. 105). This perspective appears to recognise the importance of principal education.

3.12 Conclusions on Evaluation

This section on evaluation has considered theory, methodologies, perceptions and standards. It has also examined instruments and frameworks that are used in a range of contexts throughout the world. Issues with designing suitable tools and approaches appear challenging. Leithwood (2018) suggests that school leadership is "both a central explanation for school effectiveness and one of the most powerful levers for improving schools" (p. xv). Yet, developing frameworks to evaluate impact do not sufficiently address how performance ideals are generalised and "there is no formula to help" (p. 31). While some distress is felt about labelling the role, identifying the role and finding ways to evaluate the impact of the role of the principal, enough is still not known about the environments where the

school principal leader is found. The consistent use of terminology, cultivating collaborative conversations and building capacity through reflective communities of practice might appear to be an over simplistic approach in a context, like Ireland, where a formal school principal evaluation is not conducted at all. In some respects, insights like those from Hislop (2013) and Coolahan et al. (2017), might arguably be a good starting point in the evaluation of school principals, if the chance to start over was possible.

This study reveals a unique school context called the BSO that exists as a sub-type of the ill-defined and diverse international schools' sector. More importantly, this study reveals the BSO principal, who is a formal school principal leader engaged in leading a BSO. There is very limited literature on the BSO principal and the contribution that this study aims to make is to fill the gaps in the knowledge about the evaluation of BSO principals. It is hoped that this research may go some way in further developing understandings of the lacuna in the assessment of more conventional principal leadership forms.

3.13 Summary

This review has examined forms of leadership that are comparative to the BSO principal. However, the engagement shows that, despite having large national systems in which to explore, typologies from which to work and solutions from which to select, scholars still find difficulty in agreeing on how best to assess the formal school leader among the leadership studies. There are still issues with designing evaluative frameworks to assess the performance of principals in order to accurately measure the impact of their core function, which is student achievement. Evaluation raises opportunities for authorities and for principals, and attempts have been made to create solutions and frameworks to capture the complex nature of school principal evaluations.

Seminal works on the topic of evaluation inspired later developments in what is still a developing field. Formative and summative evaluations are now common terms in education and so is the recognition of how informal and subjective aspects can be contrasted with more objective and formal attempts. Perceptions of quality and compliance with expectations has led to the application of standards in how schools and their principals operate in various parts of the world. Efforts at

evaluating principals have not come without challenges both in approach to the evaluation and the instruments used.

Chapter 4 Methodology & Research Methods

4.1 Introduction

Relatively little is known about BSO principals and how they are evaluated. The historical and locational contexts of BSO principals have arguably been established in Chapter 2 of this study. Comparative aspects of leadership and evaluation in the literature have been examined in Chapter 3. The aim now is to explore the evaluation perceptions this unique group of principals and to interpret what they are saying about their evaluations.

This chapter describes the philosophical approaches to the theoretical framework. It also describes the research design and the methodology. The data collection and the analysis procedures used in this study are outlined, and the reasons behind the various approaches including the ethical considerations, the sample selection and the quality control are also discussed.

4.2 The Research Assumptions

Establishing the philosophy on which the research is based depends on whether this researcher believes that the phenomenon is a truth that is waiting to be found and uncovered, or that the knowledge is socially constructed, or that the reality is a mix of both aspects. Establishing the philosophy helps to clarify a researcher's beliefs and ultimately guides the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In philosophy, such beliefs, or assumptions, are framed around four principles regarding the nature of reality and the nature of knowledge. Assumptions about ontology, epistemology and axiology provide a framework for understanding the philosophy that underpins the research. The methodological assumption provides direction for the research. The perspective that holds these ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs together provides a paradigm, which is the "worldview" that the researcher maintains (p. 24).

Ontological assumptions relate to the nature of reality and its characteristics. In simple terms, they describe what knowledge can be known (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The evaluation experiences of a community of BSO principals are researched in this study, and this is a reality that is arguably not known to the wider world. The epistemological assumption points to ways of obtaining that

knowledge, and the reality that is their experiences and understanding of those experiences. In this assumption, there are two very relevant and traditional ways of approaching how we understand reality. The positivist paradigm maintains that knowledge exists independently of any social thoughts and beliefs, and insists that the researcher's worldview is that knowledge can be found. This paradigm is measurable and can be quantified, and is termed as a 'quantitative' approach. The interpretivist paradigm reflects a viewpoint in which knowledge is socially constructed, and where the resulting knowledge includes a quality that must be interpreted, leading to what is termed as a 'qualitative' approach. However, when inferences are drawn from the findings of both perspectives, then scholars refer to a 'third community of researchers' who advocate the use of a 'mixed' approach (Creswell & Piano Clark, 2017; Tashakkori, Johnson, & Teddlie, 2020)

In the axiological assumption, researchers situate themselves and take a "position" in relation to the context and setting of the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018: p. 24). All researchers bring their values to a study and the focus is on what knowledge the researcher wants, or values, in the research. Among some of the axiological aspects that are described are the researcher's social and professional position, but these are mainly characteristics of a subjective interpretative perspective. The methodological assumption reflects the logical strategy that is taken in research. The strategy followed in a study may be "inductive", which is a "bottom up" exploratory approach (p. 43). The strategy may also be "deductive" which is taken from a theory, or from other perspectives, so that emerging themes are "constantly being checked against the data" (p. 43).

In educational research, as with any inquiry, it is the methodology that will differentiate it from mere observation and guesswork (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Hoy & Adams, 2015). Whatever approach is chosen should be appropriate and justified in order that any doubts about its limits can be tested (Aldridge, Biesta, Filippakou, & Wainwright, 2018). What counts, and does not count, as education knowledge should remain "contested", so that inquirers can continue to learn from each other (p. 4).

4.3 The Research Approach

This is an educational investigation that examines the evaluation perceptions of a sample of BSO principals. The examination of the experiences of these BSO principals is concerned with isolating an

aspect of their lives and investigating the reality of their evaluations. Researching this knowledge has a fundamental aim of interpreting what these BSO principals are saying about their evaluations. Paradigmatically, this research is considered from three perspectives. However, two perspectives are rejected as not suitable for the purposes of this study.

The quantitative approach is based on the tenets of positivism, which is a belief that physical social phenomena are independent of the observer (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Quantitative research was traditionally thought to be the most acceptable perspective because of its scientific and objective approach (Willis, Jost, & Nilakanta, 2007), and was considered "the only real research " (p. 15). The positivist advances the notion that researchers study a reality that is ordered and logical. This is knowledge that is objectively measured. Instruments are used, so that empirical data can be measured, which is useful for "testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018: p. 4). Prior to starting the inquiry, this researcher attended a workshop led by Dublin City University (DCU) called *'Applying Quantitative Approaches to Educational Research'* (IE603). An instrument called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was introduced as one example of a typical tool that may be used for empirical analysis (Dancey & Reidy, 2020). Narrow research questions are used by this instrument's operators to gather information, and the resulting statistical data is interpreted using prior indicators and research studies in order to confirm assumptions. Using instruments, such as SPSS, arguably requires that the researcher is completely independent of all bias in interpreting the data in order to benefit from this approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The ontological assumption in using this approach is that it would appear to this researcher that the nature of the social reality of the BSO principals' evaluations is treated as measurable and objective.

The ontological, epistemological and methodological principles of this singular approach led to the rejection of it for the purposes of this study. The BSO principals, who are the participants in this research, are located in different countries around the world. There are contextual variables among the principals and their locations that require appropriate understanding. Issues, such as their diverse locations and the relatively limited access to the participants, curtail any notions of success in using this paradigm.

A second approach that is considered is the mixed methods approach, which is borne from the 'third community of researchers' (Tashakkori et al., 2020). It is a procedure for collecting, analysing, and 'mixing' both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to understand a research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A deep understanding of both qualitative and quantitative research is needed in order to benefit from this methodology, and help was sought in this regard by attending a DCU led workshop called *'Applying Mixed Methods Approaches to Educational Research'* (IE601). At this workshop, presentations illustrated that the procedures are arguably more time-consuming, and that they required extensive data collection and analysis. Creswell and Creswell (2018) state that a mixed method study is not simply about collecting data using two distinct strands of research, but it is about blending and integrating "two forms of data" (p. 4). In this study, multiple sources of data are used but these mixed data sources are not always relevant to a mixed method approach. Issues, such as time constraints in the field and the relatively limited participant access, means that the successful use of the mixed methods approach is greatly reduced for the purposes of this study. Taking account of all of these aspects, it was rejected.

The third approach that was considered was the qualitative approach. As described by Creswell (2014), this approach provides for a paradigm that is "useful for exploring and understanding a central phenomenon" (p. 10). Creswell and Poth (2018) further explain that the qualitative approach is a "set of interpretative material practices that make the world visible" (p. 3). In order to gain a practical level of understanding, this researcher attended a DCU led workshop called *'Applying Qualitative Approaches to Educational Research'* (IE602). In this workshop, presentations focused on research that explored a central phenomenon with a view to identifying patterns, or themes, to gain a more complete understanding of the problem. The ontological assumption in this approach is that the world is socially constructed and that it must be interpreted. As such, the knowledge is not independent of the researcher but is more subjective in nature (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Social constructivism, or interpretivism, according to Creswell and Poth (2018) is a framework in which individuals try to understand "the world in which they live and work" (p. 7). This subjective knowledge is based on individual perspectives, so it is necessary that studies are conducted where the participants are located in order to establish context. Meanings are formed through each individual's

interaction with the researcher (Burr, 2015), and this aspect helps to develop a pattern where the key tenet "is a product of human thought rather than grounded in an observable, external reality" (p. 222). The epistemological assumption underpins the researcher's attempts to get as close as possible to the participants being studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). In this study, the different contexts in which this community of BSO principals live and in which they work is taken into account, and attempts are made to gather their knowledge perspectives from where they are located. Such aspects embrace the notion of reporting "multiple realities" (p. 20). The research is conducted with the intent of reporting many perspectives through the extraction of themes that are developed in the findings. Themes are produced in the findings following discussions with the BSO principals about their evaluation perceptions. The explicit focus in the dialogue is about conceptualising the social reality of these BSO principals' evaluations by interpreting meanings as they arise from the themes in their specific contexts.

The social constructivist, or interpretivist, paradigm is relevant to this study because sometimes there are variables in research problems that require further explanation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Variable characteristics, such as the locational contexts or the backgrounds of the BSO principals, require explanations regarding how one variable may sometimes influence another. In order to research a problem, where the variables are unknown, further exploration may be required so that more information might be yielded from the participants. Thus, appropriate understanding and interpretation is necessary.

There is no real agreed format on how a qualitative study is carried out, but there are suggestions that describe the features of a good qualitative study and there are standards for assessing the nature of the quality (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yates, 2004). The aims of a qualitative approach are to understand, describe and discover realities. The procedures, or methodologies, of qualitative research are inductive where the knowledge emerges and is shaped by the researcher's experience in collecting and analysing data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). These are important considerations in producing a good qualitative study.

In summary, this research is an exploratory investigation as comparatively little is known about the context of BSO principals or their evaluative perceptions. The logic that is followed is inductive as the

knowledge emerges from the participants. How the data is gathered and analysed is outlined later in this chapter.

4.4 The Researcher's Position

As with all inquiries, qualitative researchers are expected to axiologically "position themselves" in the context of the research in relation to their experience, social status or professional beliefs (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 21) Just as the views of these BSO principals are relied on in their context, there is difficulty in constructivist research in demonstrating that the inquirer's perspective does not dilute or taint the interpretations (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This researcher seeks ways to avoid personal interpretative inclinations and impulses by challenging any dependence that may exist in interpreting the research evidence. Previous experiences as a BSO principal, and as an international school leader, bring personal perspectives to this study. In attempting to reduce this influence, consideration is given to a form of decision-making map (Mojtahed, Nunes, Martins, & Peng, 2014), where the participant is involved in contributing to the dominant perspectives under investigation. This is one technique that appeared particularly useful in exhausting all of the concepts or ideas to be discussed, before identifying the key themes that start to emerge from the co-constructive discussion. There are challenges, however, in that the tool provides a distraction for the participant by becoming familiar with the diagram beforehand. Challenges are also posed by the possible reduction in conversation while participants decide where to place key themes and the risk of not establishing a good rapport with the participant.

Examining options, such as decision-making maps, highlights that experimenting with new methods of constructivist research requires a recurring need for innovation. A consistent need for self-awareness is crucial in order to reduce the ownership aspect of interpretational abilities. In the end, some more simple reflective methods, that are often used in action research, are deployed. In these methods, thoughts are written in notebooks, or audio-recorded, before conducting the research so that the field is entered with a clear mind (Koshy, 2011). This form of reflection brings life to the thought process later, as a number of notebooks are filled with initial thoughts including questions and graphically displayed layouts (see Appendix O). The audio-recordings bring an extra dimension in

being able to return to the place of the recording, where there is an ambiance to the documented observations. The notebooks and audio-recordings are reviewed afterwards to seek any bias and highlighting any personal perspectives that might emerge in the interpretation.

Applying this researcher's own personal philosophical assumptions to the study illuminates a personal paradigm, or 'worldview'(Creswell & Poth, 2018). The philosophical assumptions of ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology are key parameters in interpretative frameworks and informs the choice of approach for this study.

The analysis of the evaluation experiences of a community of BSO principals, and the extraction of the meanings, structures and essences of their evaluation processes, uncovers commonalities among these principals. This researcher's ontological position is to conceptualise the phenomenon by reporting on the multiple realities of the individuals involved. This position guides an inductive methodology in order to explore and analyse the emerging knowledge. Axiological considerations acknowledge having lived the life of an international principal, and this aspect makes it continually relevant to acknowledge and highlight any bias and any personal value system. The extraction of key themes and common meanings discussed in the dialogue therefore describes the realities of this phenomenon as it is experienced by these principals.

Having declared a research position in this study, there are now two primary focal points. The first is to explore the evaluation experiences of a sample of BSO principals, and the second is to interpret their experiences in an attempt to provide clarity to the phenomenon. From this qualitative perspective, when these principals describe their lived experiences in their own social setting, the social constructivist paradigm is portrayed in a hermeneutic phenomenology (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Dibley et al., 2020; Van Manen, 2014).

4.5 Phenomenology

Phenomenology is the term given to one of the main philosophical directions in Europe in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (Van Manen, 2014). It became a "living body of practices" that branched into distinct "traditions and orientations" (p. 72). There are many aspects to phenomenology due to its constant reinvention of itself and it is facilitated to do this because of the

tradition's "radical disorder" (p. 72). This disorder reflects a resistance to the methodological rigour of reduction, thus positing phenomenology as a philosophy that is free from constraint and prior assumptions. Gathering knowledge without restraint aligns the philosophy of phenomenology to a more naturalistic qualitative paradigm (Lincoln, 2007).

Husserl is seen as the founding father of phenomenology. In Husserl's conception, phenomenology is a descriptive philosophy involving the essences of pure experiences, and of lived experiences, that are concrete and not abstract (Husserl, 1960). The aim is to capture the experience without interpreting, explaining or theorising, so that knowledge from the immediate experience is accepted as "a first methodological principle" (p. 13). Phenomenology, according to Husserl, is the science of all transcendental phenomena which is how knowledge comes into being (Husserl, 1936). This perspective is extremely demanding for this study, as the participant BSO principals are located in different parts of the world. There is little known about the evaluation experiences of BSO principals and attempting to get the level of deep description that is required by Husserl's philosophy might be better served in another setting. However, while Husserl may have had more emphasis on the descriptive where "we avoid all non-demonstrative determinations" (p. 32), Heidegger was concerned with the interpretive process.

Martin Heidegger, who was a student of Husserl, persuaded phenomenologists away from transcendentalism and towards the pre-reflective world of everyday experience and everyday understandings. In Greek etymology, the term 'phenomenology' means 'to show itself' (Heidegger, 1962). According to Heidegger's philosophy, the role of phenomenology is about how things reveal themselves: "Thus, 'phenomenology' means – to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself" (p. 58).

Unlike Husserl, the knowledge of the immediate experience is not what concerns Heidegger, but the meaning of 'being there'- the 'Dasein'- which is his focal point. From this perspective, it is not possible to capture the experience as it is unfolding in time, as this act in itself is a disruptive process. Instead, the concern is with exploring the human lived experience, and the meanings and language that are attributed to that experience. Thus, according to Heidegger, phenomenology is an interpretive process, where "the meaning of the phenomenological description as a method lies in interpretation"

(p. 37). The ontological aims of this study align with this view – to disclose the evaluation experiences of a community of BSO principals, and to interpret that experience, thus creating meaning.

There are challenges to any simplistic narrative about Heidegger's perspective, however. Themes are created in the meaning, which borders on the notion that there is order to an inquiry. To ease this concern, Heidegger believed that it is possible for the purpose of language to move beyond the traditional functions of thematization (Heidegger, 1982), so that the knowledge is guided and informed in "an unobjective way" (p. 281). This perspective is demanding and this is perhaps why Heidegger acknowledges the persistent development of this branch of philosophy: "Like every other scientific method, phenomenological method grows and changes due to the progress made precisely with its help into the subjects under investigation" (p. 21). This creates a lot of expectation about language.

Furthermore, Heidegger (1962) posits hermeneutics as a prerequisite to phenomenology, where the language of 'being there' (the Dasein) is reflected in the interpretation. In the experiential story the language is appropriated towards meaning: "the phenomenology of Dasein is hermeneutic in the primordial significance of the word, where it designates the business of interpreting" (p. 62). Using this arrangement in a study about the experiences of BSO principals suggests that the language used in the interpretation of the knowledge illuminates the phenomenon and makes it coherent. However, according to Heidegger, there is no singular linguistical method for clarifying a phenomenon and he cautions against relying on such methods in phenomenology as language in itself may become an entity, and might only be understood by those who understand the language used. Heidegger's use of language is different from the traditional understanding of words and speech, and grammatical constructs are often technologically original (Dibley et al., 2020). This creates a basis for challenge in Heidegger's writing (Mulhall, 2005), which is stricken with a "tortured intensity" (p. viii), making his writing difficult extremely to follow.

Dukes (1984) argues that while Heidegger's approach does not offer clear prescriptions for blemish free research, he does offer a perspective "on what constitutes knowledge in the human sciences" (p. 202). It is an awareness or feeling to things in the world as they were lived to the point of practically touching the 'lived reality' before it was thought about, or reflected on. Careful consideration is given

by the reflective quality of the philosopher, who deciphers and interprets meanings that help to make sense of the experience. Thus, an open-minded receptive approach is required.

From Van Manen's (2014) perspective, hermeneutic, or interpretative, phenomenology is a method of "abstemious reflection" (p. 26) on the basic structures of the lived experience. Van Manen argues that approaching the experience in an abstemious way is to do so without theoretical or emotional influences. Hermeneutic is 'explanatory', and is a means to reflect on the experience using a kind of language that makes the analysis and descriptions understandable. The use of language has an important contribution, so that the role of the researcher is acknowledged in the sense making. This aspect also recognises the subjectivity that the researcher brings to the experience as described by the participants. In many respects, the language therefore reflects the interpretation of the interpretation. Smith (2004) refers to the researchers point of access through the participant's experience as "double hermeneutics" (p. 40). He argues that: "The participant is trying to make sense of their personal and social world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of their personal and social world" (p. 40). Heidegger (1962) warns much earlier about the risks involved: "Our first, last, and constant task in interpreting is never to allow our fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception to be presented to us by fancies and popular conceptions" (p. 195). Here, Heidegger is addressing objectivity.

Thus, Smith argues that the role of layers of hermeneutics is consistent with trying to understand what it is like from the participants point of view leading to a more complete understanding (Smith, 2004). In this study, employing direct quotations and excerpts from transcripts provides a way of including the voices of the participant BSO principals. The interpretation is therefore descriptive with the production of rich description (Dibley et al., 2020; Miles & Huberman, 1994). However, quantities of descriptions from multiple sources, while sometimes useful, is argued by Miles and Huberman (1994) not to always involve quality. This view has an influence on the sample size.

4.6 Sampling

For the purposes of this study, I attempt to frame the sample from an early stage. Patton (2015) advises selecting the sample specifically and purposefully. Factors that influence the choice include

the availability and richness of the samples, as well as the constraints of the researcher. The specific sample in this study is principals from schools that are accredited under the BSO inspection scheme. These principals have knowledge that underpins the central purpose of this research yielding "insights and in-depth understanding" (p. 264).

This purposeful sampling is a distinctly qualitative approach. While the use of a 'sample' may indicate that a verifiable generalisation might be the focus, there is a view that this is not possible in phenomenological methodology. In referring to sampling, Van Manen (2014) suggests that widely accepted concepts of qualitative sampling are not possible with phenomenology, and should not refer to "an empirical sample as a subset of a population" (p. 352). He differentiates it from typical qualitative research traditions: "external concepts of validation, such as sample size, sampling selection criteria, members' checking, and empirical generalization … are concepts that belong to the languages of different qualitative methodologies" (p. 347).

With regard to interviews, Van Manen (2014) argues that too many transcripts may result in cursory reflection and that the final result should contain just about enough experiential material to create an academic script. He advises that it is better to seek 'examples' when attempting to gain experiential descriptions. This portrays a different use of the term 'example' that "can be related back to the French root word "example" which has paradigmatic significance" (p. 352). In this view, a perspective of this example-finding is purposeful sampling, which is applicable to phenomenology: "The notion of purposive sampling is used to indicate that interviewees or participants are selected on the basis of their knowledge and verbal eloquence to describe a group or (sub)culture to which they belong" (p. 352).

In terms of sample sizes, Patton argues that there is no right answer (Patton, 2015). Some scholars argue that comprehensive interpretative accounts can only be carried out by small sample sizes, as this negates the risk of being overwhelmed by large amounts of data that would compromise the analysis (Smith & Shinebourne, 2012). Dukes (1984) is also of this view, stating that homogenous experiences can be collected from individual cases where sample sizes do not need to be large: "Strictly theoretically, a sample size of one would suffice" (p. 200). In nursing research, estimates suggest at least five and recommend that it is best to have fewer than ten examples (Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves,

2000). There is also a perspective that any case over one dilutes the level of detail that a researcher can provide (Wolcott, 2009). Small sample sizes lead to a "wealth of situated, experiential data" (Dibley et al., 2020, p. 61).

In the early stages of this research, the number of participants who made themselves available to take part in the study was a concern, particularly with regard to making themselves available for interview. There are only a limited number of principals from this BSO sector in existence at any one time and they are scattered throughout the world with no obvious motivation to take part in this study. Any concerns about the relevance placed on the actual number of participants is dismissed for the purposes of this research. Wolcott's (2009) maxim is "Do less, more thoroughly" (p. 95). Brinkman (2013) advises that "fewer interviews that are thoroughly analysed are preferable to many interviews that are only superficially explored" (p. 59). Van Manen's (2014) perspective, as stated, is to provide 'examples' of experiential evidence. This approach stays true to Heidegger (1962) who cautions faithfulness to methods in phenomenology. The arguments from all of these scholars were considered in deciding the number of participants to include in the interviews.

Thus, the resulting structure to this exploratory inquiry is a qualitative socially constructed (interpretative) hermeneutic phenomenology of a purposeful sample of twelve BSO principals. Several data gathering methods are deployed to conduct the investigation – an online survey, a semi-structured interview, audio-recordings and written notebooks, and the perspectives of experts in the field. Officially published reports and documents are also used. As with all such research, ethical approval is required to conduct the study.

4.7 Ethical Deliberations

O'Leary advises that there are obligations to respect with regard to ethics in a study (O'Leary, 2017). Ethics refer to "principles or rules of behaviour that act to dictate what is actually acceptable or allowed within a profession" (p. 70). Based on the most recently available Code of Practice on research ethics at DCU, the relevant application was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee (REC) at DCU in order to conduct the study. This included plans for seeking permission and seeking

informed consent, as well as maintaining anonymity and confidentiality while ensuring the well-being of the participant.

4.7.1 *Seeking Permission*

In the application to the REC for permission to conduct the study, the research aims were outlined explicitly and plans were presented about how the research was to be conducted. Notification of approval was subsequently received in December 2018 (see Appendix C).

4.7.2 *Informed Consent*

A basic requirement of any research study is that the participants make informed choices about whether or not to participate (Dibley et al., 2020; O'Leary, 2017). Participants can only give their informed consent if they have a full understanding of what is being requested. O'Leary (2017) states that there are implicit protections for the participants when they give their informed consent and "the intended use of the study should be honest and open" (p. 70). All the BSO principals in this study were provided with a Plain Language Statement (see Appendix D) that clearly explained the intent of the research. The participants were also provided with a consent form that they were invited to sign, or tick (in the case of the survey), prior to the research being conducted.

4.7.3 *Confidentiality and Anonymity*

Confidentiality involves the protection of the identity of the participants (Dibley et al., 2020; O'Leary, 2017). Pseudonyms are used in the study and the locations of the participants are anonymised. It is not possible to guarantee complete anonymity in any online activity because online activity cannot be completely secured against the prospect of hacking (Mahon, 2014). This aspect is referenced in the Plain Language Statement (see Appendix D) that was given to participants prior to the research taking place (DCU, 2020). In the survey, participants were not asked to reveal their names.

4.7.4 *Security*

When collecting data, precautions are taken to protect the data in a repository or when it is being transferred (AERA, 2011; DCU, 2020; Dibley et al., 2020). The participating BSO principals work in commercially sensitive roles, so the raw data was stored securely in a password protected off-line hard drive that was held in a locked office with no outside access to the data. The data is eventually to be

destroyed when the study is completed. In the Plain Language Statement (see Appendix D), no guarantee is given to the participants for the complete security of the data due to the risk of unforeseen hacking malware. However, all reasonable steps were taken within the limitations of the law to keep the data secure and anti-virus software was kept up to date.

4.8 Situating the Researcher

A challenge relevant to any research study is the closeness of the researcher to the researched (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Situating the researcher's presence in the research can arguably be validated by the practice of reflexivity, which is an act of self-referencing. It is an ethical challenge that can be shaped by being part of, or having come from, the researched. In this study, it is referenced that the researcher is a practicing international school principal when the research is conducted (see Appendix E). While the participants accept the researcher, the circumstance is sometimes used to unwittingly withhold information that the researched assumes that the researcher knows already. This action is a consistent perspective in insider / outsider research (Adu-Ampong & Adams, 2020; Berger, 2015). Interview participants in this study used phrases to include the researcher's presence in their experience. Examples of these phrases include: *"*you know the way …" (Karen), and *"*you understand..." (Rebecca), and "… I think we're driven, aren't we?" (Rebecca). Maintaining the necessary balance between this researcher's personal experience and that of the participants is helped in practical ways by the use of reflective notebooks and audio-recorded notebooks, as well as returning after a period of time to the original transcripts and audio-recordings taken during the interview (Berger, 2015). Revisiting this material after a lapse of time offered a new perspective in identifying if there is any bias or interference due this researcher's presence during the research.

4.9 The Research Methods: Establishing the sample size

Having an accurate number of participants available for the sample is important (McPeake, Bateson, & O'Neill, 2014). The population from which the sample is drawn are principals of accredited BSOs. There is a limited number of BSOs that are accredited by the DfE in England at any single point in time and this number influenced the number of BSO principals that were available to this study. In order to establish a reliable sample, several factors were first considered:

- The shifting number of BSOs
- Establishing the date frame for the sample
- Counting the accredited BSOs
- Counting the BSO principals
- Establishing the accurate contact details for the principals

4.9.1 *The shifting number of BSOs in the sample*

All BSOs are registered on a publicly available DfE database called '*Get Information About Schools'* (GIAS), along with every other school in England (GOV.UK, 2021b). The schools are entered under the heading '*Type of Establishment / British Schools Overseas'.* The number of relevant schools on GIAS has an influence on the number of BSO principals available for sampling.

In order to set parameters on the research sample, as GIAS is periodically amended by the DfE, the BSOs were counted on a single fixed date, or point in time. These BSOs were entered in a newly created database on the researcher's computer that was termed 'DataBase1' (DB1) for the purposes of the research (see Appendix Q).

The research was conducted in the academic year 2018/19 and choosing a fixed date at the beginning of the academic year was the optimum preference. This fixed date also served as a cut-off date, so that the research did not include any BSOs that might be added to GIAS after that date. The most favourable fixed date on which to count the number of accredited BSOs for the purposes of the study was 31st August 2018. The date frame for the sample was next to be established.

4.9.2 *Establishing the date frame for the sample*

The term for BSO accreditation is three academic years. Schools that had their BSO inspection a full three years prior to 31st August 2018 are included in the sample. However, accreditation is not held strictly to the date of three calendar years from the inspection. The accreditation period continues to the end of the academic year in the third year after the inspection date. Generally, these dates are more than three years apart. Therefore, the sample that was entered on DB1 included schools that held valid accreditation from 2nd September 2015 to the end of the academic year 2018/19. This is the date frame for the sample.

4.9.3 *Counting the accredited BSOs*

The chosen date on which the BSOs were counted is 31st August 2018. The number of accredited BSOs was difficult to establish from a single reliable source. Schools harvested from GIAS, within the data frame for the sample, were entered in DB1 (n=120). During a review of GIAS, some BSOs were found on GIAS even though their accreditation was out of date and invalid. The schools taken from GIAS were cross-referenced against a published list of inspected schools on the websites of all six of the approved inspectorates. This searching and cross referencing revealed that a further number of schools (n=42) held accreditation within the date frame. School inspection reports were published on the websites of the inspection providers, but the schools' details were not entered on GIAS. Anomalies, such as this, pose a challenge to the public record reliability of GIAS.

The total number of accredited BSOs that were valid within the date frame for the purpose of sampling for this study were entered on DB1 (n=162) (see Appendix Q). These schools are found in 47 locations around the world (see Appendix B). All methods of eliciting any further schools for DB1, that may have been inspected but not included in any other listing, were all exhausted following this exercise.

4.9.4 *Counting the BSO principals*

It is relevant to this study to have an accurate list of the principals of accredited BSOs (n=162) within the date frame. Van Manen (2014) states that participants are selected on the basis of their knowledge and coherence in purposeful sampling. The possibility of a principal moving jobs and a new principal being appointed are among the factors that influenced purposeful sampling in this research. There was also the chance that the school did not have a principal in place at the time of the research.

There are three sources from which the names of BSO principals were checked. First, each school on GIAS contains the name of the principal open to public access on its listing under the column heading "Head First Name" and "Head Last Name". While some BSO principals' names were established from this source, the accuracy of all the BSO principals' names recorded on GIAS required further confirmation as some of the principals' names were not accurate.

Secondly, some of the BSO inspection reports that are publicly available online list the names of the BSO principals who were in charge of the schools during the inspection. This is a matter of style for

these inspection providers. The accuracy of this listing also required further confirmation as some principals moved away or changed jobs. Finally, some principals' names were established from this researcher's local knowledge.

Searching these three sources thoroughly harvested a list of principals' names for each of the BSOs on DB1 (n =162). The accuracy of the list still required confirmation. When a review of DB1 was conducted, some BSO principals were listed twice. This is because some BSOs were inspected in two parts – 'Junior' (or 'Primary') and 'Senior' (or 'Secondary') – but they had the same overall principal (n=3). This phenomenon reduced the number of principals who were of value to this research (n=159) on 31st August 2018.

4.9.5 *Establishing the accurate contact details of the principals*

Getting access to participants, building trust and persuading people to take part in a study can be challenging (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, it is courteous to contact a potential participant for a research study if the correct name of that participant is confirmed prior to the research taking place (Lefever, Dal, & Matthiasdottir, 2007; McPeake et al., 2014; Stieger & Reips, 2010).

All of the public websites of the BSOs on DB1 were searched (n=159). A range of details about the schools, such as tuition fees and current school calendars, were displayed there. The updated names of all of the BSO principals were also displayed and these were added to DB1 (see Appendix Q).

Sometimes, a direct contact email address for the BSO principal was visible (n = 75). Typically, the format 'name@'; 'headmaster@' or 'principal@' was used. Some of the BSOs published an indirect contact email address on the website, such as 'info@', 'enquiry@' or 'admissions@' or a similar format (n=84). The administrators of these emails were contacted by this researcher to request their principal's consent to share their principal's direct contact email address with the research (DCU, 2020; Mahon, 2014; Shih & Fan, 2008; Stieger & Reips, 2010). By February 2019, a number of principals' email addresses were shared by these administrators (n=10).

It was relevant to this research to have the direct contact email of the school principal. There was a possibility that invitations to participate in the research could have been answered by someone else (Stieger & Reips, 2010). For validity purposes, all non-direct email addresses were excluded from the research as there was no certainty that they were controlled by the sample (n=74).

A review of DB1 highlighted that some BSOs, that were recorded on the GIAS database, did not have principals that would normally be expected of the role at the time of the research. An example of this is where the owner of the school (who was not a qualified principal), or the owner's representative (who was not a qualified principal), served as the 'manager' of the school. This researcher's local knowledge of these BSOs guided that these school managers were not included in the research for validity reasons as they were not trained principals (n=7). During this time, a BSO principal colleague passed away and this name was excluded from the research (n=1).

An initial introductory email was sent to directly contactable BSO principals (n=72) in 33 countries in early March 2019 (see Appendix E). This email introduced the research, the reasons for it and an invitation to take part in the research survey. It also contained a Plain Language Statement (see Appendix D) that outlined the participants right of consent and a contact address for the REC (DCU, 2020).

4.10 Gathering the Data

Several forms of data gathering were deployed in this study – an online survey, a semi-structured interview, field notes and document analysis. This researcher completed an accredited workshop on Overseas Schools' Inspector training (see Appendix F) with Penta International (Penta, 2020) that helps to provide the basic skills to interpret inspection reports. A list of experts was drafted to provide supplementary background knowledge from a range of areas related to the field in order to verify and check information. The list of experts included CEOs of overseas associations, international education consultants, Chief Inspectors of some of the inspection providers, BSO Inspectors, an international educational research company, an HMI inspector in the UK, the principal of a UK based independent school, the Ofsted policy team and the DfE policy unit in England.

4.10.1 *The survey*

Surveys are important in collecting data (McPeake et al., 2014; Roberts & Allen, 2015). The strategy that is inbuilt in a survey is to gather the same information from all the cases in a sample. Types of surveys can include postal surveys, telephone surveys, personal face-to-face surveys and electronic surveys. The acceptance of online surveying is mainly due to the advantages it offers over traditional

approaches. There is no reason to expect that online surveys will provide lower quality data than traditional offline methods (Peytchev, 2013). Online surveys are preferred to paper based surveys as they deliver efficiencies in reach, flexibility, speed, convenience for the respondents and ease of use (Harlow, 2010; Roberts & Allen, 2015).

A number of practical considerations must be accounted for in conducting online surveys. These factors include the accuracy of email addresses, as sometimes invitations to take part may be wrongly addressed, may not be accessed regularly or are sent to spam folders (Lefever et al., 2007; McPeake et al., 2014). Any loss of control over where the email goes could have the effect of creating a comparatively lower response rate (Shih & Fan, 2008; Stieger & Reips, 2010), or non-response (Heerwegh & Loosveldt, 2008) and potentially create bias. Those who receive invitations to participate may choose not to respond or to drop out (Peytchev, 2013). However, other factors also lead to non-responses including inertia, passivity or attaching a lack of importance to the survey (Berk, 2012). Receiving many requests to participate in various studies can lead to fatigue (Porter, Whitcomb, & Weitzer, 2004). The aspiration in online surveying is for possible weaknesses to be lessened. In an era of large data gathering, possible survey participants have become more wary of tracking walls and data privacy that may transgress some nations' General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) concerns (EU, 2018; Zuiderveen Borgesius, Kruikemeier, Boerman, & Helberger, 2017).

This researcher purchased a subscription to an online survey tool called 'SurveyMonkey' to help conduct the online survey (SurveyMonkey, 2019). There are different perceptions of this tool as it provides different levels of capability, depending on the subscription. However, a mid-range subscription provides an easy way to design the survey, distribute the survey and collect the data.

A trial of the survey was sent to a trusted overseas principal colleague and to the research supervisory team at DCU for review. Feedback from the principal colleague and from the supervisory team questioned the initial use of the term 'appraisal', as well as some other terms like 'challenged' and 'advantaged', in relation to the context of schools. The term 'appraisal' was substituted with the term 'evaluation' throughout the study and the terms in relation to the school contexts were excluded, as they are arguably open to misinterpretation.

The survey consists of four main parts adapted from the OECD framework (OECD, 2013). It includes some statements and some open questions answerable on a multipoint Likert scale with choices that go from one extreme to another (see Appendix G). The statements are mapped to the interview questions to ensure that the research question was kept in focus (see Appendix H).

The online survey was sent to 72 principals in 33 countries in late March 2019. McPeake et al. (2014) advise that survey participants sometimes need reminding to complete the survey. Over the next two-week period, several reminders were sent to the participants to urge them to take part in the survey. The response rate was 33% (n=24).

4.10.2 *The interview*

Probably the most common way to collect phenomenological data is by conducting an interview. Despite this, there is no great level of instruction as to how this should be carried out. An interview is a social exchange situated in a dialogue (Rubin & Rubin, 2011; Warren & Karner, 2015) and it goes beyond the spontaneity of everyday conversation (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). The interview must have a "structure and a purpose determined by one party – the interviewer" (p. 8). There is a flexibility inherent in interviews that facilitates the development of relationship building and that provides enough material for the data analysis. Kvale and Brinkman (2015) argue that the knowledge building is between the researcher and the researched, where attempts are made to "understand the world from the subject's point of view" in order to "unfold the meaning of their experience" (p. 3). This is consistent with Wellington (2015) who argues that the interview "offers people, whether they be employers, teachers, young pupils or students, an opportunity to make their perspectives known" (p. 140). The complexity of skills required to conduct a good qualitative interview is a technique that is refined through practice.

One form of qualitative interview that is conducted through the social reality perspective is the semi-structured interview, which Brinkman and Kvale (2018) define as an interview "with a purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewees with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena" (p. 8). In this study, the evaluation perceptions of a community of BSO principals are inductively explored and the semi-structured interview is the most helpful method of achieving this aim.

In the preparation stage for conducting the interview, Creswell and Poth (2018) suggest a series of steps that includes deciding on the actual research questions while focusing on the topic to be explored. In order to get as much information as possible, these scholars also recommend choosing interviewees who will answer the questions and recommend keeping the questions open ended.

In designing a procedure for interviewing, Brinkman and Kvale (2018) propose seven stages in a good quality interview. These stages include creating themes for the inquiry, designing the study, interviewing, the transcription of the interview, the data analysis, ensuring validity and reliability and finally writing the report. In another perspective, Rubin & Rubin (2011) argue against setting a sequence and open the opportunity for the researcher to make changes either to the questions or to the environment.

The arrangement of the questions in this study follow an adapted framework (OECD, 2013). The open-ended semi-structured questions are categorised under four headings: governance, procedures; capacity and way that results are used. The interview questions are mapped against the survey statements to ensure consistency. The interview questions were piloted with one experienced principal and with the research supervisors to receive feedback on structure, language and direction. There are a few minor changes in the question order that made it to the final list.

A list of 18 principals were subsequently drafted from DB1 to invite them to take part in a semi-structured interview. The list contained principals, only some of whom were known to this researcher. Principals whose locations provided a geographical spread around the world were also included on this list. Initially, most principals responded positively to introductory emails inviting them to take part in the research. However, some decided later not to return messages to proceed (n=3). The semi-structured interviews were arranged with the remaining principals (n=12). Their anonymised details are listed in the appendices (see Appendix I).

There are many different forms and settings for interviews that include face-to-face conferences, using the telephone or using other types of communicative technology (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2015). In this study, great care was taken to ensure that the interview setting was as comfortable as possible, so as to encourage communication. All settings were situated well away from the distraction of the workplace.

During the interview preparation stage, this researcher transferred to another country for work purposes. This move had an influence on the interview process. The government of the country to which this researcher moved does not allow Skype to be used as a free videoconferencing tool, but instead promotes a proprietary videoconferencing tool. Not having the option of using a free tool like Skype was a considerable obstacle and caused some delays in the interview process. The proprietary tool required that participating BSO principals should download some specialised software to their device to legally allow this researcher to contact them by videoconference. However, principals might have been uncomfortable about downloading this software as it might have invaded the settings on their devices and ultimately breach their privacy. They would arguably have had no need to use this software again after the interview. On ethical grounds, this researcher decided not to take unnecessary risks that might compromise the sample of participants (DCU, 2020).

Instead, some principals were emailed with a proposed set of interview dates on which Skype could be used more freely from another country (n=4). Telephone interviews were arranged with some principals (n=3). The costs in telephoning some BSO principals was expensive, but there was arguably little option. The rest of the interviews (n=5) were carried out by travelling to different countries for face-to-face conferences (see Appendix I).

All the of interviewees signed the informed consent form. They were asked at the beginning of the interview for their consent to be interviewed and they were advised that they could withdraw at any time. They were informed that the interviews were audio-recorded.

4.10.3 *Interview practicalities*

Kvale & Brinkman (2009) recommend using suitable recording procedures and a suitable interview guide, or protocol, to guide the interview. A small Sony voice recorder (UX-560F) with a highly sensitive microphone was used in the interviews. It has 4GB of memory that can store approximately 70 hours of audio-recordings and can be transported easily. Each recording was copied to a secure hard drive and the voice recorder was wiped clean after each interview session. A list of prepared questions was used to help guide each interview (see Appendix H). This form of guide helps keep the interview within the parameters of the study. The full list of questions includes some that give

additional areas for exploration. The BSO principals were allowed some scope in the interviews by giving them time to answer.

In qualitative research, observation is a key part of the data collection process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It is acknowledged that the observer is involved at some level in what they are observing and recording this data is helpful in focusing in on possible untruths, or impressions given (Atkinson, 2015). During the interviews, nonverbal cues were noted and other behaviours were observed and written in a separate notebook called a field notebook. Sometimes, the researcher's thoughts and impressions after an interview were audio-recorded.

Following each interview, the audio was played and later transcribed by using a subscribed transcription tool called 'NVivo 12'. Each transcription was reviewed for errors. Each text was anonymised immediately. Names and locations were substituted with '[named person]' and '[named place]'. The original recording was saved on a secure offline hard drive that had a password. It was then immediately deleted from the recording device prior to the next interview. The transcriptions were held on the same offline hard drive and were secured with a separate password.

The specified time frame laid out for each interview was 90 minutes. The interviews, however, ranged from 49 minutes by video-conference to 2 hours and 32 minutes in length for face-to-face conferences (see Appendix I).

4.10.4 *Reflective diaries & field notes*

A reflexive approach to the research process is widely accepted in qualitative research (Adu-Ampong & Adams, 2020; Berger, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014; Ortlipp, 2009). Researchers are urged to talk about themselves and make visible the nature of research outcomes, but there is very limited guidance on the use of reflective journals, diaries or field notes. As times passes, events and interactions lapse into insignificance as situations change and develop. A robust way of keeping a record of impressions that are formed during the research is required (Kemmis et al., 2014). Pre-research writing makes clear the experiences, values and assumptions of the researcher prior to beginning the research (Ortlipp, 2009). This text can sometimes document any emerging understandings about the research methodologies and can assemble different views on gathering the data. This type of writing can help to identify the most appropriate theoretical lens and it

helps to identify how the chosen framework is worked through. It also develops a way of empowering the researcher towards critical self-reflection and demonstrates any investment in pre-conceived ideas that are carried into the research. Thus, writing in this way exposes the messiness of the research process and avoids producing a discourse that includes "research as a neat and liner process" (p. 704). There are various kinds of reflections that can be captured in journals, diaries and field notes. The changing use of language, the change in activities, the change in social relationships and the changes in practices can all be included in these texts (Kemmis et al., 2014). All of this reflection goes to providing "a living source of evidence and perspectives" (p. 177).

The practice of writing reflexively in this study is not confined to the period prior to the research taking place. Diaries and field notes are used as a way of capturing ideas, making observations and documenting the researcher's thought process both prior to, and during, the research process. These records are supplemented by audio-records that are held on devices such as a mobile phone and the previously mentioned dictaphone. This practice depends on the context at the time and whether there was space to write, or just space to speak. Capturing the writing was usually completed at home alone at a desk or on a long-distance flight. Capturing the speech notes was usually conducted while driving in the car or conducted quickly after a meeting, a conference or a seminar when there was little time to write. For example, there is one short audio-recording taken while this researcher was driving in the car that captures the reasons why a BSO principal steps back from the research interview process. This BSO principal has just been dismissed. The audio-recording captures the mood and ambiance during a phone call immediately after this BSO principal had received a summative evaluation that ends with an arguably calamitous result for that individual. This audio-recording, that was captured by the dictaphone, provides a rich seam of background knowledge, mood and context from an unexpected perspective.

While keeping field notes is a regular practice, it is not a daily occurrence. Nevertheless, the audio-recordings and field notes provide a rich vein of data material. The practice is also reflexive and, as well as highlighting ways that opinions or bias might enter the research, the practice of keeping diaries and field notes also serves to continually highlight the presence of the researcher in the research. This is consistent with the opinion of scholars of qualitative research (Berger, 2015; Creswell & Poth,

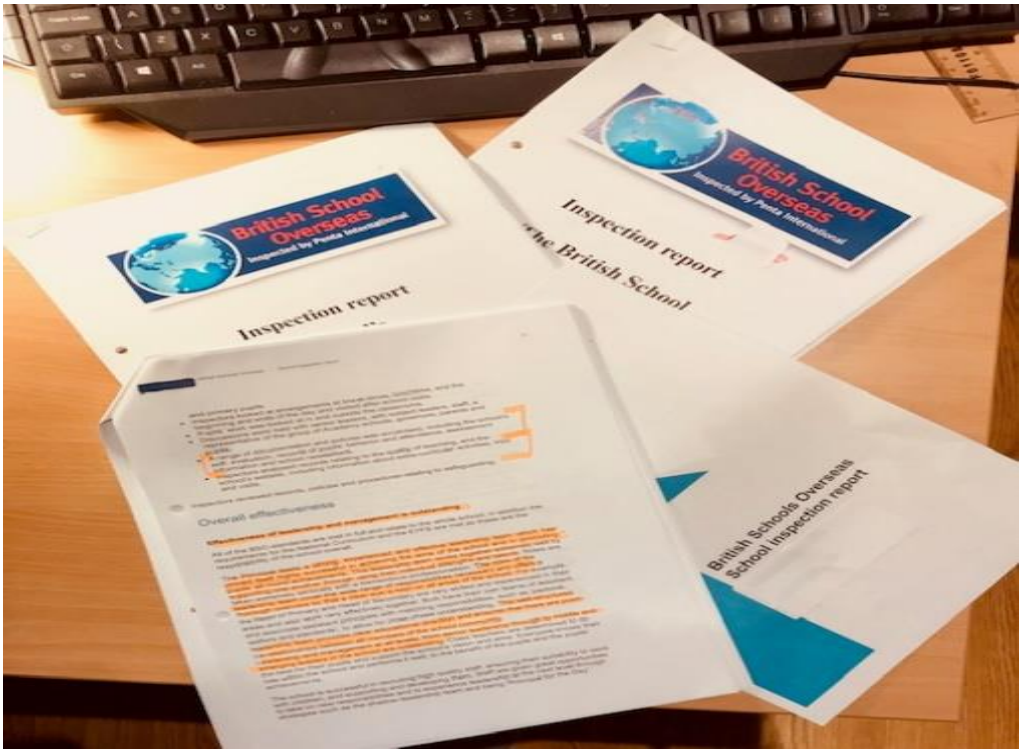
2018; Kemmis et al., 2014). The field notes were kept safely in a locked office during the research and the audio recordings were stored in the same offline hard drive with a password, just as with the semi-structured interview recordings.

4.10.5 *Document analysis*

Document analysis aims to harvest an interpretation of an issue based on the critical reading of relevant documents found in relation to the context (Kemmis et al., 2014). There are a wide variety of documents that may be used in this form of analysis including policy documents, letters, research papers, websites, electronic records and memoranda. The documents that are analysed may occur naturally in a setting or online, but may not be created specifically for research purposes. The role of document analysis is largely inconspicuous and documents enter and leave the field almost silently (Prior, 2010). Nevertheless, there are a variety of ways to analyse documents and sometimes specific frameworks are used to underpin a document analysis method. One of the first steps in the Quality Document Analysis (QDA) framework is to establish the selected body of documents for analysis. (Wood, Sebar, & Vecchio, 2020). This helps to form a deeper understanding of the context. The documents are then set aside for thematic analysis that provide opportunities for broad topics to emerge. Codes are then grouped, while contradictions and outliers may also become rich sources for analysis (Bazeley, 2009). As the analysis deepens, the structure of a coherent story is developed and this is further informed by the literature or other forms of data (Wood et al., 2020).

Some of the documents analysed for this research study include the BSO inspection reports of schools that were inspected under the voluntary inspection scheme (Figure 4.1). All 162 BSO inspection reports of the sample of principals' schools are read in order to become familiar with the language used in the reporting and to seek out patterns and themes relevant to the research questions. The analysis is then narrowed to include only the reporting on the standard under leadership and management of the schools in which the interviewed principals were located. This analysis is then documented in the findings (Chapter 5) in this study.

Figure 4.1 Document Analysis of accredited BSO Inspection Reports



Other documents that are analysed and reported on for this study include all the Ofsted report letters that are published annually by the Chief Inspector of Ofsted. The ISC annual reports, the GIAS database, UK Government Legislative Acts including the Independent Schools Standard Regulations (2014) and the Charities Act (2011) are also analysed. The TES online magazine (Tes, 2021), AGBIS (2019) guidelines for governors, ISC Research annual reports, UK government letters and emails relating to changes in the BSO inspection scheme and the websites of all the BSOs that held accreditation during the period of this study are analysed. The analysis reporting on the all of these documents is contained in Chapter 2 and Chapter 5 of this study.

4.10.6 *The survey analysis*

While quantitative analysis, such as that in a survey analysis, is often associated with large-scale research, the numerical data that it reports also serves smaller-scale inquiries such as this study (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018; Newby, 2014; Punch & Oancea, 2014). Scholars consider that "research in the social and educational field is usually more valuable when it delivers more than

description" (Cohen et al., 2018: p.849). In performing a quantitative analysis, there are four identified scales of data that help to distinguish the numbers that are being handled (Cohen et al., 2018). The nominal scale simply denotes categories that help to distinguish pieces of data, for example category 1 might denote girls and category 2 might denote boys. In this scale, the figure is simply a short label. The ordinal scale introduces order to the data and may involve rating scales such as 'agree' to 'strongly agree', or 'smallest' to 'largest'. However, the distance between the two points – such as 'smallest to 'largest' - is not calibrated equally so that it cannot be assumed for example that the 'largest' is twice as large as the 'smallest'. Ordinal data often uses rating scales, such as the Likert scale, that are frequently used in asking about opinions or attitudes. Rensis Likert is credited with developing the Likert scale as an approach to creating scale-based responses to multiple questions (Cohen et al., 2018). Another scale of data is the interval scale, which introduces a metric that includes equal intervals between data points such as those found on a thermometer. However, in interval data there isn't a true zero so, for example, it cannot be assumed that 100 degrees Celsius is twice as hot as 50 degrees Celsius. The final scale is the ratio scale that encompasses features of the other three scales so that researchers can determine proportions, such as in the measurement of distances or money, because there is a true zero.

Researchers are required to justify the scale of measurement in their inquiry because it is not always evident in the analysis of the data (Cohen et al., 2018; Newby, 2014). In making this decision, the scale of the data is an important consideration. Cohen and his colleagues (2018) argue that thinking about "which statistical test to use depends on the scale of the data" (p. 726). In the case of the ordinal scale, the points of data are described as categories. The Likert scale that is used in this particular study is divided into four categories - strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The data that is generated from the survey is, therefore, non-parametric and so it does not make any assumptions about the general population of BSO principals. Parametric data, on the other hand, can sometimes make inferences about the characteristics of a population as the data is derived from experiments or tests, such as reading scores.

This is an exploratory, qualitative study where the online survey offers a quantitative aspect. Little is known about the evaluation perceptions of the BSO principal or about how they are evaluated or about

what informs their evaluations. In this study, the truth about this knowledge is the catalyst for the main research questions. In the design of the online survey, the survey statements are arranged under the four broad headings that form part of the framework for the study – governance, procedures, capacity and the way that results are used. The statements in the survey are linked to a four category Likert scale that go from one extreme to the other (see Appendix G). The statements are also mapped to the questions that are used in the semi-structured interviews in attempt to achieve a broader perspective during the data analysis (see Appendix H).

In the analysis of the survey data, it may be possible to use some of the analysis tools offered by the online survey tool (SurveyMonkey, 2019). However, this researcher wishes to keep close to the themes and patterns that emerge from the survey in order to make any comparisons with the themes that emerge from the semi-structured interviews, from the document analysis and from the field notes. This activity is guided by Braun & Clarke's (2013) six phases of thematic analysis and described later in this chapter.

The responses to the survey are entered on a spreadsheet and they are handled according to their ordinal scale category (Figure 4.2). The number of responses for each category are converted into percentages in order to help with the analysis reporting. However, they are laid out side by side with the number of respondents to avoid inaccurate inferencing (Maxwell, 2010). While the use of numbers is "a legitimate and valuable strategy" for a qualitative study, there are different perspectives about the number units that are used in the interest of accurate inferencing (p. 480).

Figure 4.2 Sample from Survey Results

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1	24	0	0	0	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
2	10	10	4	0	41.67%	41.67%	16.67%	0.00%	100.00%
3	4	10	2	8	16.67%	41.67%	8.33%	33.33%	100.00%
4	8	3	12	1	33.33%	12.50%	50.00%	4.17%	100.00%
5	3	0	7	14	12.50%	0.00%	29.17%	58.33%	100.00%
6	3	0	7	14	12.50%	0.00%	29.17%	58.33%	100.00%
7	11	13	0	0	45.83%	54.17%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
8	8	8	5	3	33.33%	33.33%	20.83%	12.50%	100.00%
9	6	11	4	3	25.00%	45.83%	16.67%	12.50%	100.00%
10	7	12	1	4	29.17%	50.00%	4.17%	16.67%	100.00%
11	3	12	5	4	12.50%	50.00%	20.83%	16.67%	100.00%
12	2	10	10	2	8.33%	41.67%	41.67%	8.33%	100.00%
13	8	12	4	0	33.33%	50.00%	16.67%	0.00%	100.00%
14	7	8	8	1	29.17%	33.33%	33.33%	4.17%	100.00%
15	18	0	6	0	75.00%	0.00%	25.00%	0.00%	100.00%
16	0	6	10	8	0.00%	25.00%	41.67%	33.33%	100.00%
17	0	17	7	0	0.00%	70.83%	29.17%	0.00%	100.00%
18	0	22	2	0	0.00%	91.67%	8.33%	0.00%	100.00%
19	10	10	2	2	41.67%	41.67%	8.33%	8.33%	100.00%
20	0	12	8	4	0.00%	50.00%	33.33%	16.67%	100.00%
21	7	13	2	2	29.17%	54.17%	8.33%	8.33%	100.00%
22	0	15	9	0	0.00%	62.50%	37.50%	0.00%	100.00%
23	0	5	17	2	0.00%	20.83%	70.83%	8.33%	100.00%

The responses are colour-coded to match the four broad headings that form part of the framework for the research as described earlier. For example, one of the statements is: “The way I am evaluated is carried out using an internal instrument or framework, e.g., key performance indicators”. The analysis of the survey responses indicates that 62.5% of the respondents are evaluated by using internal instruments and this data informs a key insight into the use of KPIs in evaluations during discussions with the interview participants. There are also other key insights, such as the response to the statement: ‘My school board is aware of what successful principalship looks like’. The response to this statement indicates that all of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement, which is significant in terms of the context and the BSO variants that are discussed throughout this research. In the literature, the criteria for successful principalship is considered differently among cultures and countries (Day & Leithwood, 2007).

Other responses to the statements in the survey are significant because of the number of respondents that disagree or strongly disagree with the statements. For example, 16.6% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement: ‘I have a personal evaluation process that is carried out

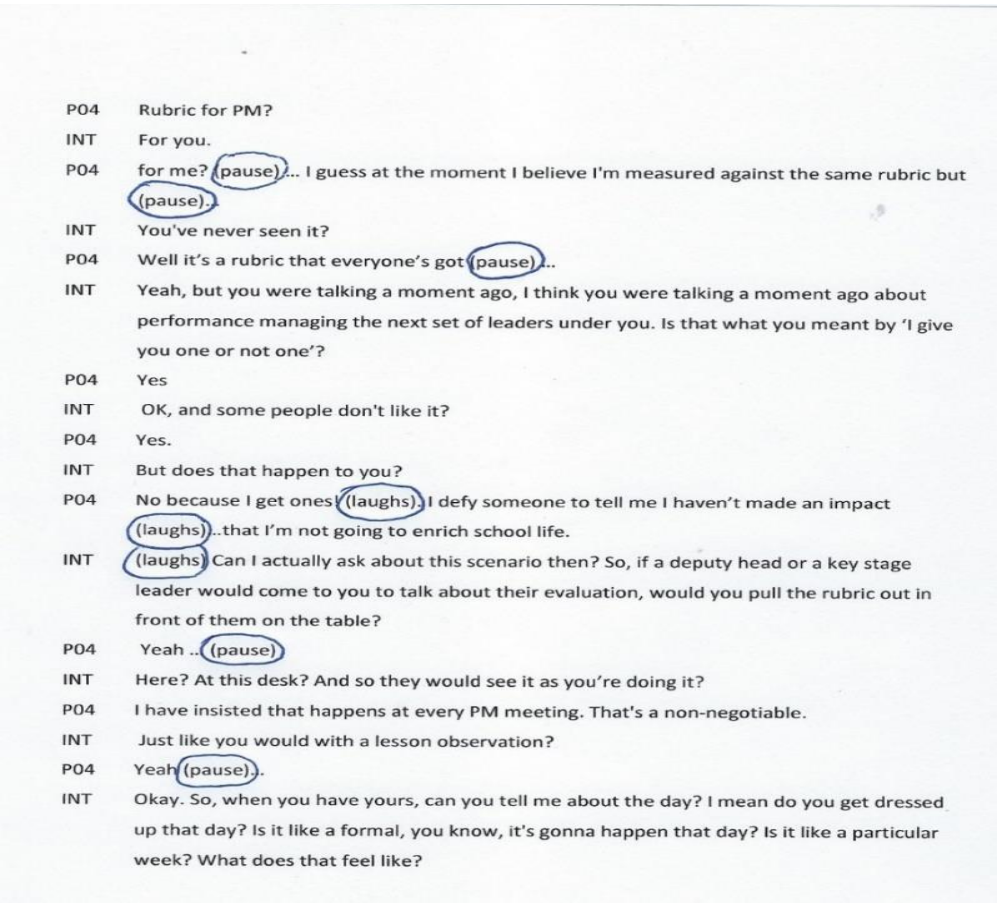
regularly'. This indicates that some of the BSO principals in the survey are not formally evaluated and this aspect is also discussed with some of the interview participants where different perspectives are offered regarding why they are not evaluated. Insights like these, that emerge in the survey analysis, help to contribute to the overall analysis of this study and may also offer a basis for future research. There is only one qualitative question in the survey and this asks: 'What might you suggest could be added to, or changed, about the way school principals might be evaluated?'. This question draws out some longer answers that add to the overall analysis and discussion. All of the survey statements are reported in the analysis of, and the discussion about, the overall study and are spread throughout this thesis.

It is important to note that while the survey responses may be considered comparatively low (33% response return), the number of principals of BSOs that were available to the survey (n=72) was limited to the date frame as described earlier in Chapter 4, when the accurate contact details of the principals of accredited BSOs were established.

4.10.7 *The transcriptions data analysis*

In preparation for the data analysis, one of the factors to be considered is the transcription of the audio-recordings of the interviews. The transcription is a product of the interaction between the recorder and the transcriber (Sandelowski, 1994). It is a "selective arrangement" (p. 311), where the transcriber makes choices about what to preserve and how to represent what is heard. Braun & Clarke (2013) argue that the transcription is two steps from the actual interview experience and with each step "information is lost or changed in some way" (p. 162). This researcher personally conducts all the transcriptions in an attempt to stay as close to an orthographic style as possible. This verbatim style is helped by using a flexible software transcription package (NVivo 12). During the transcriptions, non-semantic data is recorded in notation form, such as 'laughs' or 'pause', in order to gather as much material as might be needed for the analysis (Figure 4.3). This entails listening to the audio-recordings carefully over many hours and attempting to ensure accuracy in the text. Transcribing the recordings personally allows this researcher to get closer to the text. The participant principals are identified in the transcriptions by a pseudonym and any identifying information is anonymised.

Figure 4.3 Use of non-semantic notation in transcription



P04 Rubric for PM?
INT For you.
P04 for me? (pause)... I guess at the moment I believe I'm measured against the same rubric but (pause)..
INT You've never seen it?
P04 Well it's a rubric that everyone's got (pause)...
INT Yeah, but you were talking a moment ago, I think you were talking a moment ago about performance managing the next set of leaders under you. Is that what you meant by 'I give you one or not one'?
P04 Yes
INT OK, and some people don't like it?
P04 Yes.
INT But does that happen to you?
P04 No because I get ones! (laughs). I defy someone to tell me I haven't made an impact (laughs)..that I'm not going to enrich school life.
INT (laughs) Can I actually ask about this scenario then? So, if a deputy head or a key stage leader would come to you to talk about their evaluation, would you pull the rubric out in front of them on the table?
P04 Yeah .. (pause)
INT Here? At this desk? And so they would see it as you're doing it?
P04 I have insisted that happens at every PM meeting. That's a non-negotiable.
INT Just like you would with a lesson observation?
P04 Yeah (pause)..
INT Okay. So, when you have yours, can you tell me about the day? I mean do you get dressed up that day? Is it like a formal, you know, it's gonna happen that day? Is it like a particular week? What does that feel like?

4.10.8 *Triangulation*

A large part of the data gathering process is analysing data from different perspectives. Flick (2018) refers to this aspect as triangulation. The term triangulation is borrowed from the field of navigation where different points of observation are used to determine a location (Farmer, Robinson, Elliott, & Eyles, 2006). In a research context, triangulation involves taking different perspectives on the issue under study where these perspectives can be substantiated using several methods or approaches (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Flick, 2018b). These multiple methodologies often employ more than one type of data collection procedure. The practice of checking multiple sources is regarded as one of the "strengths of fieldwork" (Wolcott, 2009, p. 26).

However, Van Manen (2014) argues that "no predetermined procedure" such as triangulation can fulfil the demand for validating a phenomenological study (p. 348). Nevertheless, for the purposes of this research, triangulating multiple points of observation is deemed necessary for validation purposes,

as this is an exploratory social constructivist inquiry. Triangulation enhances the validity of the research in postpositivist interpretative frameworks (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, in this study, as many

perspectives as possible are included because the scholarly literature is limited (Table 6).

Table 6 Triangulation Methods used in this study

Data sources and Methodologies	Format
Interviews	Semi-structured interview analysis with 12 purposefully sampled participants
Survey	Analysis of 33% return on the survey
Document Analysis	Analysis of BSO Reports for participant schools
Policy Documents Analysis	Analysis of BSO Standards; Membership Association policy documents; legislative records; speech transcripts; financial accounts; UK Department of Trade documents.
Emails and other communications	Communications with the UK government; membership associations; phone calls; letters
Expert perspectives	Phone calls, emails & conversations with BSO inspectors; HMI inspectors; DfE; Ofsted research unit; CEOs of membership associations; educational consultants; private independent school headteacher.
Reflective Diaries and Field notes	Audio-recorded and written field notes and reflections
Geographical contexts	An intentional geographical spread of participants over three continents
Academic literature	Academic literature review. Review of literature for the purposes of context
News Media	Analysis of relevant online magazine articles, for example TES, BBC and opinion pieces from educational and trade magazines
Internet-based data and databases	Analysis of GIAS database; Reports; BSO school websites; online databases
Informal conversations with BSO principals, school owners, governors and staff	Informal conversations with conference attendees in different parts of the world; phone calls; face-to-face conversations; informal conversations with governors, school owners and staff

A relevant aspect to this study is the unique position that BSO principals hold in their communities. Education leaders, such as BSO principals, have sometimes been described as 'elite' with regard to interviews for the purposes of research (Bailey, Robinson, & Coore-Desai, 2014; Natow, 2020). These elites hold positions in the world that provides them with a unique knowledge from a privileged perspective (Petkov & Kaoullas, 2016). There are many perspectives to interviewing elites because, for example, the information they hold may be sensitive (Davies, 2001). In this respect, it is relevant that some background work should be carried out before and after conducting interviews (Kezar, 2003). However, despite the significance of triangulation in this background work, there is little by way of guidance about how triangulation has been used following elite interviews, such as those conducted on these BSO principals, as the literature in such studies is scarce (Natow, 2020).

The semi-structured interviews and the survey used in this research encompass a worldwide geographical spread and includes both male and female participants. Sources of data for background work include document analysis of BSO inspection reports, government policy documents on inspection guidance, emails and expert views, comprehensive field notes and reflective diaries, academic literature, news media databases as well as informal conversations with other BSO principals, governors and staff.

4.11 Analysing the Data

In qualitative studies, inductive data analysis is often difficult as each study is designed as it progresses (Saldaña, 2015). Creswell and Poth (2018) describe data analysis as a spiral, where entry into the analysis stage is with textual data but the exit is with a story. To help with this process, this researcher attended two DCU led workshops called '*Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Systems'*. These workshops train participants in the use of a specific software called NVivo 12. Patton (2015) states that using software to analyse the data can enhance the process of analysis, but warns that software packages do not conduct the analysis for the researcher because "the real analytical work takes place in your head" (p. 530). The transcripts from each of the semi-structured interviews in this study are analysed using a thematic analysis. It is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting

themes and patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The strength of this form of analysis is its flexibility.

4.12 Thematic Analysis

Braun & Clarke (2013) identify six phases of thematic analysis. They include familiarising with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and finally producing a report.

4.12.1 *Familiarising with the data*

It is important to get an overall sense of the data (Yin, 2015). Accordingly, familiarisation with the textual data is achieved by reading the transcripts several times, by reading field notes and by listening to the audio recordings. This process provides the space to gain an understanding of the methods that are applied to the data collection. Some small initial side-notes are made as thoughts occur to this researcher during this process.

4.12.2 *Generating initial codes*

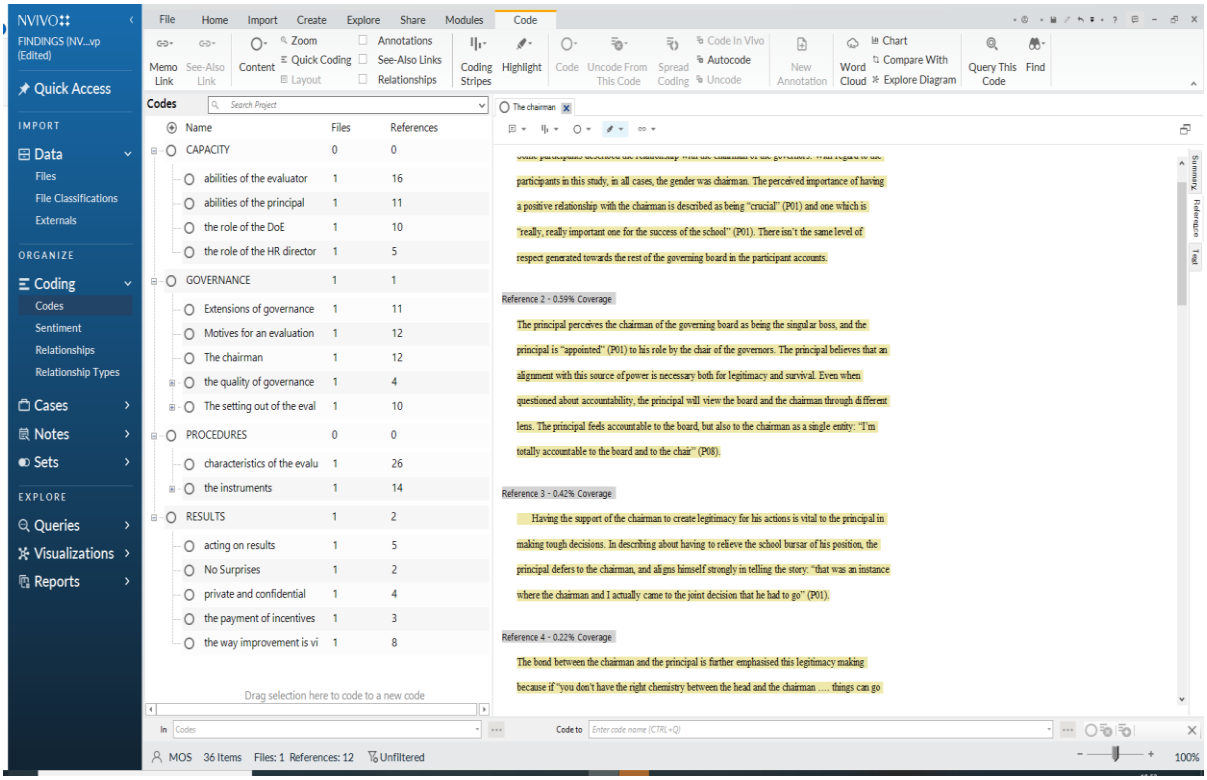
Braun and Clarke (2013) say that the first analytical steps are taken in order to bring life to the data. The textual data in this study is enlivened by highlighting points of interest and by making annotations on emerging items of significance. While involved in this individual physical exercise, this researcher adopted a personal style of coding, which is "a process of identifying aspects of the data that relate to your research question" (p. 206). Initially, the NVivo 12 software package is rejected and instead working with highlighting pens is the preferred method of coding (Figure 4.4). There is no single agreed approach to coding (Hammond & Wellington, 2013) and "even the terminology to describe the process so that terms such as 'codes', 'themes', 'categories' and 'labels' may be used interchangeably" (p. 22). Codes are words, or brief phrases, representing bits of data. Initial codes such as 'relationships', 'respect' and 'time' begin to emerge, but they are difficult to pattern in the initial stages as there are so many variations to the codes. Braun and Clarke (2013) advise that the researcher concentrates on one or two transcripts at first. This researcher proceeded to code two of the initial transcripts in this complete manner attempting to "identify anything and everything of interest" (p. 206).

Figure 4.4 Initial Coding Approach

4.12.3 *Searching for themes*

As the coding process develops, broader patterns of coded data are collated into provisional themes. A theme captures something significant about the data in relation to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Several overarching themes become evident, for example, 'the structure of governance' and 'the evaluation methods'. As themes emerge, this researcher returned to the software and began to enter these provisional themes into NVivo 12 (Figure 4.5). The codes are collected into those themes as it is more easily managed in this way. Sometimes the codes become themes in themselves (Charmaz, 2014). In this analysis, some of the codes become themes as they were large enough to do this, for example 'the use of KPIs' and 'the chairman'. Sometimes themes emerge that have not been expected, for example 'principal inputs (into their own evaluation)', so flexibility was required at every step.

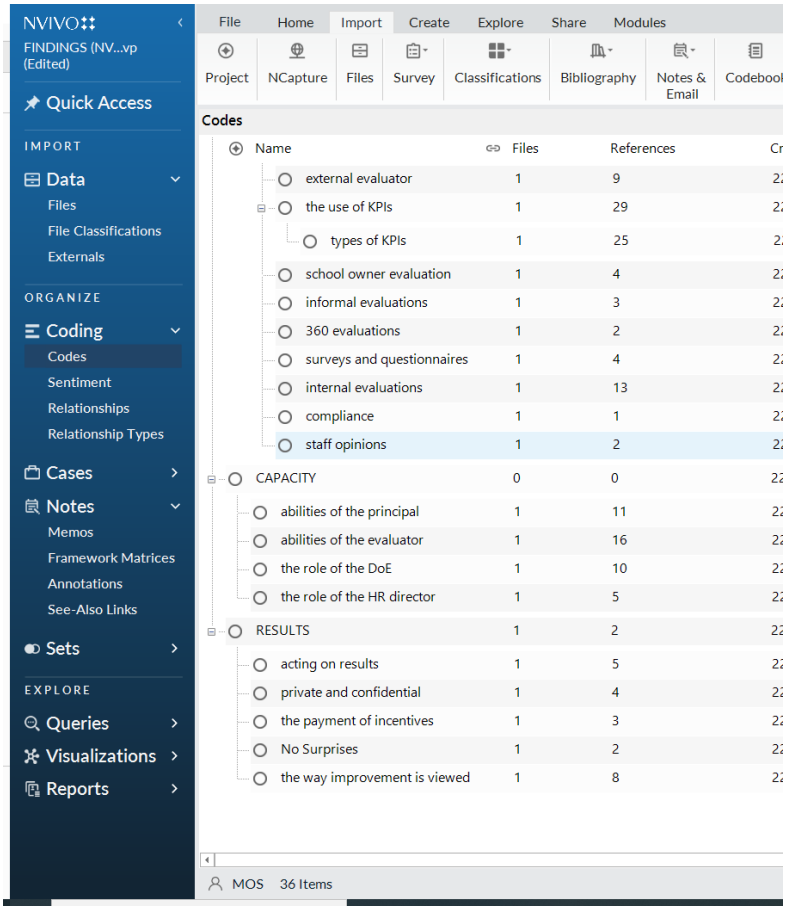
Figure 4.5 Provisional Themes forming in NVivo 12



4.12.4 *Reviewing themes*

Braun and Clarke (2013) advise the researcher to critique and make refinements when reviewing the themes. Sometimes, the coding is changed and, towards the end, this researcher had to "let go of coded material" as the material became too unwieldly (p. 230). While this is difficult, it is important to be selective in order to "create an overall patchwork pattern for the quilt" (p. 231), and tell the story that answers the research question. It was also critical to know when to stop reviewing, because the coding can become interminable (Figure 4.6).

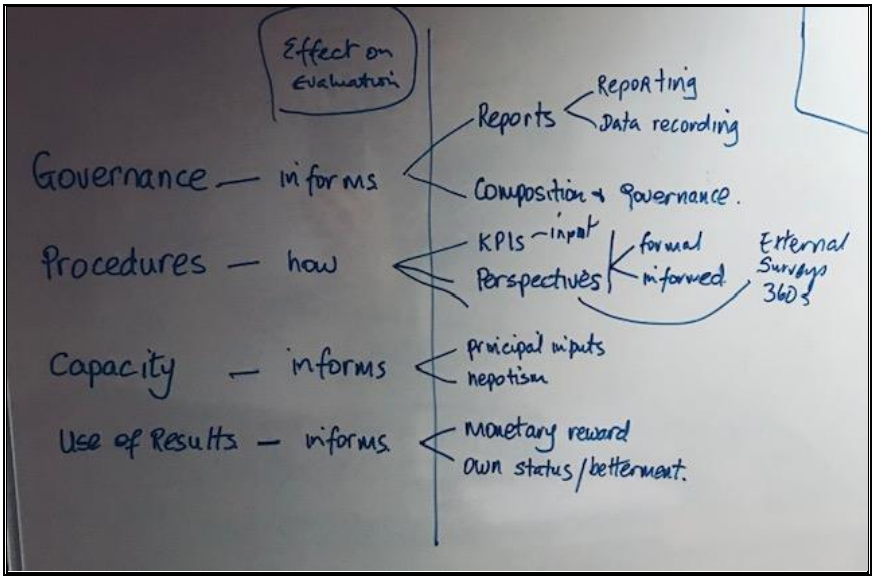
Figure 4.6 Reviewing Themes NVivo 12



4.12.5 *Defining and Naming themes*

The penultimate step in Braun and Clarke's (2013) phases for thematic analysis is when the shape of the thematic map starts to come into focus. At this stage, this researcher tried to define and conceptualise each theme in order to help the presentation. This involved defining themes and naming themes. The data is reorganised, so that the overall shape of the report is clarified. Sometimes, a simple wall mounted whiteboard is used to organise the thought process (Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7 Naming themes



4.12.6 *Producing a report*

The final phase is producing a report or, in terms of this study, a thesis. This document outlines the methodological approaches, the analysis and a conclusion to the research replete with limitations and recommendations. Accordingly, attendance at a DCU led workshop in November 2019 entitled '*Effectively Presenting Research*' is particularly helpful to this researcher.

4.13 Quality Control

The aim of quality in research is to arrive at a congruence of valid reasoning through the systematic use of well-established procedures, thus improving the reliability, validity and integrity of the inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The methods used by qualitative researchers to establish 'trustworthiness' includes establishing credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. When the correct procedures have been followed, Denzin & Lincoln (2018) argue that some inferencing is allowed to be drawn from the research. Wellington (2015) states that *credibility* is "the extent to which a document (or indeed an interview) is sincere and undistorted" (p. 214). This is relevant in exploratory research, as a background of understanding helps establish credibility in the research. This researcher endeavoured at all times to take careful notes and accurate transcripts, and also to submit regular drafts of text to the research supervisor for comment and feedback. A lot of time was spent working

in the field as a BSO principal, which included attending conferences and absorbing the environment as well as giving conference seminars and workshops in various countries. In one example, this researcher made a presentation at the 36th Annual COBIS international conference in London in 2017. This conference was attended by over 800 British international school principals and others involved in international education, who use the event for networking and exchanging ideas. All of this activity ensured that a greater understanding of the BSO environment was gained. This researcher also endeavoured to be consistently reflective throughout the study in order to reduce any interpretational ownership.

Transferability refers to the extent to which the results of the research can be transferred to other contexts or settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). While qualitative researchers conduct research to obtain findings that may be only applicable to that context at that time, the 'thick descriptions' allow other researchers to transfer the conclusions to other contexts. The context where these BSO principals work is evaluated by approved inspection providers and is comparable to contexts in England. Therefore, this research arguably has relevance to the DfE in England and to international education in general.

Dependability is related to credibility and can be enhanced by the presentation of an audit trail where the researcher keeps records of their inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). All aspects of the enquiry are presented in the appendices in an attempt to be as explicit as possible in unravelling the complexities of the context.

Confirmability is the extent to which researchers show their processes and how they arrived at their findings and conclusions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Uwe Flick refers to this as 'transparency', and it provides others the opportunity to consider if they would have followed the same methodology and arrived at the same conclusions (Flick, 2018a). It is the appendices in this study that offer insights into the research process, thus offering transparency for further research.

4.14 Summary

In this chapter, the philosophical approaches to the theoretical framework, the research design and the methodology are discussed. The reasoning behind developing a socially constructed phenomenology

to explore the evaluation perceptions of a sample of BSO principals is also discussed. The data collection methods of using a survey, a semi-structured interview, document analysis as well as diaries and field notes are outlined. The methodologies that are used in triangulation involving the use of multiple sources of data is explained and reviewed. It is relevant to explain in detail the research methods to ensure transparency, and illuminate some of the complexities in the research. Other approaches including the thematic analysis, the ethical considerations, the sample selection, the quality control and the study limitations are also explored and discussed.

Chapter 5 Findings

5.1 Introduction

The evaluation of the British School Overseas (BSO) principals in this study does not take place in a single event, as might happen in a school inspection or an examination. This inquiry reveals that the evaluation of these BSO principals takes place over time and from many perspectives. Adjusting to this reasoning, and by using Braun and Clarke's (2013) phases of thematic analysis, allows a range of themes to emerge from the data. This methodology helps to reveal a complexity of views and beliefs about the evaluation of BSO principals. Over 260 emerging themes accumulated into larger descriptions and understandings (see Appendix J). These themes are combined with survey results, document analysis and field notes that are focused on answering the research questions that inquire about the evaluation perceptions of BSO principals, about how they are evaluated and about what informs their evaluations. In the interest of coherence, the themes are finally brought together under broad headings, or sections, adapted from a framework devised by the OECD (2013). The broad headings are environment, procedures, capacity and the way that results are used.

Environment includes findings that emerged in relation to the context of the BSO principals in this study. This section gathers together sub-themes that reveal variants in the structure of the ownership of BSOs and also includes the influence of the member associations (see Appendix K).

Procedures reveals the findings that emerged about how the BSO principals in this study are evaluated (see Appendix L). There are a range of motives for evaluating the principals and the findings show that an array of methods and instruments are used in their evaluations.

Capacity reveals some of the terminology used by these BSO principals in their descriptions of evaluations. This section also presents findings on themes about the perceptions of those who conduct the evaluations and also presents findings about the capacity that BSO principals bring to their evaluations (see Appendix M).

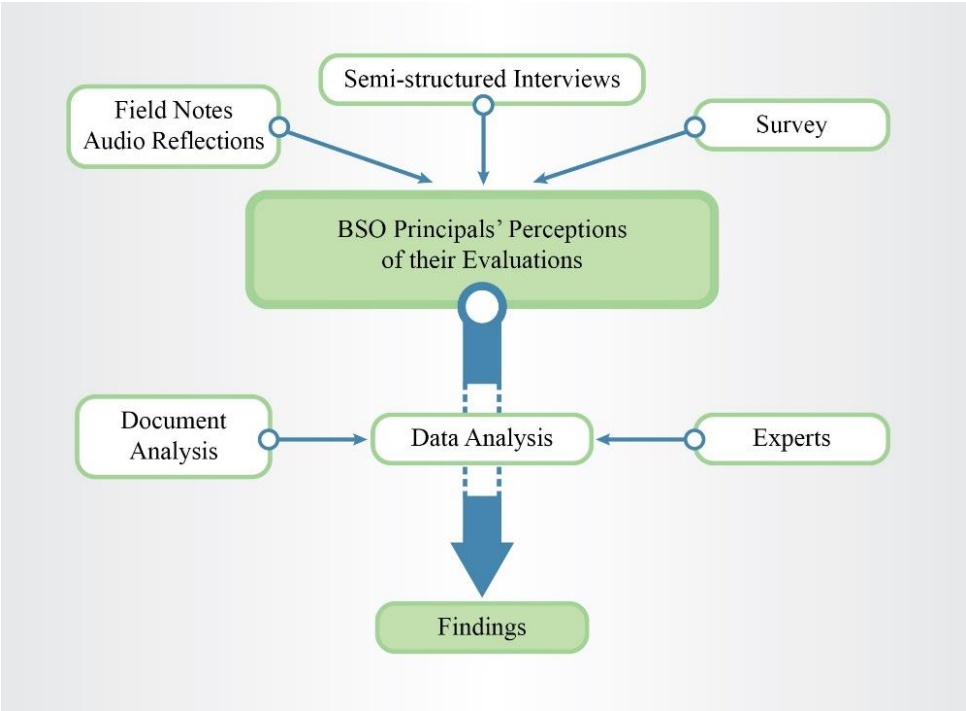
The way that results are used reveals findings on what happens after an evaluation has taken place. These themes include perceptions about BSO inspection reports as well as understandings about the influence of BSO inspection reports and how they are formally recorded. This section also reveals

perceptions about sharing evaluations, understandings about fairness and accuracy and conceptual understandings about upskilling and support (see Appendix N).

The research commences with a survey of BSO principals from around the world. It then moves to meet twelve BSO principals located in six countries across three continents in a semi-structured interview setting (see Appendix I). The research is supported throughout by researcher-driven and reflective audio and written diaries (see Appendix O). This data is underpinned by a thorough document analysis that includes BSO inspection reports, policy documents, legislative instruments and financial statements.

In the initial survey, 72 BSO principals are included in an appeal for participation and 24 principals reply (33% return). The sharing of their viewpoints offers an initial round of data gathering (see Appendix G). Document analysis, during this period, focuses on the standards of leadership and management section of 162 published BSO inspection reports, all of which were considered recent and valid during the sampling date frame. The document analysis moves subsequently to the BSO inspection reports of the research participants' schools. Field notes and audio-recorded notes provide further data from which crucial evidence is drawn. This material also provides a rich vein of contextual background information that underpin the findings. Data is supplemented at important junctures by a range of opinions and views from assorted experts in the field (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 Path to Findings adapted from Braun and Clarke (2013)



The prevalent term for a school leader in England is 'headteacher', and while this term is used in some of the direct quotes in the findings, the more global term 'principal' is used throughout this report as a descriptor. Similarly, while the term 'chairperson' offers greater gender awareness, the terms 'chairman', or 'chair', are used more commonly by the participants in this research. All of these terms are evidenced in different sections throughout this report. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the principals in the interviews.

5.2 Environment

The BSO principals in this study draw upon long-standing careers and they offer a wealth of leadership and management experience to the research. Most served as headteachers in one or more schools in the United Kingdom (UK) prior to travelling overseas to take up BSO positions. From the findings in this study, there are two clear and significant aspects of the context of BSO principals that are brought to light in the evidence. The historical context traces the history of the BSO from its

origins in England. The locational context places these BSO principals in their overseas environment and this is the context in which they are evaluated.

The historical context of the BSO has been outlined in Chapter 2. This context is relevant to the conceptual understandings that BSO principals have of their evaluations. It is said that the approach to accountability in England is intense (Ozga, 2012) and it is recognised as being one of the most centralised systems (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019). Performance standards were created for headteachers in England in efforts to define expectations and to create benchmarks for efficacy (DfE, 2015; Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019; Green, 2013). The narrative regarding accountability and performance is traced in Chapter 2 through the transformative changes that took place in the British education system over a period of thirty years. During this time, the BSO voluntary inspection scheme was introduced in September 2010.

The locational context for the BSO principals in this research points to the diverse international places in which they are found and in which they are evaluated. Their work in this context involves leading and managing large private independent schools that vary in size between 500 and 2,500 students. Many of the BSOs have a primary school phase, a secondary school phase and sometimes a kindergarten on the same campus. In schools like these, each phase has its own headteacher who works as part of the campus leadership team that is overseen by the BSO principal. Document analysis of all accredited BSO inspection reports during the research period show that the majority of the students in BSOs are host country nationals, but this number is also supplemented by other international students many of whom are not British. This nationality aspect is sometimes recorded in the school characteristics section of a BSO inspection report. For example, one sample report about a school in Turkey states: “Pupils from 35 nationalities attend the school, the largest being Turkish, followed by British then American”. Another sample BSO report from a school in Mongolia states: “The school provides for predominantly Mongolian students.” Another BSO report comments on the range of nationalities in a school in Venezuela: “The majority of the pupils are Venezuelan but a small proportion are of various ethnic origins and from a range of countries, including Britain, The Middle and Far East, and North and South America”.

Many scholars agree that the issue of context has an influence on the evaluation of the principal (Fullan, 2020; Leithwood, 2019). Arguably, scholars are referring to principals of school settings found in national contexts. BSOs are located internationally and the extent of the knowledge about the context of international school leadership is very limited (Bunnell, 2019; Cravens, 2019; Lee & Walker, 2018). The findings about school size and about school student profile help to provide an understanding of the type of environment where these BSO principals work.

In the survey for this study, 83% (n=20) of the participants agree that the context of the school informs their evaluation. This finding, in many respects, aligns with the literature. All of the survey participants (n= 24) believe that their school governing boards are aware of what successful principalship looks like. However, the cultural lenses through which the criteria for successful principalship is considered differs between countries (Day & Leithwood, 2007). There isn't a globally standardised way of evaluating principals (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Fullan, 2018a; Leithwood, 2019). Arguably, it is highly likely that these BSO principals are influenced by local perspectives in their understanding of their evaluations.

With these aspects in mind, the BSO principals are presented with an open-ended but direct question: "Tell me about your school context". This open question reveals that different compositions of ownership and governance are at play among the BSO schools in this study. In the analysis of the responses to this question the emerging themes are gathered under a main theme that is the structure of BSO ownership.

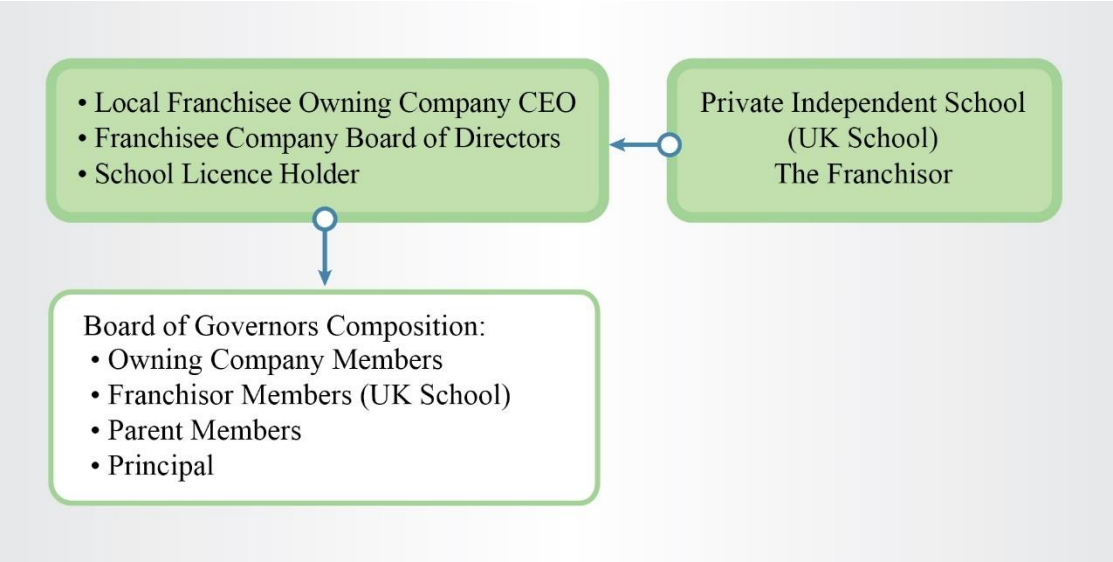
5.3 The Structure of BSO Ownership

Four types of BSO ownership emerge in the findings. The governance that develops from the ownership structures influence how these principals are evaluated. The different forms of BSO ownership that are drawn from the evidence are described in four typologies. These typologies are categorised as 'variants' for the purposes of this study. They are the franchised company formation (BSO Variant 1), the private company formation (BSO Variant 2), the proprietorial formation (BSO Variant 3) and the school trustee formation (BSO Variant 4).

5.3.1 *BSO Variant 1*

The first variant of BSO ownership found in the study is the franchised private company formation. In this structure, a school is established by a private business under a brand franchise arrangement with an independent school in England (Figure 5.2). This franchise arrangement provides for the private business to pay fees to the private independent school in England for the use of their brand. In financial accounts submitted to the Charity Commission private independent schools describe these fees as income from charitable activities (Haysmacintyre, 2020a, 2020b). Private independent schools that are registered as charities do not pay income tax or corporation tax on this fee income in England. In most countries, the private business is required to hold a license that authorises it to operate a school. Oftentimes, the conditions for holding the license involves establishing a governing board for the school in order to satisfy local legislation. This variant of school, as found in this study, is an accredited BSO that is formally recognised by the DfE in England.

Figure 5.2 BSO Ownership Variant 1



Mark is principal of a BSO whose brand is franchised from a private independent school in England. The local owning company for Mark's school pays fees to the private independent school in England for the use of its brand. According to Mark: "It's a premium school in terms of the way that schools

are classified in this country*".* The members of the governing board include parents, members from the local owning company and members representing the private independent school in England. The private independent school has a strong interest in how Mark's school performs. Board members travel from England to represent the private independent school on the governing board. The private independent school advertises its relationship with Mark's school in its own marketing literature. These aspects, combined with the fee income element, reflect the serious view that the private independent school takes of the franchising arrangement with Mark's school.

Mark believes that this governing board is not representative of the whole school. He makes the comparison between the governance of this school and his previous experience of governance in England: "Certainly the schools that I've been part of in the UK, HMC schools, there's quite a sort of definite structure of governance by a board in a representative board". Mark feels differently about the governance of his current school: "One of the areas where I feel that it is not as good here is that the governance here is really, really inferior". His understandings of the structure of the ownership and the governing board have an influence on his perception of how he is evaluated: "You know there is an owning company, but you have a board of governors as well which is made up of half of people from [named company] and half from [named school] UK". Mark feels that the governing board has an overt business focus and, in his perception, this aspect affects the governance.

He believes that the governing board performs differently to what he expects and this influences his view of the governing board: "It kind of looks like a board of governors. It just doesn't function in the way the board of governors should function". Mark believes that he needs to be aware of the business concerns of the owning company, who is the franchisee, and also the interests of the private independent school, the franchisor, in order to carry out his role.

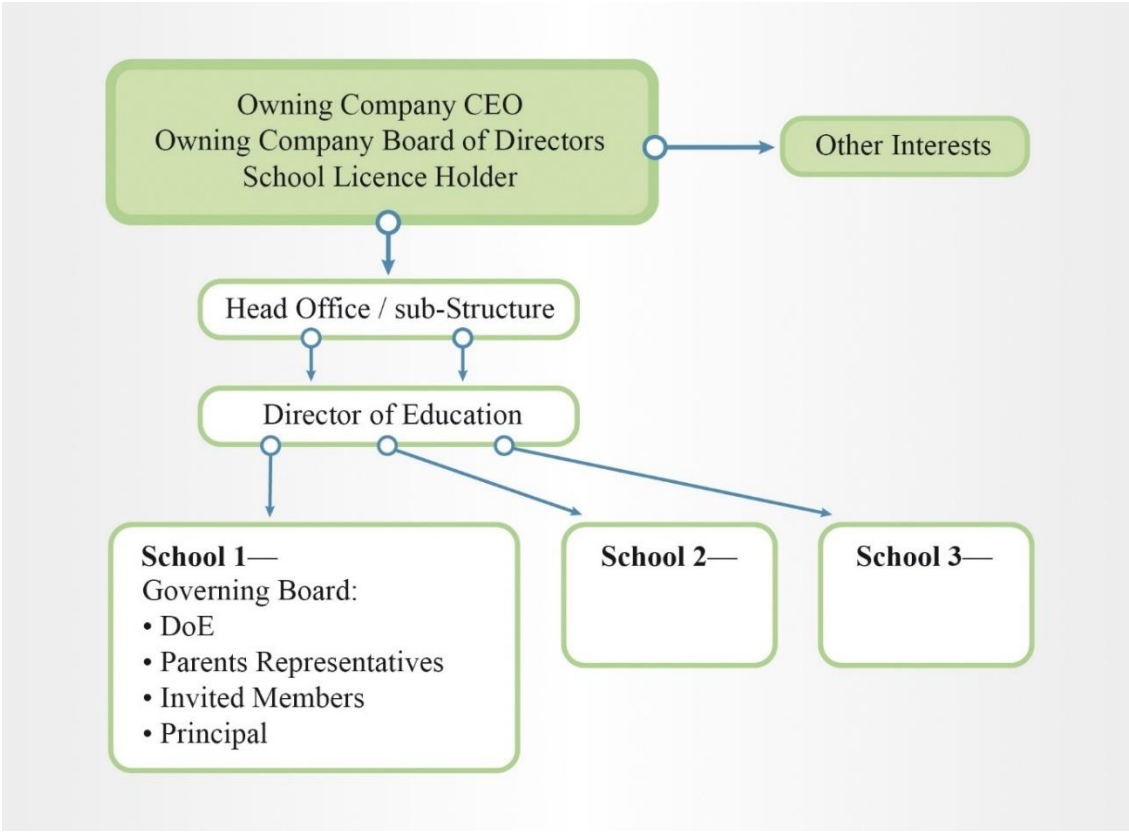
Mark perceives that he enjoyed a larger decision-making role when he was principal of a private independent school England: "Every decision at every level came to me and I could just make the decision". He believes that this is not the case with this BSO: "Even with the governors, you must do this, that and the other, there are a lot of things that I simply cannot control about the way the school runs here". Mark believes that his current role is more limited than his previous role in England: "It's made me much more aware of how critical you know, my interaction, and you know, my decision-

making is because it's much more limited than it used to be". In many respects, Mark has clearer parameters on what he can and cannot decide on in terms of running this school. However, the business requirements of this ownership type influence his understanding of how he is perceived to carry out his job as principal.

5.3.2 *BSO Variant 2*

The second variant of BSO ownership found in this study is a formation where a private company owns a group of schools. This private company delegates the oversight of each school to a Head Office or other such sub-company structure (Figure 5.3). This Head Office reports directly to the owning company. Sometimes, a Director of Education (DoE) is employed by the Head Office to oversee each school and its principal. In this formation, the owning company does not have a franchise relationship with any private independent school in England. This type of school, as found in this study, is an accredited BSO and it is formally recognised by the DfE in England.

Figure 5.3 BSO Ownership Variant 2



Audrey is a principal of a BSO whose ownership is structured in this way. The owning company of Audrey's BSO is led by the "CEO of the company" who also has other business interests. The owning company recruited Audrey and also makes most of the financial decisions for the school. In the past, Audrey met regularly with the CEO to discuss "the direction the school was going". She also discussed what she felt were "the strengths" of the school. Due to the group's recent expansion, a "director of education" is employed to oversee Audrey's work. Now Audrey is given Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that she is expected to meet: "We've been set the KPIs by head office". Business enterprises often need to assess their activities using metrics such as KPIs to focus on those aspects of the organisation that are vital for performance (Marr, 2012; Parmenter, 2015). This arrangement is one to which Audrey is still adjusting: "So up until now there's been a conversation". The new arrangement, and the arrival of the DoE, may also affect her regular meetings with the CEO. Audrey describes her perceptions of the school:

> "What we do is fantastic, this school was amazing before I walked in the door. All I had to do was keep it going and then polish it slightly but it was already an amazing school and I can't take the credit for that".

Audrey believes that her role is to sustain this school's performance. If the school does well in BSO and local inspections, it gives Audrey an advantage in terms of how she might be evaluated. Audrey believes that her role as principal has changed since the introduction of the KPIs, but she is trying not to let it affect her: "Actually, sounds awful. I'm not worried about that". There are things about the school that the DoE wishes to change, particularly in managing costs, and Audrey is not in agreement with him: "I'm not going to destroy my school. I want this school to be the best school I can make it. And if I don't get an extra bonus so, be it!". She feels that this DoE has different ideas in terms of how the school should be operated: "Ok, we have a new director of education here who is new to role". Audrey believes that the DoE may need time to adjust to his new position.

The DoE is a member of the governing board of the school. He is Audrey's supervisor and has an input into Audrey's evaluation. He also has an input into other aspects of Audrey's work, such as a BSO inspection. In the latest BSO inspection report for Audrey's school, the DoE is judged to provide a 'high level of support' and can 'clearly articulate' the school's strengths and weaknesses. Having the

DoE speak in this way about the school is evidence of the growing influence of the DoE on the school. This DoE's influence affects Audrey's perceptions of how she is evaluated because he is her supervisor.

Rebecca is principal of a BSO that is part of a similar group of schools: "The group I'm with now although they're not an educational group [named company] they do have a couple of schools and it's very much based on a business model". The ownership of this school provides Rebecca with a mission that is focused on student outcomes: "We have KPIs set against academic outcomes so that the external examination results would show an upward trajectory". Student achievement is often reflected in BSO inspection reports that are published publicly. As discussed in Chapter 2, student achievement is one of the influences on the number of fee-paying students seeking enrolment at a school. Fee income is a factor in the financial valuation of schools (ISCResearch, 2020a).

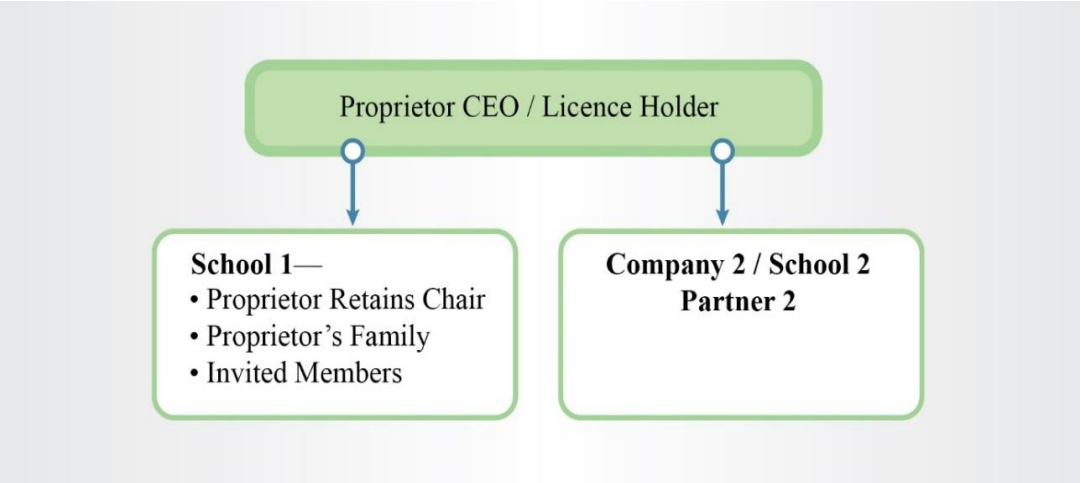
Rebecca appears accustomed to the business orientation of the ownership of this school. She does not have a supervisory DoE and instead reports to different company members in the Head Office. The focus of her mission regarding student achievement influences her perceptions of how she is evaluated. She is ambitious and concentrated: "There's no sense of hoping for the best". She believes that planning is key to success in how she carries out her role and she is determined to leave nothing to chance.

Sam is principal of a different BSO that is also focused on inspection outcomes. Sam describes the local school inspection arrangements: "It is one of the toughest regimes in the world". Sam believes that the local inspections are a challenge to undertake.

5.3.3 *BSO Variant 3*

The third type of BSO ownership found in this study is a school that is established by a proprietor. Sometimes the BSO is part of a small group of schools. The owner holds the operating license for the school and establishes a governing board where the owner, or an associate, is the chairman (Figure 5.4). For the purposes of this study, an associate is a business partner of the school owner. This school variant does not have any relationship with private independent schools in England and, as an accredited BSO, it is formally recognised by the DfE in England.

Figure 5.4 BSO Ownership Variant 3



Ian is principal of a BSO where the ownership structure is such that one investor has created three different partnerships to establish three different schools. Ian describes the ownership structure as; "a group of schools really, a business.". Each of the schools in this small group are separate businesses. Despite being separate, all of the schools are branded the same. The students wear the same style and the same colour of school uniform as if they were part of the same school group. The investor is the chairman of the governing board of Ian's school.

Ian is ambitious for his school: "I like to think I want the school to be strong. I want the governors to be able to hold me to account". He believes that he should be accountable to the governors. He regularly discusses school issues with the investor / chairman of the governing board. Ian gives an insight into the structure of this governing board: "A family board really to be honest. It's essentially micromanaged by a small family". Several family members hold different positions at the school. The chairman arranges for an associate to take an office next door to Ian's office. Ian feels increasingly accountable to this associate who is not part of the school governance: "He wasn't technically on the school board". Ian is philosophical about this situation. He realises that the composition of the governing board and the placement of the associate close to his office is unusual. He is willing to overlook this composition of governance for now: "Yeah but, you know, you've got to start somewhere I suppose". He believes that he has to continue in this arrangement. The governors, the

investor / chairman and the associate influence Ian's perceptions of how he might be evaluated. He feels that there are numerous possibilities for being evaluated.

William's BSO is part of a "trio of schools" that are owned by a single proprietor. There are three schools in the small group of schools. The other two schools are not accredited BSOs. The proprietor appoints a Special Education Committee (SEC) to act as a governing board for William's school. William says that this SEC is "very concerned about operational things and finance". It is expected by the proprietor that each school "must stand on its own two feet". This means that William's school is required to be financially viable from the perspective of the proprietor.

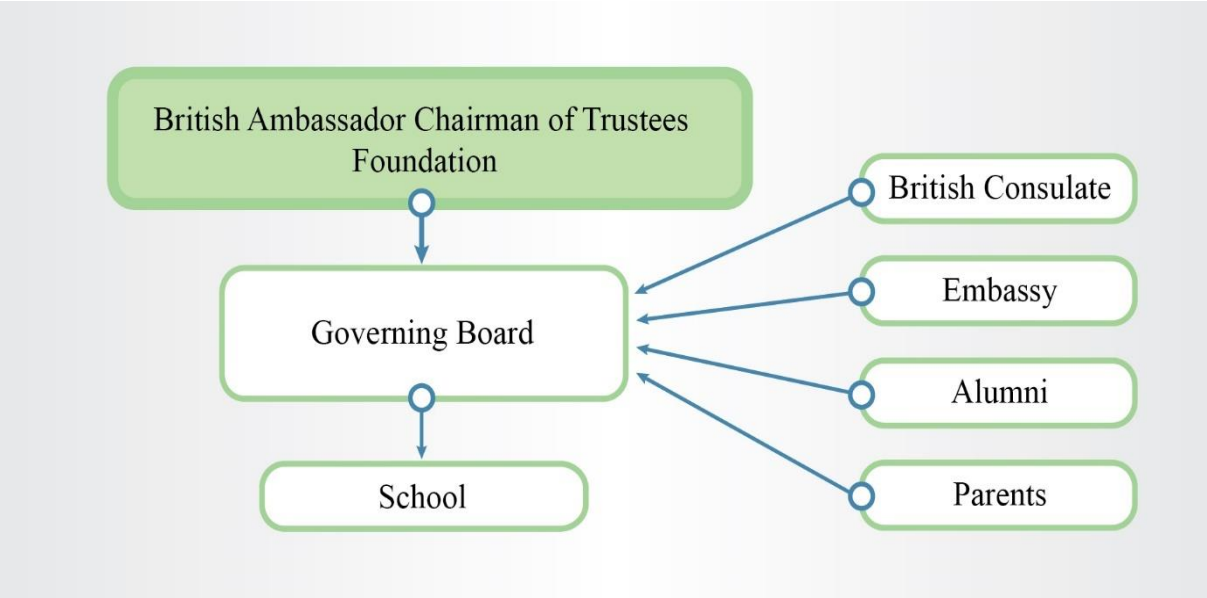
William tries to work with the SEC to make some building improvements at the school: "I was looking to make changes last year, you know, to the infrastructure of the school, for everyone's good. I find it really frustrating dealing with the SEC". He feels that the SEC has little influence over the proprietor in getting permission to carry out the improvements. William's suggestions are ignored or just not carried out. This aspect is "frustrating" for William. Sometimes, he does not get any response to his suggestions.

The BSO where James is principal is owned by a single proprietor. The owner is the chairman of the governing board: "It is led by family members and the school leadership". The governing board does not have any parental representatives. The owner "looks after" James, and the strength of this relationship motivates him to work hard for someone whom he feels carries the "vision of the school". James is influenced by the school owner's perception of him.

5.3.1 *BSO Variant 4*

The fourth variant of BSO is a school that is established by trustees from within the British community. This school variant was initially established to cater for the children of globally mobile British expatriates. In some contexts, this format is referred to as an 'embassy' school due to its close relationship with the local British embassy (Figure 5.5). However, this variant of school now also serves host country students, or other international students, all of whom seek a British education. This variant of school, as found in this study, is an accredited BSO and it is formally recognised by the DfE in England.

Figure 5.5 BSO Ownership Variant 4



Jenny is principal of a BSO whose board of governors is overseen by a board of trustees that are selected from the local British community. Jenny's BSO was founded to provide an education for the children of British expatriates. The board of trustees is chaired by the local British ambassador. The trustees select the governing board and it is comprised of alumni, representatives of the local British consul, as well as representatives of the trustees and parents. Jenny's perception of her school is that it is a "a bit out of the ordinary". The board of trustees and the governing board are mainly British citizens who retain strong links with England despite living overseas. She describes the school as follows: "We're a foundation. We are a not-for-profit organisation". The school's website states that the mission of the foundation is to promote the intellectual, spiritual and physical development of young people. Jenny explains that the school "is well known in HMC". She also says that the school has a worldwide reputation: "We have an excellent reputation in the U.K. and globally". Jenny expresses pride in leading a BSO that is accredited by the DfE in the England: "We are one of about 100 schools globally that are recognised". She perceives that her school operates to the same standards and expectations as private independent schools in England: "We comply with the same standards as Eton and Harrow, and that's a good comparison to make". The perspective of leading a school in a unique international environment that can be compared to recognised private independent schools in

England demonstrates Jenny's pride in her school. These perspectives influence her perception of how she might be evaluated as these comparable schools are perceived to be successful.

Phil is principal of a BSO that was established more than 40 years ago. The school's website shows that the governing board includes representatives from the British Embassy, selected members from the local community and parents. Phil describes his school as a "not-for-profit school" and that this model is the only one of its type in the country in which he is located. He believes that his school is high performing and that his school is unique as it is operated from the perspective and support of trustees who are part of the British overseas community.

Donald describes his BSO as "a wonderfully plucky school". However, he perceives that the promotion of British values at the school lacks meaning. Donald feels that the school should have a more international focus:

> "I mean we had this discussion at the start of the year. We got down to the constitution and the initial vision. It has always been a bugbear of mine when people talk about British education and British values and I've never understood what that means. It's like we have a monopoly on these values. We are a British school but only in name, only in terms of the assessment structure that we have in place and in terms of our IGCSE and international A-levels".

Donald believes that the perspective towards building a British community around a 'British' school should be counter-balanced with what the local parents expect from a private education: "You know parents also send their children to school to get their academic results, to go off to the best University". Donald appears to be struggling with his school's identity.

Charles is principal of a BSO that has been losing money. He believes that schools like his have to "have their own cash reserves". He says that the financial structure under which the school operated in the past was not enough "to sustain it". He perceives that, even though the trustees are "pretty savvy", it is he who has been instrumental in "turning it around". He believes that there is a "narrow focus" in evaluating him because of his concentration on the financial aspects of the school. This focus on the financial aspects is based on the perspective of the board of governors.

Different stakeholders have different perceptions of what performance is like (Anderson & Turnbull, 2016). The expectations of the four variants of ownership of these BSOs influence these BSO principals' understanding of their different remits and their perceptions of how they are evaluated by the respective authorities in their schools. All of these BSOs are accredited by the DfE in England.

5.3.2 *The Influence of the Associations*

Jenny is a member of the HMC membership association. The HMC is composed of a select group of approximately 250 private independent school principals (HMC, 2020). The association has strict membership criteria, particularly with regard to governance. Jenny's school is also a member of AGBIS, which is an association that supports and advises schools in the independent sector in England. According to its guidelines on principal evaluation (AGBIS, 2019c), all of the private school associations require principals to be reviewed regularly: "AGBIS and HMC, GSA, IAPS and SoH and SCIS agree the Head's performance should be appropriately reviewed on a regular basis" (p. 49). It also states that reviews are often a requirement of "specific heads' association membership requirements" (p. 49).

Associations, such as the HMC and AGBIS, have some influence over their member schools as they organise conferences and professional development courses that are attended by principals and bursars (AGBIS, 2019c; HMC, 2020). They have an influence on the governance of some BSOs and it is this governance that evaluates the BSO principal. Jenny describes the nature of some associations' governance expectations that guide schools like hers in principal evaluations:

> "HMC really needs to work itself, drag itself into the 21st century. And it's got a lot of work to do with respect to inclusion, diversity, innovation and you know there are all sorts of things about it which are very frustrating and old fashioned. Particularly for a state school educated girl. That's pretty clear to me. And you know I don't, I'm not from the mould of an HMC head. And I think that they are willing and I think they want to, but I think there's a lot of work also to be done with governance and with AGBIS and the work that needs to happen with them and trying to change the way in which heads are appointed. And, you know, it's the sorts of values and what people look for in headship appointments. It's really where that needs to go and I think that [named person] is trying to do some work and make that happen. But it's still a

> long way to go. I think HMC is trying. I think some of what they're doing is patronising but I think you know at least they realise that they need to move themselves away from this sort of you know elite, judgmental, middle class, middle aged men (laughs) and do something a bit different".

This description provides an insight into Jenny's perspectives and understandings about influences that some of the associations have on overseas schools, and this includes the BSO where she is evaluated.

The environment and the structure of ownership of these BSOs is diverse and this diversity influences the governance that evaluates these BSO principals. They have perceptions about the quality of their schools and this informs their evaluation perceptions. The following section presents a range of evidence about the evaluation procedures of the BSO principal that emerged from the findings.

5.4 Procedures

The BSO principals in this study are asked about the procedures for their evaluation. Specifically, all of the principals are asked the same open question: 'Tell me about your evaluation process'. Their answers draw a diverse range of themes based on the evaluation processes that are conducted and reported (see Appendix L). For the purposes of this report, these themes are brought together under two main themes that describe the evaluation motives and the evaluation methods.

The evidence from the initial survey (Table 7) shows that 83% (n=20) of the participants agree that they had an evaluation process that was carried out regularly. In terms of whether the evaluation is carried out internally by the school board, 58% (n=14) agree but 42% (n=10) disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. In terms of whether the evaluation is carried out by a third-party evaluator engaged by the school board, 46% (n=11) say that it is but 54% (n=13) disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. Some 62.5% (n=15) of the survey participants agree that they receive a written report of their evaluations.

Table 7 Results of the evaluation processes from the survey

Survey Statement	Agree	Disagree
I have a personal evaluation that is carried out regularly	83%	17%
I have a personal evaluation process that is carried out internally by the school board.	58%	42%
I have a personal evaluation process that is carried out by a third party - an evaluator - engaged by the school board.	46%	54%
I receive a written report of my evaluation.	62.5%	37.5%
As a principal, I have never experienced a formal personal evaluation.	12.5%	87.5%

The evidence from this survey also indicates that 17% (n=4) do not have regular evaluations. Some 12.5% (n=3) indicate that they have never received a formal personal evaluation. This evidence indicates that whether it is conducted internally or carried out by a third party, most of the BSO principals in the survey are familiar with being evaluated to some degree. However, the evidence also indicates that there are some BSO principals who are not evaluated at all.

5.5 Motives for Evaluation

It has been considered that when an evaluation is approached in a developmental manner, then the motive for an evaluation is supportive of the principal and it creates a perception of worth in their role (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019). However, scholars have noted different influences on the evaluation process, particularly performative aspects, in which principals thrive on being evaluated (Heffernan, 2018a; Keddie, 2013). Other influences include the challenges that arise in scheduling evaluations (Feldhoff et al., 2014), and whether principals see evaluations as politically necessary (Crawford et al., 2017a). In this study, and in the evaluation of these BSO principals specifically, arranging for an evaluation sometimes appears like an uncertain and inconsistent process. One of the anonymous principals in the survey commented: “Regularity and consistency, often I have to remind the board that I am due a review”. Another principal in the survey commented that the requirement to submit a

lot of documentation makes the “process a little tedious”. This researcher’s fieldnotes also noted a tone during the interviews that some participants found the evaluation process to be laborious. Another principal in the research perceives that the main reason for an evaluation is contract renewal: “Ultimately my evaluation determines whether or not I get another contract”. BSO principals generally sign up to limited contracts that may be renewed by mutual agreement.

The themes that emerge in this study produce a range of motives for conducting evaluations on BSO principals. From the themes, it is evident that the motives for evaluations include providing comfort and accountability to those in authority. The evaluation is also seen as good practice. Some BSO principals are evaluated to justify monetary dividends while others do not receive evaluation feedback.

5.5.1 *Lack of regular evaluation motive*

The owning company for William’s school has designed a range of KPIs for him with regard to his performance. However, William’s KPIs have never been “brought out for scrutiny”. William believes that his evaluation is based on his “longevity within the company”. He has worked for the school for a long time and has; “been willing to stay with them over years”. During his time with the school, he has undergone BSO inspections: “What the BSO inspections bring to the school, and therefore the company, is being able to attract NQTs from university. That's what the BSO status and accreditation gives us”. This owning company views BSO inspections as an opportunity for recruitment. Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) are generally less expensive to employ than their more experienced colleagues. William believes that the owner’s perspective of him guiding the school through a BSO inspection influences the decision not to prioritise evaluating him as a principal.

Charles also doesn’t have a formal evaluation process. His school was losing money and he feels that there are sufficient accountability structures in place that are guided by his financial restructuring of the school: “Finances are very much one of my targets”. It is through this lens that Charles is viewed by his governing board at the time of this research.

5.5.2 *Comfort motive*

Mark believes that the motive for conducting his evaluation is to reassure the chairman of his governing board that he is doing a good job: “It made sense to me that he wanted an external check on

everything and I suppose what that did, it possibly reassured him more than it reassured me". Mark is evaluated by an external consultant and he dismisses the notion that an evaluation might affect him: "I was arrogant enough to think I was doing a good job no matter what anybody said (laughs)". Mark receives positive feedback from his evaluation and this serves to reassure his chairman.

James' BSO Inspection report describes him as 'inspirational'. This, he perceives, is enough to provide "comfort" to the owner of his school.

5.5.3 *Good practice motive*

The main motive for Phil's evaluation is that it is perceived as good practice. Phil tries to lead his school as close as possible to what he believes is expected of schools in England. He believes that an evaluation is "mandatory" in England and he receives approval from his governing board to arrange it. The evaluation involves engaging an outside consultant to conduct it and the school pays for this consultancy. Phil feels that he should have an evaluation every few years in order to be; "accountable to the board". Phil believes that he should be able to account for his own development as it "helps" during a BSO inspection. Sometimes the development of the principal is reported explicitly in BSO inspections under the standard for leadership and management. For example, following one BSO inspection, the report states: "Procedures for the principal's appraisal are followed". However, in this sample report, there is no explicit indication about the type of procedures or the type of appraisal that was followed.

Jenny's evaluation is habitual and her regular evaluation is also perceived as good practice by her governing board: "I have an appraisal approximately every two years. I've been here five years and I've been appraised twice. The last one was in the last academic year and I imagine I will have another one next year". The habitual nature of her evaluation is evidence that it is perceived by the school governance as good practice. Jenny's targets from her evaluation are intertwined with the performance of the school: "The parents knew what my targets were, because they were very much related to where the school was going". Jenny's targets are focused on maintaining a high academic performance in the school. The evidence here also indicates that Phil and Jenny enjoy the practice of being evaluated.

5.5.4 *Accountability motive*

Conducting an evaluation is one way for a governing board to hold a BSO principal to account and this perspective is sometimes recorded in BSO reports under the standard for leadership and management heading. A sample from one BSO report comments on the governing board: 'They hold the school leadership to account very effectively'. However, there isn't any evidence in the report as to how this is done.

Ian tries to place himself in the mind of whoever may evaluate him: "What are the things that he as a principal is good at? What does the school get out of it? What can we all be better at?". Ian uses a survey to try to account for himself to the board of governors.

5.5.5 *Reward setting motive*

The reason that is given for the evaluation of some of the BSO principals in this study is to determine if they should receive an additional monetary reward. If Karen meets her KPIs, then her DoE decides that she receives a monetary "little bonus". If Audrey's BSO inspection report reflects the improvement her school owning company expects, then Audrey is paid a "bonus" too. Rebecca also receives a financial reward if her school attains the expected school inspection outcome: "That was to do with how the contract was negotiated in the first instance". However, Sam doesn't receive what he describes as a "financial handshake". Sam does not expect a monetary reward because meeting his KPIs is a challenge for him. This researcher recorded in field notes that Sam is feeling under pressure in his job during the time of the research.

BSO inspections consider student outcomes when making judgements about a school's performance (DfE, 2016a). Financial rewards for student performance creates a space to enact control, or compliance, over those receiving the reward (OECD, 2013). Paying a monetary bonus to these BSO principals is one way of keeping them motivated to meet their KPIs.

5.6 Methods of Evaluation

The role of the school principal has become more complex and demanding as it has evolved over time (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Fullan, 2018a; Leithwood, 2019). The themes reflecting how BSO principals in this study are evaluated are differentiated between formal and informal methods (see

Appendix L). Formal methods of evaluating should be systematic, relevant, appropriate and accurate, whereas informal evaluations are open to misinformation, bias and errors of judgement (Mertens & Wilson, 2018; Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). The professional quality of the evaluation method and a shared understanding of what it entails are both relevant (Andersen et al., 2018). In order to fulfil accountability requirements, a profession should regularly subject its services to an evaluation (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). Internal evaluations are required for the purposes of improving services and supplying data for independent or external evaluators.

In the survey, a total of 67% (n=16) of the participants say that their evaluation is informed by a set of professional standards (Table 8). The National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers in England is arguably a familiar framework to BSO principals (DfE, 2015). But these standards are not mentioned by the participants in this study. Similarly, as a group, the governance of BSO schools do not appear to universally adopt these standards when evaluating their principals. As we will see, they seem to adopt other methods. It was agreed by 71% (n=17) of the participants that their evaluation is conducted using an internal instrument, or framework, while 79% (n=19) of the participants agreed that an internal instrument or framework used, such as KPIs.

Table 8 Results of evaluation methods from the survey

Survey Statement	Agree	Disagree
The way I am evaluated is informed by a set of professional standards	67%	33%
The way I am evaluated is carried out using a researched instrument or framework	71%	29%
The way I am evaluated is carried out using an internal instrument or framework e.g. Key Performance Indicators.	79%	21%

5.7 Informal Evaluations

The BSO principals in this study mention that they are accountable to individuals located in their schools. In terms of this accountability, some of the BSO principals perceive that their accountability is directed towards the chairman. However, some principals refer to the chairman of the governing board while others refer to the chairman of the owning company. Some BSO principals are accountable to a DoE, while other BSO principals feel accountable to an associate of the proprietor.

5.7.1 *Being accountable to the chairman*

In international education, it is argued that the duty of the chair is to ensure that the board and the principal fulfil their roles effectively (Stout, 2015). The strength of the working relationship between them is built on "trust and mutual respect" (p. 409). In private independent schools, the chair holds a key position and has a vital role as "critical friend" (AGBIS, 2019c: p. 11).

In Phil's BSO, the chairman of the governing board meets Phil regularly and separately to the board. Phil's written evaluation report is "cc'd to the chair of governors", but otherwise the report is kept private and confidential. The importance of this bond between Phil and the chairman is acknowledged by Phil: "If you don't have the right chemistry between the head and the chairman, things can go wrong". Phil's evaluation is not shared with anyone else: "I did not share with staff". The evidence here portrays an almost exclusive relationship between this BSO principal and the chairman of the board of governors.

Donald also includes the chairman of the governing board separately in his accountability domain: "I'm totally accountable to the board and to the chair". Donald refers to the chairman and the board of governors separately in his perception of accountability.

The first time Jenny is evaluated at her current school, it is conducted by the chairman of the board of governors: "The first time I had an appraisal it was done by the chairman of the governors and basically it was me doing a self-evaluation and there wasn't really very much more to it". This evidence shows that her perception of the chairman is separate to the board of governors, given that the chairman of the governors carries out her evaluation.

Mark believes that having a positive relationship with the chairman of the board of governors is "crucial", and "really, really important one for the success of the school". Mark's perception of the

chairman appears to be more relevant to him than his perception of the board of governors. Mark also has another chairman and this is the chairman of the board of directors, who is the owner of his franchised school. This chairman is not as involved in the school as Mark might expect: “I hardly ever see him. He's disengaged. He's not someone I can have a regular chat with, you know, he doesn't come here very often”. Mark appears to be aware of the importance of this chairman and, in some respects, Mark would like to see more of him. This chairman is the owner of the school and, from this perspective, he holds authority over decisions regarding the school. Field notes recorded at the time of the interview note Mark’s contemplative demeanour when he speaks about the relationship between himself and this particular chairman.

The chairman, or CEO, of the owning company of Audrey’s school appears to display an active interest in her school. This chairman is not the chairman of the board of governors. She describes discussing the direction of the school with this chairman prior to the new DoE’s arrival: “And it was a far more collaborative process between myself and the CEO”. Audrey places a distinct importance on communicating with the owning company CEO who is not part of the governing board. She realises that the owning company CEO holds authority in relation to the school despite the presence of the DoE and the chairman of the board of governors.

The chairman of the governing board of Ian’s school is also the proprietor of the school. This chairman has meetings with Ian to discuss his perceptions of how Ian is carrying out his role as principal:

> “I mean he gets a report once a month and once a month, again it’s never written. Nothing was ever written. And he’d tell me where I stood, giving targets and all that kind of stuff. So, it keeps me on my toe, to be honest, but it’s also, it’s part of a very negative culture in the school actually. So, I don’t like it and you just don't know where you are one minute to the next. Imagine if you have a bad day one day. Well, that's it, you know. When you have a bad experience with a parent or something happens, then your copybook’s done and it's difficult because he didn't actually know everything that I was doing. Does that make sense?”.

It seems that this chairman is informally evaluating Ian on a continuous basis. If the chairman makes a decision about Ian’s future with the school, then Ian doesn’t perceive he has a right of appeal or reply.

His comment “your copybook’s done” offers a rather definitive perspective. This approach is a challenge for Ian and he is not comfortable with it. The possible consequence of not getting along with the chairman is encapsulated by Jenny: “It makes it very difficult for a head who may fall out with his boss”.

The evidence here shows that these BSO principals perceive that they are accountable to a chairman, despite other evaluation possibilities. Whether this chairman is the chairman of the board of directors or chairman of the board of governors, this individual is perceived as the person with the most authority. From this perspective, this chairman is placed in a central position in the evaluation perceptions of these principals and this aspect influences these BSO principals’ evaluation perceptions.

5.7.2 *Being accountable to the DoE*

The role of the DoE is that of a direct supervisor and one to whom some of the BSO principals in this study feel answerable. However, the role of the DoE appears to create an ambiguity around the role of the governing board. In many traditions and, particularly in England, the governing board would be the body to whom a principal is accountable (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019).

Audrey is evaluated by her DoE who supervises her work. When Audrey is asked to whom her accountability lies in her evaluation process, she reveals: “Would it be my director of education? No!”. The DoE is Audrey’s direct supervisor but she appears to have difficulty accepting his role. During her interview, Audrey aligns her KPIs to those of the DoE in an attempt to equate her principal role with that of her supervisor: “He was a principal. He was a principal up until last year and now he's the director of education. But equally I am imagining that what it says in my KPIs is actually his KPIs”. Audrey believes that her evaluation is linked with how her DoE is evaluated: “I imagine someone said to him you’re the new director of education, I want you to make sure the all the schools are 100 percent full. He’s then written on everybody’s KPI 100 percent full”. She believes that the DoE has accepted KPI targets on her behalf from the owning company: “You know he's new to role and he wants to make his mark”. She believes that the DoE is aware that some KPIs are difficult to achieve: “Yes, he should know that”. She also believes that the DoE should know what is achievable in terms of the KPIs. Audrey does not feel that she will meet her KPIs and she describes her inner

conflict with this situation: “I'm not worried. That’s the problem”. She tries to resist having to be accountable to her DoE. When asked about the consequences of not meeting the expectations that are set by the new DoE, she states: “I think it depends on his ego to be quite honest”. This evidence and the tone in which it is delivered indicate that Audrey is not comfortable with having the DoE as her direct supervisor.

When describing to whom she is accountable, Karen includes the governing board as if they were directly managing her: “I am accountable to my director of education and my governors”. However, as will be seen later, Karen is actually accountable to the DoE, who is in turn accountable to the owning company. This line management format, in some respects, bypasses the governing board.

Karen doesn’t respect how her DoE conducts her evaluation, but she accepts it because there are no surprises. She says that her DoE does not find time to sit with her and discuss her performance: “Because he ran out of time and he did it in the holidays”. The DoE chooses to leave the paperwork for her evaluation to the end of the summer term and he then sends her an email with his evaluation. She feels he gets away with this methodology because her review is generally positive: “And, because I guess he thought he could. We worked very closely together. So, it's a bit of a lean on our relationship really. And, he knew he was giving good stuff I suppose. It was his way, you know”. The informal nature of this evaluation by the DoE highlights the growing compliance nature of Karen’s role. It is arguably easier for the DoE to evaluate her by using KPIs and then let her know the result almost casually. When this perspective is put to Karen during the interview, she states:

> “There should be a performance management meeting where you evaluate and you go through and discuss because I do that for my staff. But it’s over time through line management you go through all the nitty gritty of the leadership of a school.”

Karen is not evaluated in a single event like a meeting. She receives feedback over time from her DoE and as a result there are no surprises when she receives the result of her evaluation.

Sam’s interactions with his DoE are not as relaxed or as casual. He receives “bunches of emails” as he battles with achieving his KPI targets. His DoE visits the school regularly and sometimes she has meetings with Sam’s team: “She leads team meetings”. Field notes recorded at the time indicate that Sam is feeling the strain of his DoE’s high expectations.

All of this evidence indicates that the role of the DoE appears to have a considerable influence on the evaluation perceptions of these BSO principals.

5.7.3 *Being accountable to an associate*

As stated earlier, an associate is identified in this study as a partner, or business friend, of the school owner. Ian describes how an associate of the proprietor retains a position in the school and maintains oversight of what happens on a day-to-day basis. This associate has an office located next door to Ian's office: "He's essentially the equivalent of a bursar, he's the equivalent of what you call a bursar. But he's not really". This situation has an effect on Ian's practices as principal. He describes how the associate is placed beside his office to undertake surveillance on the daily activities in the school. Ian feels accountable to this associate and it does not sit comfortably with him:

> "He runs nurseries. He's got people he does business with. So, he has a job in the school. He's in situ in school. He manages the day-to-day operational running of the school in terms of the cleaning, the administration staff, the buses, that kind of stuff, and the budget of the school essentially. So, I need to check with him before there's big expenditure because he will be the interpreter to the owners essentially".

The reality for Ian is that this associate has a close relationship with the chairman owner of the company. This researcher's audio field notes report that, on the day of Ian's interview, this associate introduced himself to this researcher and enquired about the research that was being carried out. This researcher's impression was that the associate appeared to be very active in the school and, in many respects, appeared to have authority in the school. It is evident from this researcher's observations of the interactions between them that Ian felt accountable to this associate.

5.8 Formal Evaluations

There are more formal attempts at evaluating some of the BSO principals in this study. Formal evaluations do not always need to be carried out by external experts (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). The formal evaluations of these BSO principals are conducted by the Head Office or by an external adviser, who use instruments such as KPIs, 360-degree evaluations, surveys and questionnaires. The variety of processes used in these evaluations influence these BSO principals' evaluation perceptions.

5.8.1 *Being evaluated by the Head Office*

School data is requested from Audrey on a regular basis by her Head Office. She receives documents seeking information about the school. This information covers a range of areas such as student statistics and financial data: “The document comes down for us to put the meat on the bone”. Audrey enters the requested information on the document and then returns the completed document to the Head Office. The DoE and others, such as HR administrators, work at the Head Office. Decisions in relation to Audrey’s school are sometimes made at the Head Office: “The head office say I have to take 100 more children. That is beyond my control. I will send an e-mail just to cover myself to say you are asking me to do something that is against X Y and Z?”. This reality illuminates the multi-faceted nature of Audrey’s evaluation possibilities.

Rebecca is evaluated by a HR director who works in the Head Office: “At the moment now it is the head of HR at [named company]”. If she meets her KPIs, then the HR director calculates if she deserves a bonus. The HR director then makes a recommendation to the owning company:

> “Ultimately the person who would actually sit and work on this would be the head of HR for [named company]. He then would give it to the board, and say that’s probably the way to go, you know, and they would administer it”.

It is not the governing board of the school who pays Rebecca’s bonus. The board of directors of the owning company pays Rebecca’s bonus if it is recommended by the HR director. Rebecca is uncertain how the HR director decides on his recommendation, but he generally has the information to hand that enables him to do it: “Would he know enough? Well, you know, against the KPI, did you grow enrolments? How many judgements did you improve? Or in an inspection you know, staff retention, whatever it is”. These enrolment, inspection and retention aspects also contain information that is of interest to the Head Office from a business perspective.

Donald describes his experience with a HR director: “We’ve got a HR guy on the board. An amazing guy”. He describes the nature of his evaluation that is conducted by the HR director:

> “He's just introduced a brand-new appraisal system for me, and he's very excited about it. In the past the principal's evaluation was done very scantily and I’ve got a pretty rigorous one now in front of me on my laptop. It’s 21 pages long”.

Donald is pleased that the HR director has a tangible and bespoke procedure for evaluating him.

For his upcoming inspection, Sam completes a self-evaluation form (SEF). This completed document is uploaded by Sam to a software system so that it can be shared with the DoE and the Head Office: "I send the SEF over to her so that she can go over it". The data included in the SEF is subject to scrutiny by the DoE and others at the Head Office.

5.8.2 *Being evaluated by an external adviser*

External advisers, or consultants, are used widely throughout England to consult with schools and offer objective support to the governing board and to the principal (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019). They are required to interpret data for governing boards. Sometimes governing boards may not have the required skillset to question, support and challenge the principal. Some of the BSO principals in this study undergo evaluations by external consultants. However, this study also finds that some BSO principals undergo external evaluations to assess their suitability to join school membership associations.

Phil initiates his own evaluation by engaging an external consultant as he wishes to remain as close as possible to the system of headteacher performance management that is conducted in England. As part of the evaluation process, Phil "underwent a self-evaluation". The external evaluator spends "three working days" at the school. The process also consisted of surveys that were given to the staff, to the students and to the governors. At the end of the process, the formal written report is "private and confidential". According to Phil, it is "very positive" and provides him with affirmation. His perception is that it is a good evaluation that is useful to him.

Mark says that his external evaluator is a "hugely experienced man". Mark feels confident in the evaluator's ability: "He knew the context. He was a good person to do it". Mark feels reassured by the time and the care that the evaluator brings to the process of the evaluation:

> "He was very thorough, and talked to a large range of people including senior colleagues, teachers, parents and pupils over a course of several days in the school and had quite long sessions with me, how I managed people, how I led them".

Mark had a positive experience with the external evaluator and believes that the process was useful to him.

Jenny is also evaluated by an external consultant. Jenny knows the consultant personally: “I did a self-evaluation and it was essentially a 360. There were questionnaires sent out to parents and staff. It was very thorough”. Jenny has a good understanding of the process because it is not her first time to be externally evaluated. However, she appears to find the process tedious: “The questionnaires were quite (pause) were a bit like the inspection questionnaire. They were quite bland you know”. Jenny appears to require more from the questionnaires: “They weren't about me as an individual, they were about the job that I was doing. And then [named person] brought all of that together. He assimilated it”. Jenny is asked what she thought of the process and she replies: “I have to say at one point when the questionnaires were being put together it felt like an inspection process”. When the evaluation is completed, Jenny describes what happens: “He had a meeting with the chairman and then he delivered you know the final outcomes of that with some targets obviously and also some really positive feedback”. Receiving affirmative feedback is important to Jenny even though the process felt like a school inspection.

Despite Jenny’s perception that the evaluation lacked focus on her as an individual, she feels that legitimacy is an important element in the evaluation process. She attempts to describe what this legitimacy means based on her perception of the external consultant: “Because he's so active in [named association], he does know the international community really well. And he knows, you know, what good looks like and what excellent looks like and I think that's really important”. Jenny believes that it is the consultant that brings legitimacy to the evaluation process. It is important to her that the evaluator impresses her governing board: “And perhaps more importantly, he has the respect of our Board”. Jenny believes that this consultant has the board’s respect: “So, he was giving the right kind of messages to them”. Jenny also believes that the governing board might not have approved this external evaluator if his credentials were not respectable: “If we had someone who was less well known and had less stature, I think they might not have accepted it in quite the same way that they did quite frankly”. The evidence clearly indicates that the act of paying for and accepting the credentials of the evaluator confirms that the board welcomes the evaluation process as a legitimate exercise. The evidence indicates that the evaluation has been a positive experience for Jenny even though she felt that it was more about the school than about her.

Jenny's next evaluation will be carried out by a different evaluator whom she also knows personally. She fully expects to be briefed and included in how he will conduct the evaluation: "He may well use structures that they use in [named association] or HMC. I'll have a conversation with him about that when he's over here next in October". The "structures" to which Jenny refers are criteria that associations, like the HMC, use when assessing the principal's suitability to join their association (HMC, 2020). School principals, including BSO principals, undergo external evaluations to assess their suitability to join school membership associations. A principal must be part of a membership association before the school can become an accredited BSO (ISC, 2020). The criteria that must be met in order for a principal to join a membership association, like the HMC, includes a commitment to professional development, a commitment to the association's aims and objectives as well as various criteria that apply to the school. The quality of the governance of the school is a key requirement for membership associations (COBIS, 2020; FOBISSEA, 2020; HMC, 2020). Associations, like the HMC, scrutinise the principal's contract of employment and the final decision for membership is at the discretion of the association (HMC, 2020). Association committee members sometimes visit the school to assess a principal's suitability to join (BSME, 2020). The evaluators of a principal's suitability to join an association are described by Mark: "I mean there are some people on the circuit in the UK particularly in HMC who kind of retired as heads and they offer themselves up as people who will do this". Former members of associations sometimes evaluate the principal's suitability to join an association.

In her interview, it is put to Jenny that there might be a difference between a headteacher's evaluation to join a membership association and an external evaluation of their role as school leader. Jenny gives her perception of how a headteacher's suitability is evaluated in order to join an association, such as the HMC: "It's basically who you know and that's all it is. You just have to be nominated by someone who's already in the club. It's horrendous really when you think about it. But you know it's a badge of respect for our schools". This evidence helps to confirm that evaluating a principal to join a membership association, such as the HMC, is different to evaluating a principal's effectiveness in their role as discussed in the literature review (Chapter 3) and as outlined earlier in this section by Eddy-Spicer et al. (2019).

The perceived capacity of the external evaluator and their understanding of the BSO context is closely aligned to these BSO principals' expectations of the overall evaluation process. Mark summarises this perception: "I mean to me that was a big factor. I didn't want to be judged by someone who, you know, had a perhaps imperfect knowledge of the sort of school I was running". It is important to these BSO principals that an external evaluator has an understanding of their unique environment and knowing the external evaluator personally, in some cases, adds to this understanding.

5.9 The Instrumentation Used for Evaluating

As we have seen, informal methods of evaluating the BSO principal, such as those conducted by the chairman, are sometimes based on opinions and perceptions. More formal attempts at evaluation using instruments are conducted by the Head Office and by external evaluators.

In terms of the instrumentation used for evaluating BSO principals in this study, the analysis shows that instruments such as KPIs, 360-degree evaluations, questionnaires and surveys are used to evaluate these BSO principals. It emerges in the data analysis that KPIs are linked to specific quantifiable targets. They are also sometimes used to create more wide-ranging aspirational targets. Sometimes questionnaires are used for feedback, while 360-degree evaluations appear to be regularly used by external evaluators.

5.10 Key Performance Indicators

There are many aspects to measuring performance using indicators. Performance indicators might make knowledge transparent and measurable, but they might also constrain the ability of others to exercise judgement (Porter, 2020). The use of KPIs shifts the power of setting priorities to those who control the indicators (Franceschini, Galetto, & Maisano, 2019). KPIs sometimes legitimise specific policies and "facilitate the use of financial rewards and punishments in order to manipulate institutional behaviour" (p. 198).

In the themes emerging during the data analysis for this study, KPIs are sometimes contextually adjusted by the principals themselves. The KPIs are also monitored sometimes by using specialised software. The evidence shows that specific types of KPIs include those concerned with student retention and student admissions, staff retention, student results and inspection outcomes. Sometimes,

KPIs are used for compliance or for evaluating rewards and, sometimes, they are used for more broad ranging aspirational targets.

5.10.1 *Contextualising KPIs*

Some of the principals in this study did not wish to share their KPI documentation with this researcher. Rebecca feels that her KPIs are easily tracked back to her school: "You were sworn to secrecy". She feels that it is a breach of confidentiality to divulge KPI formats. Sam's KPI documents are online and accessed by using a password: "You need the password". These online KPI documents hold financial and quantitative information about the school.

Karen states bluntly: "I'll show it to you, but you can't use it.". Karen displays a comprehensive range of self-evaluation type statements on her laptop. The statements are set out to receive Likert-type scale responses. The responses to the statements are quantified to give an overall result. Karen explains how the previous year's KPIs were evaluated: "One meant succeeded, two meant you'd met and three meant met in part, and four meant not met". The total result of the quantified responses is designed to inform the Head Office how well Karen is meeting her KPIs. The accumulated result then places Karen in another category that in some respects resembles BSO inspection grades:" One was outstanding. Two was very good". The system is set up to reflect that if Karen has an average of one, then Karen is an outstanding principal. She perceives that this way of measuring her is standard and that the process comes from England: "I would assume Ofsted or something, or their system from back home". She believes that the use and format of the KPIs that she has received are standard practice in England.

Sometimes the KPIs reflect aspects of the school that can be specifically quantified. In the survey, 72.5% (n=15) of the participants agree that the way they are evaluated is very much linked to the operations and management of the school, more so than pedagogical leadership. Audrey describes how her KPIs are contextually quantified: "We're all different size schools. We have to tweak them to our school". She is required to adjust the KPIs to the context of her school: "This year we've been set the KPIs by head office. The KPIs will be things like performance of children in core subjects, finance and making a bit of profit blah blah blah". All of these KPIs can be quantified.

Some of Audrey's KPIs are given in percentages. If she has a certain number of students registered,

then she is considered 100% full: “So, for instance one of the KPIs is that I will be 100 percent full”. Anything less than having the school at 100% of capacity affects Audrey’s overall evaluation.

Sam has a similar system that he describes as a “live document”, which is a record that he regularly updates to reflect the school’s most up-to-date information.

5.10.2 *Monitoring KPIs*

For some principals in this study, checking in against KPIs can be frequent. Sometimes, there are consequences for those who do not meet their KPIs. Rebecca gives an insight into what happens to a principal in her school group who does not meet their KPIs regularly: “There’s no lessons learned. We just moved the person on”. In this instance, the principal was dismissed. It appears from this example that whether or not they are met, KPIs create results.

Specific software is sometimes used to track KPIs and other performance data. Audrey is unsure how the software works: “So somehow it's all tracked across”. However, she realises that it is monitored. Rebecca and Sam have more coherent views about how their respective systems work. They upload the information to the software system that is accessed by their respective Head Offices. Rebecca explains: “You have regular check-ins against a sort of a document where you’re constantly reviewing and checking things out”. The data monitoring keeps Rebecca in line with the compliance requirements of the owning company: “So, that was all set and agreed in advance and then tracked”. Rebecca has experienced the same format in other schools where KPIs are closely aligned to a handful of distinct areas: “And that is just when I moved to this new place. Now I find that it's been done here as well. So, it's quite corporate”. Rebecca gathers the evidence and appears happy with how the monitoring is conducted. On the other hand, Sam realises that his school’s performance needs to improve: “It’s quite an amount of stress with this stuff”. Constantly checking in and updating a software monitoring system puts pressure on Sam.

Karen’s progress is also monitored several times during the academic year: “We have a performance management dash appraisal annually with a mid-year check-up and end of the year check-up”. The frequency of the accountability format is sometimes stressful for Karen, but she tries to relieve the pressure by maintaining her good humour: “There is so much shit thrown at you that you need have

that sense of fun sometimes and just carry on (laughs)". This comment is also an indicator of Karen's experience in dealing with the pressures of the role.

Donald's perception of KPIs is that if one concentrates on the process, then the outcomes will be achieved: "I think if you focus on the processes, then the results will always take care of themselves". He feels that there are many aspects to the use of KPIs: "I mean I guess I think its perception isn't it. Whether it's an approval rating or not". Donald understands that there are different ways of interpreting and using KPIs. It is evident that he does not have the same intense monitoring as the others. The evidence here shows that regular monitoring of the KPIs maintains the focus of these BSO principals towards the requirements of the owning company.

5.10.3 *Student retention and student admission as a KPI*

As globally mobile expatriates, the families of some BSO students move countries or cities. Families, sometimes, move to another school because of some dissatisfaction with their current school. KPIs have been designed for some principals in this study regarding the retention of registered students. These principals are also given new student admission targets as a KPI.

The enrolment of new students and the retention of registered students at Karen's school is a percentage of her overall evaluation: "20 per cent about admissions and retention of students". Karen is strongly motivated by her company to grow enrolments and retain students: "That's money, isn't it? Bums on seats". There are financial implications for any change in the number of registered students. The retention of registered students is also one of Audrey's KPIs: "Retention of students is one of the KPIs". Audrey believes that one of the most difficult KPIs to manage is retaining registered students and keeping the school full: "What's the hardest? Keeping the school full.". The retention target for registered students at Audrey's school is based on a percentage of students who stay registered at the school. If students move school during the academic year, then Audrey's KPI is affected.

Sam is given a student admission target as a KPI: "The targets were set against enrolment. So, it's about growing enrolments". Growing enrolments in Sam's school entails registering as many students as possible until the school is full.

The admission and retention of students is a serious topic for Rebecca. If a family decides to move a student from her school, she examines all the possible reasons:

> "You take it personally, if you lose a family. If you've got a retention issue or you know there's a particular year group where there's an issue with re-enrolment and you're trying to unpick what the quality issues were or your relationship issues and you know, I'd be very hands on like that. Trying to work it out and make sure you know that these people are getting value for their money and the quality is right".

If a family leaves her school, then Rebecca will investigate the reasons thoroughly: "I follow it up personally, everyone who leaves you know". The evidence shows that one of the reasons that principals, such as Rebecca, are motivated to grow student enrolments and retain registered students is because it directly affects her KPI for retaining students.

5.10.4 *Staff retention as a KPI*

In the survey, 92% (n=22) of the participants agree that the way they are evaluated is very much linked to the management and retention of staff. A challenge for some BSO principals is to reduce staff turnover to ensure staff continuity. There are recruitment and end-of-contract gratuity costs for the BSO when staff join and leave the school. Online platforms, such as TES (Tes, 2021), are places where teacher recruitment agencies advertise teaching positions in BSOs. These recruitment agencies are paid by schools for sourcing teachers. Online platforms sometimes highlight end-of-contract gratuities that schools offer to teachers who stay at their schools for mutually agreed contracted periods.

Retaining staff is one of Rebecca's core KPIs: "Staff retention, that was our fourth one". There are various perspectives on what retention means, but Karen's KPI for staff retention is quite specific: "My KPI is to maintain staff retention rates of 70 percent". Karen is required to retain 70% of her staff on an annual basis to meet her KPI.

Audrey understands that there are many perspectives to retaining staff. Teachers may move from the school to a position that pays a higher salary or may move away for family reasons:

> “If you'd had stayed in [the region] and you are paid more, I’m not going to say to you don’t do it. Why would I? Why would a staff member stay with me if they can get more money elsewhere in [the region] and still have a lovely job? If they moved to a promotion, I wouldn't ever begrudge that. I think if I can't offer it, I think they should go with my blessing. One of mine that I know are a couple who had a baby. She's wants that they go back and spend some time with their family in England. All of those I would say they're not leaving because they're leaving the school. They’re leaving because of their family and life”.

The evidence presented here clearly indicates that Audrey believes that she needs to be circumspect about staff retention, despite the requirement to fulfil a KPI that affects her overall evaluation. Staff retention is an aspect that informs the evaluation of the BSO principal.

5.10.5 *Student performance as a KPI*

In the survey, 71% (n=17) of the participants agree that the way they are evaluated is very much linked to the performance of the school. A total of 50% (n=12) of the participants in the survey agree that the way they are evaluated is very much linked to pedagogical instruction in the school, more so than operations and management. These results also indicate that during this research there are some BSO principals who are involved in operations more so than pedagogical management.

In Audrey, Karen and Rebecca’s schools, student attainment is expected to increase year on year to show progress. In their schools, student attainment is the summative testing of student performance and attainment is expected to be at least in line with what would be expected of average standardised student data outcomes in England.

Audrey describes some of the expectations about this information: “Data will be that we have to be at least in line and increased by X, and then we fill in the detail on those KPI documents”. Audrey’s student attainment data is also documented in her school self-evaluation documents that are scrutinised during BSO inspections.

Karen describes how she breaks down the data targets in a subject area: “So writing is our focus area and we said everyone's got to make at least 5 percent attainment on writing”. In Karen’s school, attainment in writing is assessed by a teacher assessment model where the teacher decides on the student’s grade. Karen checks in on the school’s software system regularly to see if all the student data

is on track: “You review it in March. You review it in June. Well, secondary in September obviously because they have to wait for their exam results”. Student attainment data is an important part of Karen’s evaluation and this is one of the reasons why she reviews it regularly.

Rebecca describes her school’s expectations regarding student attainment outcomes: “That's what they want. Exam outcomes, inspection outcomes and numbers”. Rebecca keeps her KPIs for student attainment data in her mind when she is recruiting staff: “You've got to find like-minded people who are going to be relentless. And you know no sense of complacency, particularly about the outcomes. I mean that's full on”. Rebecca expects her teaching staff to consistently improve student attainment. Like Audrey and Karen, Rebecca believes that improving student performance is reflected in student performance data consistently tracking upwards to attain higher attainment levels.

Donald is not comfortable with the challenges in keeping student attainment outcomes at a perceived respectable level:

> “I mean it’s always been my bugbear of mine with teachers or heads of departments where you know you have to have a certain amount of A* or As, which was based on very little evidence. And it didn't make sense”.

He tries to direct his evaluation away from examining student performance data and tries to avoid specific quantifiable targets in this area: “In terms of if you talk about quantitative data, in terms of results of students, we kind of purposefully swayed away from that”. It is evident here that Donald doesn’t receive the same form of quantified KPIs that Audrey, Karen and Rebecca receive with regard to student performance. His perceptions about the effect of student performance on his evaluation is different from the others.

5.10.6 *Inspection outcomes as a KPI*

Some of the BSO principals in this study are given inspection outcomes as a KPI. As well as BSO inspections, schools also undergo local government inspections. One of Audrey’s KPIs is to achieve a better overall judgement for the whole school at the next school inspection: “So, I'm ‘very good’ at the moment so my tweak on my KPI is I will have to be outstanding”. Audrey says that her KPI is adjusted to meet a higher judgement grade at the next inspection: “That I get outstanding at my next [local ministry] inspection”. Audrey doesn’t fear inspections per se, but she has some anxiety about

being evaluated in case the outcome is different to what is expected: “And you know so there's always that, that anyone judging you is horrible isn’t it?”. The result of any inspection is important to Audrey and she hopes to achieve her expected result so that she can meet her KPI.

Karen doesn’t trust the accuracy of the local school inspections. In the academic year following her interview for this research, Karen is taking up a new principalship role in another school that is aspiring to be a BSO. She will stay within the same school group. This new school has recently been judged as ‘acceptable’ by the local inspectorate, but Karen does not believe that this is an accurate judgement. She believes that the judgement should have reflected a lower grade: “But I was like “that's not realistic”. However, based this local inspection outcome, the owning company are now expecting that Karen will achieve a ‘good’ judgement with the school in her next inspection:

> “It's my initial plan, apparently within two years, it’s to reach good. That's my KPI from the Head Office. So, now I'm not saying that's a very tall order but I think [the local ministry] are a bit more gentle on how they mark. Unfortunately, [the local ministry] mark this school as acceptable at the moment but it’s not”.

Karen is challenged to find a way of managing her school owning company’s expectations for this school. She believes that the school should be placed on a lower inspection grade than that which was awarded by the local ministry. The school’s inspection outcome affects the KPI she has received from the company.

Jenny believes that there is a difference between the local school inspection procedures in her region and BSO inspections: “We're regulated by the Ministry of Education here. And they never visit but we have a remote supervision process”. Jenny believes that inspection standards in her region are not as stringent as BSO inspection standards: “The British, obviously the BSO standards are completely different and much more rigorous in many ways”. Jenny’s perception of the local inspection system is that it is less thorough than the BSO inspection system.

Despite these principals’ perceptions of quality in school inspections, there is also another perspective. Audrey believes that local inspections have a greater relevance to local expectations: “That's the one that the yummy mummies all chat about on Facebook”. Sometimes there are different perspectives of quality with regard to inspections.

Based on the evidence presented here, it is clear that inspection outcomes are a reality in the evaluation of BSO principals. The evidence shows that these BSO principals believe that local inspection systems are different to BSO inspection systems. Any inconsistency in inspection outcomes has an influence on these BSO principals' evaluation perceptions.

5.10.7 *Compliance as a KPI*

Some principals in this study receive KPIs in relation to compliance with local legislation. Audrey states that she studied the local legislative requirements: "The first thing I did before I came to this country was read the law, the policies and the guidance for compliance". She describes the challenges that she faces in relation to being compliant with local legislation. These challenges are sometimes created by her school's owning company in an effort to save costs, such as the quality of the students' uniforms or the supply of teaching materials. In her view, some of the KPIs that she has been set do not comply with local requirements: "So, there are certain KPIs that are, because they are so, in my view ridiculous, they are so unachievable". Audrey believes that despite the company's efforts to cut costs she still needs to be compliant with the legislation.

One of Rebecca's core KPIs is to stay within the expectations of the local Ministry of Education, but she has to balance these expectations with her own company's expectations: "It was set around compliance, so making sure we were compliant with the local regulator as well as an internal [named company] audit to do with H.R., finance, etc". Like Audrey, the owning company of Rebecca's school has budgetary requests that may not align with local legislative compliance requests.

In Rebecca's school, there are aspects to compliance that go beyond the local legislature and budgetary concerns. She comments on a tightly managed compliance culture that affects student achievement within her own organisation: "We had KPIs set against academic outcomes so that the external examination results would show an upward trajectory". This type of compliance is different to legislative and budgetary compliance because it is dependent on how the students perform in assessments. Rebecca tries to ensure that her teaching staff know and understand that student achievement targets are expected to be reached in external examinations:

> "If the input, you know, the learning and teaching and the way we deal with students, you know, in terms of the pastoral care and support. If we're ambitious, you know, scaffolding

children to succeed at the top levels, the outcomes will come, yeah?".

Rebecca's uses the term 'input' several times during her interview as a replacement for the term 'teaching and learning'. This suggests an industrial perspective in the underlying mission of the school as if it is involved in the production of goods. This industrial view is questioned by this researcher during her interview, reflecting a perspective that all children learn differently. Rebecca acknowledges this perspective, but remains focused:

> "You're trying to show that actually the input is resulting in better outcomes, year on year, can it? Not always, no. But I take that point in terms of the cohorts and that, but you can look to be doing a better job year on year, can't you?"

This concentration on student achievement keeps Rebecca focused on an overall judgement of outstanding at the next school inspection. Continuous improvement appears to reflect that the majority of students in her school gain higher assessment results each year. This view is shared by her school's owning company who requires an "upward trajectory" in external examinations each year. Rebecca is expected to be compliant in order to align with her employer's expectations: "I mean certainly in [named company], goodness me, you know and you do, you did what you were told". Rebecca is expected to ensure that externally examined student achievement improves on an annual basis.

5.10.8 *KPIs for evaluating rewards*

The KPIs for some BSO principals in this study are a mechanism for assessing if they should receive a reward. The performance of some of these BSO principals, such as Karen, is measured by comparing their performance against the KPIs that they have been set by the school ownership: "We measure ourselves against our targets". The data generated by meeting, or not meeting, the KPIs is assessed: "Then we put it through to HQ, and HQ decide what we're worth. It's our little bonus". If Karen's performance data achieves what is expected in her KPIs, then she will receive a reward.

Performance data is also important to Rebecca as she believes that KPIs is a form of assessment for a financial reward. She perceives that the same reward system operates in different BSOs: "In a not-for-profit and in a for-profit, monetary gain is linked to those KPIs". She understands that successfully meeting the KPIs is linked to a financial bonus being paid to her.

However, if KPIs are not fully met, then Rebecca describes how a performance reward might be graded from her perspective: “In [named company] it was a kind of a plus plus, depending on how far over the line you were at different things”. Rebecca is saying that there are gradations of meeting the KPIs in her school.

In Audrey’s school, the KPI document is a method for evaluating her performance. She understands that this is a method for justifying her bonus:” All I can see this KPI document being is a document that tells me that I may or may not get a bonus”. If she achieves her targets, then she is paid a bonus. The evidence here suggests that the notion of a monetary reward, or a bonus, is not always a straight forward issue. If the KPIs are not met entirely, then a graded system ensures that at least some of the principal’s hard work is rewarded.

5.10.9 *KPIs as an aspiration*

Some principals in this study have KPIs that are more generalised and aspirational. William’s company set KPIs for him but it does not monitor them: “They have never been brought out for scrutiny”. William is not assessed by comparing his performance to these KPIs.

The perspective on Charles’ performance is based on how he has managed the financial aspects of his school, which is losing money: “Fees are based on performance management and everything is treated as a business by the school”. Charles perceives that if he is underperforming in his role, then this would reflect in the willingness of families to pay tuition fees for their child to attend the school. He was requested by the board of governors to draw up his own targets and his “own set of objectives”. He has tried to fulfil this request: “It’s just got objectives in there with room for numbers but there are no numbers on it and there are three main headings. It’s a very raw document”. What Charles means is that he has not completed the written exercise of creating his own objectives for the school. The document that he has to complete is still in draft form and it appears to be in the form of a SEF. In terms of managing student performance, Charles “line manages” the headteachers in different parts of the school. He perceives that the student attainment in the school is not very high: “They would have outstanding exams every year if they expelled half the kids”. However, the immediate priorities for

Charles are not pedagogical. His immediate priorities appear to be concerned with the financial aspects of running the school.

Donald's HR director creates KPIs for him that appear quite generalised. These KPIs are produced in a document that contains targets for many aspects of the school: "He has taken different elements whether it's teaching and learning, HR, community service and then he's provided targets for each of those with obviously KPIs and means of verification and all of that". These KPIs appear to be general statements and aspirations, and they do not appear to be as quantifiable as the KPIs that have previously been evidenced in this study. Donald describes his KPIs as: "just a measurement of performance". Donald's KPI document is composed of statements: "I mean it's got my targets based around different areas of the school". Here the data indicates that how these KPIs are interpreted might reflect on how well this BSO principal gets along with his employers.

5.11 The Use of Other Instruments

Other instruments are used to evaluate the BSO principals in this study. Instruments such as 360-degree assessments are used to evaluate performance, while locally produced surveys and questionnaires are used to gain feedback.

5.11.1 *360 evaluations*

A 360-degree evaluation is a specific instrument that uses evidence-based feedback from people, including teachers and other stakeholders, who work with the principal (Youngs et al., 2020). However, there is only limited research available on the impact of 360-degree evaluation system. In this study, Ian perceives that he underwent a comprehensive 360-degree evaluation. Ian describes the 360-degree evaluation that is organised by an external management consultancy company:

> "It came from a management company, a company that did appraisals and it did a lot of consultancy work for businesses and because we were a school as part of the business, we worked closely with them and they worked with the HR department. I had a 360, a very business-like one. No questions on teaching and learning. No questions about leading the team".

It is clear from this evidence that the evaluation may not have been directed at the educational aspects of Ian's role. He describes the structure of this evaluation: "In terms of the 360 there was 62 questions and those 62 questions were all part of four areas". Ian felt that he was able to get his "targets" from the consultancy company's evaluation results. Ian's perception of how the data is used and what it reflects indicates that Ian does not know how to interpret the data from this 360-degree evaluation. Jenny describes the system that was used to assess her by an external evaluator: "I did a self-evaluation and it was essentially a 360. There were questionnaires sent out to parents and staff. It was very thorough". Jenny believes that the type of evidence gathering used by the consultant in this evaluation is a little excessive: "You know the idea of going through and sending out a questionnaire to everyone in the school seemed a bit over the top". Jenny doesn't like the public nature of the way information is gathered: "I think maybe there was too many people consulted and it all felt quite public as a result". This evidence clearly indicates that she finds the process tiresome due to the number of people involved and the methodology used to conduct the survey. However, she likes to see the survey result as it "comes in" and appears to find some value in that aspect. When she examines the survey result, it appears to confirm her expectations: "When we were getting them it was really positive". Jenny is content that the survey results are positive.

Jenny perceives that the evaluation could have been carried out differently: "I think we could have gotten exactly the same outcome with far fewer people". This confirms how laborious the process is for her. However, it also confirms her expectations that the outcome was going to be positive and, therefore, the methodological process could have been shortened.

5.11.2 *The use of surveys and questionnaires*

Surveys are valuable in obtaining a panoramic view to provide perspectives surrounding the school environment and its principal (Brown-Sims, 2010; Davis et al., 2011; Sun & Youngs, 2009). In the survey for this study, 70% (n=17) of the participants feel that the way they are evaluated is very much linked to the performance of the school.

In a BSO evaluation, the inspection team sometimes use surveys and questionnaires. They are given to stakeholders, such as parents and students, to provide evidence for the inspection. In Audrey's BSO inspection, the visiting inspectors do not use their own questionnaires. They examine some surveys

that are already taken locally: “I think they just took the school and the ministry surveys.” These BSO inspectors do not appear to use surveys specifically designed for BSO inspections. Arguably, this has an effect on the outcome of the inspection.

Audrey believes that survey fatigue can set in when seeking feedback from parents: “I don't give my parents any more surveys”. Audrey is reluctant to use too many surveys as she feels that parents are tired of answering survey questions.

Ian gives his staff a survey. He designs and distributes the survey himself. He believes that his personal management of the process has influenced the way staff answered the survey. However, Ian still manages to find value in the exercise:

> “But then again it's all about perceptions. So, my surprise is, I didn't know that that's what the teachers thought. But now I do and I think “OK fair enough”, I have to think what can I do to address that”.

Ian has a relatively large staff and he takes feedback from his staff seriously. In another perspective, Jenny feels that the external evaluator who conducted her evaluation distributed too many questionnaires. She believes that he could have used fewer questionnaires and received the same result. However, Donald favours getting feedback from lots of different people:

> “Obviously you are going to get anomalies and if you are genuinely getting feedback from all different members of the community then you are going to get a more rounded view of the work of the principal rather than just you know just looking at your immediate people that we line manage”.

From this evidence, it is clear that Donald feels that it is important to get as wide a perspective as possible from members of the school community when reviewing the work of the principal.

Self-evaluation questionnaires are given to some of the BSO principals in this study as part of their evaluation. Self-evaluation is often used in principal evaluations (Condon & Clifford, 2012; Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019; MacBeath, 2006). Phil “underwent a self-evaluation”. It is part of a suite of questionnaires that is used by the external evaluator. Other questionnaires in this suite include a staff survey, a student survey and a governor survey. Phil states that: “The surveys were a mixed-bag and nothing of huge significance existed there”. The external evaluator has a protocol in place to help

decide on those aspects of the feedback that are to be discussed with Phil: “If there were negative responses, then that aspect was discussed with me”. When the evaluator writes his final report, it is presented with all the areas of evidence to the chairman of Phil’s governing board.

Mark describes a self-evaluation questionnaire that was conducted on him by an external evaluator: “In fact, he made a questionnaire, a self-assessment which I had to complete before he got there”. Mark believes that the external evaluator designed the questionnaire himself: “He just made it up himself. He was a very experienced head so it's possible he may have had that done on him in the past”. Mark trusts the experience of the external evaluator in administering the self-assessment questionnaire.

The data presented here indicates that there are various ways that surveys are used and designed. The evidence shows that there isn’t a universal approach to surveys used by BSO inspectors or external consultants. There are different ways that surveys are designed and used among external advisors. The evidence also shows that there are a range of perspectives regarding the benefit and value of the surveys. A perception of the comparatively low value placed on surveys may arguably have been reflected in the 33% return received by this research when surveying BSO principals.

5.12 The Capacity for Evaluating

In this section there are three themes – the terminology used, the capacity of the evaluator and the capacity of the BSO principals in this study to be evaluated. Respect and legitimacy in the evaluation process is relevant with respect to perceptions of the evaluator abilities. The capacity of the principal is highlighted in aspects such as experience, confidence, timing and the ability to plan for no surprises. The principals also input directly into their own evaluations. The evidence clearly indicates that all of these themes make important contributions to the evaluation of the BSO principals in this study.

5.12.1 *Terminology*

Due to legal perspectives on the term ‘appraisal’ in England (Fletcher & Williams, 2016), the concept of evaluating principals became ‘performance management’ (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019). In considering the terminology around the wider concept of appraisal, Hislop (2013) argues that genuine improvement could be hindered when the terms used could arguably become obstacles to “the

potential benefits of having a more formalised professional appraisal culture in schools" (p. 18). Following the pilot survey for this study, the term 'appraisal' is substituted with the term 'evaluation' – a broader term. Some BSO principals in the study recognise different terms including the term 'performance management', which is used widely in the England. However, the term 'performance management' has not been a feature of this study. The range of terms that principals in this study use include "management appraisal" (Audrey, William), "performance management" (Karen), "appraisal", "self-evaluation" (Mark, Donald, Jenny, James, Charles and Phil), "performance review" (Ian), and "interim review" and "check in" (Rebecca and Sam). Throughout this study, the term 'evaluation' is used in the interest of coherence and that does not preclude the BSO principals in the study from using whatever term they feel is the most comfortable.

5.12.2 *Perceptions of the abilities of the evaluator*

There are a wide variety of perspectives from which the principals in this study might be evaluated. In the survey, 75% (n=18) of the participants agreed that they knew when their evaluation would take place, and 75% (n=18) agreed that the way they are evaluated is not a source of stress. The data from these results indicates that evaluations are scheduled and they are not expected to offer any sudden changes or surprises.

However, Mark believes that there is pressure in being evaluated: "It is quite stressful because you know a lot depends on how good you are at selling the school". This perspective indicates a reality that an important aspect in relation to how these BSO principals are evaluated is interwoven with the performance of the school. Mark's evaluation is conducted by an external evaluator which he describes as "a current head". The fact that the evaluator is a practising principal is relevant for Mark. He feels that his respect for the process might not be as high if it was conducted by someone from outside the teaching profession: "I'd need to have an element of respect and respect for them, I think". He also believes that respect for the evaluator, as an individual, is important.

Jenny believes that the evaluator should be thorough: "Then he came here for a couple of days, talking to people, had small groups, talked to people I worked with closely". This description clearly indicates that spending time and engaging with people at her school legitimises the evaluation process for Jenny.

Audrey's argues that the evaluator should have a proven track record and that this aspect in itself produces confidence in the process: "I think if you're judging me you need to know. You need to walk the walk. You need to have walked that walk without a doubt". Despite the fact that KPIs play a large part in her evaluation, she feels that the evaluator's abilities to assess her should come from their experience: "As long as the outstanding is the same.". She also expects that whoever evaluates her is able to recognise high performance.

However, Rebecca doesn't appear to have the same opinion in terms of the skillset of the evaluator. She doesn't believe that specific training in schools is necessary in order to evaluate the principal: "I mean there was a whole virtual platform where you were to upload your progress and your evidence from your check-ins and all of that". She believes that her HR director is capable of making judgements about her KPI attainments: "He has some measurement". The evaluation by her HR director is a transactional arrangement that generally recommends the approval of her financial bonus. Charles is not evaluated in a formal way. He is subject to the opinions of people who are arguably not trained in the evaluation of principals: "Some of these are very senior CEOs, legal people". The senior nature of his governing board alleviates any concerns Charles might have about their ability to evaluate him. He believes they have the capacity to evaluate his performance.

Donald is enthusiastic about the capabilities of the person who is evaluating him: "His specialty is appraisals". The perception that his evaluator has a special skill legitimises the process for Donald. The evidence here indicates that the principals in this study have perceptions of legitimacy and respect that are linked to their evaluator. They are also subject to the perceptions and the personal experiences of those who are charged with evaluating them. The evidence also indicates that these BSO principals are required to be adaptable to different evaluators who have different capacities to evaluate. The data indicates that the capacity of the evaluator is dependent on the context.

5.12.3 *The capacity of the principal for the evaluation*

The capacity of these BSO principals to take part in an evaluation has many perspectives. Evaluation experience, confidence, planning for no surprises and retaining control over the context are all aspects that emerge as themes in this research.

Mark believes that the evaluator needs to be experienced enough to challenge a principal: “You would be able to run rings round the person appraising you”. Mark’s perspective is based on his experience as a principal. However, Audrey feels that an evaluation is a challenge for her: “There's always a fear that you might not be where you think you are”. Audrey believes that her evaluation and the evaluation of the school are interlinked, and she takes this aspect personally: “Do I take it personally? I do take it personally? I do take it home with me, yeah, of course I do”. She believes that she is viewed as the personification of the school: “Does it define you? I think probably yes it does. I think it probably does. I think also it's a stick to hit you with. It’s a stick to beat you”. Audrey believes the result of a school inspection reflects on the principal.

Rebecca concurs with Audrey’s perspective that the performance of the school affects the principal: “I mean it is very personal. You know we make personal sacrifices don’t we to do the jobs that we do. So, I think a principal that says it wouldn't affect them, I think they would, I'd like to meet them. But yes, it does affect you personally.”. Rebecca takes assessments of the school’s performance personally.

Karen also believes that her performance is reflected in the school performance: “I defy someone to tell me I haven’t made an impact, that I’m not going to enrich school life”. She portrays some self-deprecation and a lower self-perception than might be at first expected: “My team think I'm better than I think I am (laughs)”. Karen feels that she needs to defend the school performance as it reflects her performance: “Of course, at times you're going to be defensive”. Karen believes that her evaluation and the school’s performance are closely linked.

Donald didn’t expect to encounter any unexpected revelations in his evaluation: “Were there surprises? No not, not really”. This evidence indicates that Donald is comfortable in his role and retains some control over his environment. Jenny also has a strong sense of the parameters of her role: “I’m involved in all the broad strategic decisions in the school but I have people who are responsible for all of those areas, I can't be making decisions about the day to day”. This comment emphasises Jenny’s perception of her own work, but also her perception of the hierarchical staffing structures in the school. She is involved in the strategic decisions in the school and this aspect reflects the control she has over her environment. Jenny’s seniority also influences her evaluation understandings. She is

sanguine about her evaluation: “They know I am who I am and I’ve been doing it for quite a long time it's kind of hard to change that”. This data indicates that Jenny doesn’t expect any surprises in her evaluation and she is able to continue to control the environment.

These BSO principals display an ability to control the context of their evaluations. In many respects, this is a reflection of their experience. They are confident in their own abilities and appear to take control of situations. This aspect is also portrayed in the BSO principal’s ability to input directly into their own evaluation and influence the direction of the evaluation.

5.12.4 *The influence of BSO principals over evaluations*

The influence of the BSO principals in this study over their evaluations emerges in the data analysis. Principals have time to influence evaluations whether they are conducted by BSO inspections, conducted by external evaluators or conducted by using KPIs.

Schools are allowed to choose their BSO inspection teams from the DfE list of approved providers. BSO inspection providers, such as the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), provide a framework for schools that outlines their inspection process (ISI, 2018). Inspection teams, such as those from ISI, need to be scheduled at least “three months in advance” of the school inspection (p. 6). Details of the inspection team are provided to the school and ISI “contacts the school to make preliminary arrangements and to agree how and when required documentation should be transferred” to the reporting inspectors (p. 6). Initial documentation provided to the reporting inspectors includes the submission of a self-evaluation form, or SEF. The principal signs the completed SEF and it is submitted to the inspection team. The scheduling of the inspection team’s arrival impacts the school. The logistical arrangements for the arrival of BSO inspectors are, therefore, known to BSO principals giving them prior knowledge of the timing of their arrival.

In terms of her evaluation by an external adviser, Jenny also has prior knowledge of who is conducting the evaluation: “It wasn't like he was just foisted on me”. This individual is an executive from one of the member associations whom she knows personally: “I knew [named person] already and I suggested him. I had been asked to make a suggestion about who it should be”. According to this researcher’s field notes, Jenny arranges the evaluator’s trip from London to her school: “I was quite happy that he had the knowledge and skills to be able to do it”. It is important to Jenny that a

suitable person is chosen to evaluate her, and that she has an input into the choice and the scheduling of the evaluator.

Phil initiates his own evaluation and gains approval from his governing board to proceed with finding an evaluator to conduct it. He seeks a recommendation from another principal: “[Named person] gave me the contact”. Field notes record that Phil arranges for this external evaluator to fly directly from England to conduct his evaluation.

Rebecca does not choose the HR director who carries out her evaluation. Her evaluation is based on whether she meets her KPIs. Rebecca feels that she must do whatever is asked of her in terms of meeting her KPIs: “You've got to kind of toe the line to an extent, don’t you? To make sure that you are, you know, that you are ticking the boxes”. By carefully carrying out what is requested of her, and by “ticking the boxes” to meet her KPIs, Rebecca ensures that her evaluation meets the expectations of the HR director. Achieving their KPIs is very relevant for some of the principals in this study.

Sam is keen to have his “student progress data” reflect the expectations of his KPI documents. One of the KPI documents is a SEF that will outline student performance data showing whether Sam’s KPIs are on target: “The student data needs to match the self-evaluation documentation”. The self-evaluation documents reflect Sam’s opinion of student progress and the data in the SEF documents is required to match the expected student progress. If the SEF data doesn’t match with the expected student progress data, then Sam is perceived to either over-estimate or under-estimate student progress in his self-evaluation document. In the previous BSO inspection report for Sam’s school, the visiting inspectors commented on the “accurate analysis of assessment information”. The inspectors noted their observations in the published report: “Currently, this is not sufficient to identify priorities for improvement or strengths in teaching and learning”. This is one reason why Sam is concerned that the SEF data needs to match the expected student progress data. All of this data forms part of Sam’s eventual evaluation.

Karen describes how she can manipulate underlying student progress data to suit the KPI result she wants to accomplish. She tries to ensure that the student progress data reflects what is expected in her KPI: “You got to meet it or beat it by a minimum 5 percent”. Karen finds ways to articulate academic progress whenever she needs to report student data: “You always try to spin it positively, don't you?”.

This researcher noted in field notes that the use of words like ‘spin’ portrays how Karen’s endeavours can be expressed to create a perception of extent or magnitude.

Karen describes a time when her efforts to meet her KPI do not immediately appear to go to plan. Student progress data that is presented to Karen by one of her Deputy Headteachers does not match the expected results. Karen describes how the information that she is given reflects that student progress has regressed, instead of making progress. Karen’s arranges for the Deputy Headteacher to meet with the student data manager in order to review the data again. In Karen’s school, the student data manager is a person who monitors student progress by using specific software:

> “Year One were giving us some data in February, midyear data and anyway she missed, or something had gone wrong, like they’d really regressed and I just felt “right stop!” you know and it's quite frightening I think because some of the people in that room had never been in one of these meetings and I just went “can everyone just stop! Let's look at the data. We’re going back” and then she was quite flustered and I went “I am not showing this data to [named person], to my director. I'm not showing this to [named person] who is gonna want to know where we are going. What we're unpicking is, I’m going to stop this meeting, I’m going to put her in the room with my little data man, right? Unpick this. What is going on? We've got 24 hours to sort this out. We've got now six weeks March and May, April, May to get these figures back up. What was more in my head was that [named person] had to feed it to the Director of Education, that we’d regressed in Year One”.

In this description, it is evident that student regression is not helpful in terms of Karen meeting her KPIs. Using the software, the Deputy Headteacher and the student data manager manipulate the progress data to show that student progress is improving. The Deputy Headteacher and the student data manager return to meet Karen with more positive results. Karen’s expression that some people in the room had never been to “one of those meetings” indicates that Karen has had similar experiences previously. This new data is reported to the DoE. Karen ensures that some of the data that is used to measure her KPI for student progress is changed to reflect a better outcome. Student progress data is quantified and is a large part of Karen’s evaluation. This evidence clearly indicates that these BSO principals have influence over evaluations that directly affect them.

5.12.5 *Seeking understanding in evaluations*

The BSO principals in this study seek understanding and reassurance regarding their evaluations. They believe that their job is unique and that the role is not easily understood. However, there is also an aspect to seeking understanding that might camouflage the true potential of a principal.

Mark describes his role as a BSO principal:

> "I think probably the position is quite unusual in schools sort of globally in that you have an immense amount of responsibility in virtually all aspects of running your school. You're the CEO of the business. But you're also the leader, the spiritual moral leader of the community as well".

Mark feels that the principal of a BSO school has a wide range of responsibilities. He uses an analogy in an effort to seek an understanding of his role: "Because you're like a little island that has nothing supporting you outside". This notion of feeling alone in the role is easily recognised by many principal leaders and is a view supported in the literature (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019; Fullan, 2018a; Heffernan, 2018a).

Audrey seeks understanding from the perspective of the challenges that the BSO principal faces in their role: "I've got less time with the children, two curriculums to cover". She believes that performing at a top level is challenging: "You know, above expectations it's quite hard to get". Audrey tries to explain the demands that are required to maintain the expected standards:

> "I would say that one of the hardest things about being an international principal and being an international teacher is to maintain the standard in a British school to be at least in line with being as good as a British school".

By outlining the challenges, Audrey attempts to seek understanding regarding her role. Other challenges include school size, and there are principals in this study who operate very large schools. James believes that: "More than twelve hundred students are too much for a single principal". He believes that schools can get too large and can have too many students for an individual principal to manage properly. In the analysis of BSO Reports, it is reported that some of the BSO schools in this study had teams of middle management, sometimes across different "sites". One report describes a school with different sites: "It is spread over 2 campuses and employs close to 250 staff". These

teams and separate campuses are overseen by the same principal. Rebecca acknowledges the role of middle management in her school and, in doing so, explains that there are aspects of her work in the school building that may go unseen

> "You know there's conversations to be had with heads of department. There are conversations to be had with the parents to try and get them to understand that you know where we're at. And so, there's a lot of sort of relationship building".

Rebecca is aware that many of these unseen practices are not measured directly in an evaluation. She seeks understanding about the size of the challenge in being a BSO principal: "There's stress in leading big schools, small schools, isn't there? Because there's no sense of complacency about it". In the research field notes, this researcher recorded that by asking questions like "isn't there?", and by attempting to include this researcher in her perceptions, Rebecca is seeking affirmation and understanding (see Appendix P). The field notes reflected that Rebecca appeared to have a large and complex role. She uses rhetorical questions as a way of seeking affirmation and reassurance that she is correct in her perceptions. Some of these words and phrases are underlined in the following piece for emphasis:

> "Yeah, but in terms of those high expectations, is that stressful? Yes. Because you know with people, people want to get on with it their own way, but actually you know, they have to, we all have to, work together, don't we? We want to make sure certain things happen in a certain way at a certain time, yeah? And ultimately if it's not, it'll land on our desks".

While Rebecca is seeking forbearance, she also portrays uncertainty by seeking affirmation. In this part of the interview, field notes show that this researcher is sensitive to the role of 'insider' status as he has lived the life of a BSO principal. Rebecca, in some respects, is seeking agreement from the researcher. There are many aspects to insider research and it is essential that researchers are aware of their positionality (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The written field notes were essential for reflection in analysing the data (see Appendix P). School leaders are predisposed to a subjective analysis (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019; Pashiardis & Brauckmann, 2008) and evaluation systems are often localised opinions for others to consider (OECD, 2013; Radinger, 2014). While feedback is an important part of evaluating, there is a paucity of research regarding the performance capacity of

principals and the ability to recognise when principals have reached their potential (Condon & Clifford, 2012; Goldring et al., 2009). Too much may be expected from some principals.

The data here indicates that seeking understanding creates space for these BSO principals to input into their evaluations. But there is also an aspect of seeking understanding that might be interpreted as a plea for help to ease uncertainty. Perceptions of being alone in the role, sharing perceptions of managing complex roles and seeking affirmation are all ways that these BSO principals provide input into their evaluations.

5.13 The Way Results are Used

Improving organisations through the assessment of performance involves providing feedback (Athota & Malik, 2018). Formative feedback is defined as information communicated to the learner with the intention of modifying their behaviour (Shute, 2008). Cultural factors, among other things, "play an important role in receiving and delivering 360-degree feedback" (p. 327). As with any assessment, complexities and challenges "are inevitable" (p. 327).

Four themes emerge in the data analysis regarding how evaluation data is used. These themes are grouped together under the heading 'The Way Results are Used'. They include an analysis of BSO reports that show that reporting on the BSO principal is different. Another theme shows that BSO inspections have an influence on the principal's evaluation. The themes also include whether evaluations are shared, whether they are fair and accurate, and whether these principals stay upskilled and supported.

5.14 BSO Reports Analysis

There is a paucity of literature on the BSO principal as outlined in the literature review for this study (Chapter 3). However, there is some reporting on principals in BSO inspection reports, which are formal documents. An analysis of BSO inspection reports reveals a difference between the commentary on groups such as leadership, governors or ownership and the reporting on principals. The BSO inspection reports for the schools of the principals who take part in the interviews for this study show that, in general, most of their schools achieve highly (see Appendix Q). The overall effectiveness of these schools is judged with ratings of 'outstanding', 'highly effective' or 'excellent'.

Under the standard for leadership and management, the BSO inspectors report on areas such as the principal, the effectiveness of leadership and management, performance management, safeguarding, the governing body and staff professional development.

In a sample analysis of the standard for leadership and management in these BSO inspection reports, examples show that this aspect is highly rated. A section of one sample report states that: “Leadership and management at all levels is outstanding”. Another sample report states that: “The quality of leadership and management is highly effective”. However, there is no signal towards what defines leadership and management, effective or otherwise, in these reports.

Governing boards also receive mention in these sample BSO inspection reports with observations noting, for example, the quality of the governance: “The Governing Board is highly committed, supportive and skilled group of professionals with an appropriate range of backgrounds. The majority are former pupils and / or current or former parents”. Another sample BSO report observes: “The governing body is a strong force for change”. In some cases, governing boards are praised in BSO reports for their efficacy in holding the school leadership to account: “They hold the school leadership to account very effectively”. Another sample shows that sometimes visiting inspectors make recommendations to the governing body if, for example, there are concerns about student achievement: “The governing board should ensure that the school is fully held to account for students’ outcomes”. In this recommendation to the governing board, there is no definition of ‘the school’, in terms of leadership and management. While these observations may be valid, there is also no indication given in the reports about how these conclusions are reached or any background evidence to show how governing boards actually hold the school leadership to account.

Regarding school ownership, an observation is noted in a sample BSO inspection report about how the school owners approach the operation of the school: “They do not interfere with the management of the school; there are clear lines of demarcation”. Another sample report comments on what is perceived to be the role of the school owners: “The proprietors ensure all local requirements are met”. Many of the observations on the governance, the ownership and the leadership approach in these sample BSO inspection reports are spread throughout different sections of the documents.

Some reports contain specific commentary and judgement about the principal's leadership and vision if, for example, the principal is perceived to be a good communicator: "The principal provides a very strong lead to the whole school community and communicates the school's vision very well". Another sample report judges the principal's capacity to improve the school: "The principal is inspirational with a clear vision and capacity to continue to move the school forward". Another example states that: "The principal should ensure that processes for school self-evaluation are suitably rigorous and truly reflect the school's performance". In the standards for inspectorates, BSO inspections do not set out specifically to evaluate the principal (DfE, 2014a). But the analysis of these BSO reports shows that there is direct commentary on the principal and observations, such as these, inform the evaluation of the principal. These commentaries and observations are personal to the principal. Other areas of leadership and management receive more general commentary because they are groups. It is easy to identify the principal as an individual in these BSO inspection reports, because there is generally only one principal of a BSO as outlined in the methodology for this research when the principals were counted.

In ISI's inspection framework, oral feedback is shared with the school by the lead inspector on the final day of a BSO inspection (ISI, 2018). Those attending this meeting may include the school leadership, but may also include members of the governing board and owners of the school. This feedback is given by way of context to what will be written in a published BSO inspection report. The overall commentary in the report, including judgements on leadership and management, is guided by the lead inspector. In ISI's Inspection Framework, the lead inspector is referred to as the 'Overseas Reporting Inspector' (ORI). This inspector writes the inspection report: "The ORI has the responsibility for drafting the written report on the basis of the team's agreed findings" (p. 7). The ORI is also the inspector who delivers the oral feedback to the school. It is this inspector who directly identifies the principal in a BSO school inspection because, as the lead inspector, it is the ORI who writes the report.

Annual Reports, that are submitted to the Secretary of State for Education in England by Ofsted, comment on the quality assurance provided by the inspectorates who provide BSO inspection reports (Ofsted, 2012a, 2013, 2014, 2015a, 2016, 2018a, 2018b, 2019). These documents are analysed in

Chapter 2 (see Appendix S). Some of the commentary by Ofsted regarding quality assurance noted lack of explicit evidence in making qualitative judgements and requested that more evidence is required. On this basis, the explicit reporting on individuals, such as identifiable principals, in BSO inspection reports also requires further evidence on how judgements are made. The way that the evaluations in BSO inspection reports are reported have an influence the evaluation perceptions of the BSO principals in this study.

5.14.1 *The influence of a BSO inspection on evaluating the principal*

The analysis of BSO reports for this research reveals that the principal is directly identifiable in some reports. This reporting on the principal in BSO reports has an influence on their evaluation perceptions and is linked to the evaluation of the principal at a school level.

Mark believes that the BSO inspection is connected to his evaluation: “I think they're linked because shortly after I had that appraisal, we then had the BSO which is an ISI inspection which is an incredibly thorough inspection”. Mark believes that if his evaluation and the school inspection were not aligned, then there would be a disparity in the results: “I think it would have shown up in a number of ways to do with in sort of structural ways, you know the way the school was organised, if that had been poorly done”. Mark acknowledges his perception that there is a connection between the BSO inspection and his evaluation.

However, while he perceives that the school inspection is thorough, Mark believes that it doesn’t capture everything about his work at the school: “You know you look at the actual report. It's difficult to find any negatives in there. It's not the best school I've worked in by a long way, a long way. And it's quite young, and it's still developing”. He questions the effectiveness of a whole school inspections on informing the evaluation of a principal: “Are inspections a good way of measuring how good the head or principal is? I think they contribute to it”. Mark realises that there are aspects to a school inspection that do not capture all the work of the principal. For principals, such as Audrey and Sam, being directly identifiable either positively or negatively in a BSO report is significant. Some of their core KPIs include school inspection outcomes. The outcome of a school inspection influences their KPI-based evaluation.

Jenny compares her BSO inspection report with her evaluation in an effort to explain if one

format influences the other:

> "I think it's really difficult to separate them out. As the head, if your outcomes are then judged by someone external, they are your appraisal, aren't they? The inspection judges how well I've done in the last five years in making my school what it is today. In many ways that's a better appraisal than any other."

Jenny believes that the BSO inspection reflects the work of the principal. Being easily identifiable in the BSO inspection report means that her evaluation is influenced by the BSO report. This evidence indicates that some of these principals perceive that BSO inspections have an influence on their evaluations, even if they don't have inspection outcomes as a KPI. This finding is significant because BSO inspection reports do not set out specifically to evaluate the principal (DfE, 2014a). The extent of the influence of the BSO report on the evaluation of the BSO principal requires further research.

5.14.2 *The recording of BSO inspection report data*

All of the principals in this research find relevance in their school being categorised as British. They perceive that being accredited by the DfE is relevant. They find legitimacy in being comparable to accredited private independent schools in England. They perceive that the BSO inspection scheme is trustworthy. BSO schools pay for the quality assurance provided by the BSO inspection scheme. James and Sam are qualified BSO inspectors while Jenny compares her DfE accredited school to her perceptions of top performing independent schools in England. Audrey believes that the BSO inspection is useful "for the accreditation". Audrey also believes that the BSO inspection scheme helps with recruitment: "We can take NQTs because of the BSO". It also helps her own credibility: "My CV? BSO inspection? Of course, that would go on there". Mark compares different school inspections from the perspective of quality revealing the importance of trust in an inspection: "We then had the equivalent of the BSO, which is an ISI inspection".

It is relevant to the principals in this study that the underlying system for the BSO inspection scheme is sound and trustworthy. These aspects provide legitimacy to the BSO inspection scheme. For example, Jenny states that BSO standards are different and are" much more rigorous in many ways". Schools that are accredited accrue several advantages including the power to induct NQTs, the capacity to assess graduates towards their QTS and they can claim to be formally recognised by the

DfE in England. These aspects provide a form of quality assurance for schools who arrange and pay for BSO inspections as the inspections are voluntary. When schools are accredited by the approved inspectorates, accredited schools are entered on the public record in the GIAS database that is under the auspices of the DfE.

The DfE believe that it is very important that the GIAS is kept up to date and they state this in a user guide (GOV.UK, 2021b). According to the GIAS user guide, the information on GIAS feeds "many internal DfE systems and analysis", such as the annual school census for independent schools. The user guide states that the GIAS "… is used by members of the public to see the publicly available information on establishments". The DfE warns in the user guide that if the information on GIAS is "incorrect", then it could "have an impact on establishments" and important aspects for schools, such as funding and census collecting. If the information on the GIAS database is not correct, then schools are not being represented correctly to the public, many of whom are parents (or prospective parents) of the students in the schools.

In attempting to establish a purposeful sample of BSO principals for this research, an analysis of accredited BSOs on the GIAS database was conducted. This research counted the number of BSOs that had valid accreditations on 31st August 2018 (see Appendix B). In the analysis, the evidence clearly showed that GIAS database entries for accredited BSOs were out of date, or in some cases, not recorded at all up to one year after their BSO inspections. When accredited BSOs on the GIAS database were cross-referenced for this research, against those on the publicly available websites of the approved inspection providers, a total of 42 schools were absent from the GIAS database. The DfE confirmed by email to this researcher on 7 May 2021 that the GIAS contains an up-to-date list of accredited BSOs (see Appendix T).

Following a second analysis of the GIAS database on 17 June 2021, the evidence clearly indicates that the GIAS database still includes out-of-date entries. For example, at least one school, The British School of Alexandria with the unique reference number (URN 132609) is still listed on the GIAS database of accredited BSOs in June 2021 despite having had its inspection on the 3rd March 2016 (GOV.UK, 2021a). This accreditation should have expired at the end of the academic year 2018 /19.

Further evidence shows that the British School of Alexandria had a renewed accreditation inspection on 29th January 2019 and this updated accreditation is not recorded on the GIAS database at all. During the same second analysis on 17 June 2021, the evidence clearly shows that the recording of the names of BSO principals on the GIAS database are unreliable (GOV.UK, 2021a). The database accuracy of the names of the principals recorded during the time of their BSO inspections are out of date by 20 years in at least one case (St. Andrew's International, Thailand: URN 132759), are out of date by five years in another school (Gulf English School, Kuwait: URN 132622) and by three years in another school (British International School, Riyadh: URN 147041). The updated principals' names were included on these schools' most recent BSO inspection reports when they were submitted for inclusion on the GIAS. In one BSO inspection report, the 'school manager' was listed as being the principal on the school's most recent BSO report in 2019, but a different and legitimate principal's name (who works in a different part of the world) was listed for the same school in the GIAS database (Gulf English School, Kuwait: URN 132622).

The DfE carry out system and detail updates regularly and they report this work publicly on the news section of their website (GOV.UK, 2021b). In relation to keeping BSO details updated, a senior inspector with one of the inspectorates cited delays in the administration of recording BSO details on the database sometimes, but this does not account for inaccuracies. In correspondence seen by this research that was requested not to be shared, a membership association wrote to the Secretary of State for Education in England about this aspect and other matters relating to the issue of accuracy in the BSO inspection scheme. The reply was not seen by this researcher. As regards the DfE, the correspondence in relation to BSOs is sometimes managed by 'Ofsted ARC – Contact and Administration Team'. An email enquiry from this researcher relating to the accuracy of the GIAS was answered by the ARC administration team with advice to contact the DfE directly. When an enquiry about the accuracy of the GIAS was made to the DfE, as advised, the reply was from the British Schools Overseas desk at the DfE that confirmed that the GIAS was accurate and that it was updated by the DfE regularly (see Appendix T). In light of the evidence described earlier, the perception of the DfE that the GIAS is accurate indicates that there are weaknesses to some parts of this formal GIAS recording system.

The only accurate list of BSOs and BSO principals in existence for the period up to the end of the academic year 2018/19 was held by this research study on its own database called ‘DB1’. A thorough search was conducted, as described in Chapter 4, and it was found that there was no single accurate and reliable record of BSOs or BSO principals held by the DfE, by Ofsted, by the inspectorates or by any of the membership associations. This is still the case on the 17 June 2021.

The evidence shows that the perceptions of BSO principals are that the BSO inspection scheme is a trustworthy evaluation system, but there is still work to be done in order to provide a sound and accurate quality assurance recording system.

5.15 Sharing

The participants in the study are asked if they share their evaluation results with teaching colleagues. In the survey, 67% (n=16) of the participants indicated that they would not share the results of their evaluation and 75% (n=18) of the participants said they would share their evaluation with other teaching professionals. The reasons why BSO principals do not share their evaluations with others appears to point to something in the process that subverts their willingness to share their evaluation. The majority of BSO principals in the survey, 87% (n=21), agreed that the way that they are evaluated could be improved and 75% (n=18) agreed that there is a better way of evaluating them than their current process. This evidence indicates that the participants in the survey feel that the evaluation process could be improved.

The BSO principals in the interviews had different perspectives about sharing their evaluations. Phil is evaluated by an external consultant who gives him feedback on his performances. In this process, a 360-degree evaluation is used and the results of the evaluation is written and reported back to Phil and the chairman of the governing board. However, they are not shared with the full governing board. According to Phil, the results are kept “private and confidential” to him and the chairman of the governing board.

Donald is assessed using a 360-evaluation that is designed internally by a HR director and reported back to Donald and the chair of the governing board only. Rebecca is evaluated using KPIs. If she meets her KPIs, she does not share knowledge about the financial reward that she receives with

anyone else: “No! (laughs), no, that would never happen”. When she is asked the reason why she does not share the details she says: “That's, that's one for home, yeah?”. She prefers to keep the details of the outcome of her evaluation private.

Jenny shared some of her evaluation with the school community. It was conducted by an external evaluator: “Oh well I did, and actually the targets I shared with the school community. The parents knew what my targets were, because they were very much related to where the school was going. So that worked really quite well”. Jenny’s targets were interlinked with the school performance targets. The evidence here indicates that these BSO principals do not like to share the results of their own evaluation with anyone else. In many respects, this makes investigating this aspect of their experiences challenging to research.

5.16 Fairness and accuracy

The principals in this study were asked whether they felt their evaluations were fair and accurate. The perception of fairness in an evaluation system is influenced by the key element of objectivity (Athota & Malik, 2018). The accuracy of performance feedback, such as 360 evaluations, is much harder to question when it comes from multiple sources (Campion, Campion, & Campion, 2015).

In the survey, 83% (n=18) of the participants agree or strongly agree that the way they are currently evaluated is fair, while 62.5% (n=15) agree or strongly agree that the way they are evaluated is accurate. A total of 83% (n=20) of the survey participants agreed that the way they are evaluated gives a fair impression of them. However, one principal in the survey commented: “Too much emphasis on opinion rather than facts”. The survey results indicate that the participant principals are happy with their feedback after being evaluated. The evidence also indicates that they feel that their feedback is fair, while some principals believe that the feedback is accurate. The extent to which principals challenge or question their feedback requires further investigation.

Karen argues that a system of performance management is better than an evaluation using KPIs: “I'm not saying I know I'm correct. Performance management is obviously how you're performing and what you need to get better at because you know it's true”. She perceives that the system of KPIs is reasonable only because it is the same system for everyone: “Fair, in a group? Yes, because everyone's

got the same ones". Karen does not feel that KPIs are a good way of evaluating a principal, but she believes that the system at her school is fair when the context is taken into account.

Jenny believes that her evaluation by an external evaluator is "fair". She believes that it is important that whoever is doing the evaluation should be trustworthy. She believes that there are challenges when evaluating principals:

> "I think any qualitative appraisal is going to have gaps because people are human, aren't they? You know we're not widgets and we can't measure people accurately I don't think. I think so long as it is well done by someone that you trust and that's the most important thing and that you trust whoever is doing it".

Audrey's KPIs are aligned to the performance of her school at her next inspection: "To be an outstanding for the next judgment I think is fair. Yeah, that's fair. The data that's fair". Audrey perceives that aligning one of her KPIs to the performance of the school is a legitimate exercise.

Rebecca feels that evaluating her performance using KPIs is fair: "It is what it is, yeah?". She believes that there is an advantage in the system because the KPIs can be reviewed at intervals: "It's transparent and then you either get it or you don't. Or you flag along the way, you know, at interim reviews. That it's not going right. I suppose it's fair if you agree to it ". Rebecca believes that it is better when KPIs are socially constructed, but she perceives that both parties to the KPI do not always have an even advantage. Rebecca feels that there is a perspective to KPIs where companies who own groups of schools may use the system for their own advantage, particularly when paying financial rewards:" The [named company] one was definitely a template. It was applied across the board. And I mean how fair? How fair the remuneration was? There wasn't transparency on that". Rebecca feels that the payment of financial rewards was not the same for everyone and that the company had an uneven advantage in the transaction.

Rebecca's believes that if the task of leading a school is carried out successfully, then a reward should be given. She believes that her bonus reward at the end of the year is affirmation that she is doing a good job: "It's about "are you doing a good job?", and you know, does the effort that you put in pay off". Rebecca receives her bonus every year.

Phil is “happy” with his evaluation process and he appears to enjoy being evaluated. However, Ian gave a survey to his staff from which he sought feedback and he believes that survey participants used the feedback system in a negative way: “The thing that niggles me is if it's a personal thing. If it’s professional, that’s different. I think they use it for their own personal gripe. Their own personal perspective”. Ian does not oppose feedback surveys per se, but he appears to be sensitive to the results:” Because it's the perception of these people, it doesn't necessarily mean it's a truism. You've got to be made a rock not to take some stuff on board here”. Ian believes that sometimes surveys about him may be used as a mechanism for airing staff concerns.

From Donald’s perspective, the impact of a principal is challenging to calculate. Donald argues that, by the time the impact of student achievement is realised, it is too late for any tangible rewards to accumulate for the principal:

> “You’re never going to know the impact I think as a school principal leader until years after. Results might improve incrementally. Morale might improve. There are certain structures in place which can improve but ultimately, we're dealing with young people aren’t we?”

The perceptions regarding whether evaluations are fair and accurate are varied. There are obvious differences in the perceptions of fairness and accuracy in how evaluations are viewed among the BSO principals in this study.

5.17 Upskilling and support

The BSO principals in the interviews were asked how they kept upskilled and up-to-date with their profession. They describe a range of ways in which they perceive that they maintain their skills. Audrey buys books that might be recommended at conferences and she shares them with her teaching staff: “You know, really interesting books. I bought multiple copies”. She likes to stay in communication with other principal colleagues or goes to visit other schools as a school inspector. Rebecca remains upskilled by getting information from social media: “I have a little circle of people, former colleagues. Mainly former colleagues, yeah? And I do like to chitchat with them. I like LinkedIn. I like Twitter. I’m always sort of reading around.”

Donald stays in touch with former colleagues and is about to sign up for a Master's degree: "There are three or four ex-principals that I regularly speak with on Skype whenever I've got tricky situations". Karen seeks advice from a colleague: "I go to her for a lot of advice. She's very good at coaching". Jenny keeps her skills up to date by attending conferences. Jenny says: "I mean I find myself in conferences quite a lot. I'm also an inspector so, I've done inspector training. And so, obviously, if you do an inspection that keeps your skills up because you get together with other schools and that's really important".

Having a support network is important for these BSO principals and this is sometimes facilitated by the member associations that hold conferences or that are active online (AoBSO, 2020; COBIS, 2020). Regional associations meet on a regular basis and, for many BSO principals, this involves taking a flight to another country to attend meetings (BSME, 2020; FOBISSEA, 2020). However, it emerges in the data analysis that many of these principals rely on other colleagues and their families for professional and personal support. For example, Audrey says:

> "I chew my husband's ear (laughs). I vent to him my frustrations. I've got a group of principals I've become friends with. I've got one principal and I'll call her up, you know. She used to work in the same organisation. She feels some of my frustrations. I've always got a whatsapp group with the other [named location] principals and we will vent on that quite a lot".

Even though their schools are relatively large, it is not always suitable for these BSO principals to interact with their schools' teaching staff outside of the work environment. In the interviews, it emerges that the friends of the BSO principal tend to be in small groups and tightly knit. For example, Rebecca says: "I have a little circle of people who I would kind of call and say "right now this has happened. What do you think about this now?". Rebecca prefers to keep a small group of professional friends from outside her direct work environment.

The nature of the work of BSO principals is sensitive as their schools are commercially operated organisations. Access to suitable resources in order to upskill are limited, apart from conferences. Interacting and sharing ideas with other schools in their local areas is also limited because BSO schools have little in common with overseas state schools, for example, in areas like curriculum and

language. Staying upskilled and seeking support are good ways for BSO principals to share their perceptions about how they are evaluated. However, the evidence shows that these BSO principals perceive that these aspects are not easily accessed. Therefore, there are few platforms for BSO principals to share their evaluation perceptions.

5.18 Summary

This chapter on the findings in this study reveals that, in the environment of BSOs, the locational context is diverse. In this diversity, the evidence shows that BSO ownership and governance has a major influence on the evaluation perceptions of these BSO principals. Four variants of BSO ownership were revealed in the findings and the ways that BSO principals were evaluated depended on this context. The membership associations also influenced their evaluation perceptions. In the procedures for evaluation, the motives for evaluating and the methods of the evaluation portray an array of influences on these BSO principals' evaluation perceptions and on how they were evaluated. Capacity presented the themes on the abilities for evaluation as well as the BSO principals influences over their own evaluations. The way results are used illuminated challenges for the BSO sector in the way evaluations are presented and formally recorded. The chapter concluded with perceptions of sharing, of fairness and accuracy and of upskilling and support. The following chapter will now discuss the major findings.

Chapter 6 Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The findings in Chapter 5 are significant and offer value for a wider discussion. The most notable aspect is the extent to which the findings highlight the reality of the BSO environment where the BSO principals experience their evaluations. While the phenomenological aspect of the study relates the lived experiences of those being studied, other aspects are also related in the research. These go beyond the individual lived experiences and offer a more generalisable theorising with regard to leadership in the BSO context.

The main purpose of this exploratory study is to find out the evaluation perceptions of BSO principals and to interpret what they, as research participants, say about those evaluations. Two further objectives are to discover how BSO principals are evaluated and to examine what informs these evaluations. To date, and as investigated earlier in the search of the literature, there has been a paucity of studies found that focus on the experiences of the BSO principal. In this study, part of this under-researched area is addressed and important aspects of what it is like to be evaluated as a BSO principal are illuminated.

This chapter sets out to discuss the findings outlined in the previous chapter. It then moves beyond the original research questions that guided the investigation to explore some deeper issues facing the world of the BSO sector. A range of possible options will be explored in relation to the wider field and in relation to how they inform the existing corpus on school leadership.

The main findings in this study emerge and are classified into four broad areas adapted from a framework originally designed by the OECD (2013): environment, procedures, capacity and the way that results are used. In the interest of consistency, the findings are discussed in this chapter under the same broad headings.

6.2 Environment

The diversity of influences on the environment where the BSO principals in this study are located contributes to a variance in their evaluation perceptions. The BSO principal is the formal school leader of the BSO and, while research on BSO leadership is scarce, there exists a long history of leadership

analysis in education generally. Typologies of leadership help this analysis and, arguably, the formal school leadership in the BSO sector is comparable with other types of schools in many respects. An important and defining aspect of school leadership within the study however is the environment in which BSO principals are found and, more importantly for this study, where and how they are evaluated.

The BSO principals in this study perceived that their schools were unique. In describing their schools, some of the principals used terms such as ‘premium’, ‘excellent reputation’, ‘well-known’, “plucky” and ‘unique’. It is obvious that the reputations of these schools are respected, established and perpetuated from the perspective of the principals. The schools are also endorsed by the local communities who support them.

The document analysis of BSO inspection reports during this research found that BSOs were located in 47 locations around the world. While this evidence affirms that BSOs are located internationally, there remains a challenge in defining international schools (Bunnell, 2019; Carder, 2013). Similarly, there is no accurate definition for international school principals. Resolving this aspect internationally is complex, not least for the BSO principal.

One reality for the principals of the BSOs in this study is that they are disorientated by the numbers of schools that are established internationally and that identify as ‘British’ or as ‘English Medium International Schools’. Organisations, like ISC Research, are involved in counting British international schools and their data indicates that there are thousands of international schools around the globe that identify as ‘British’ (ISCResearch, 2020a). Some of these schools also lay claim to having ‘excellent’ reputations and ‘unique’ identities.

It is also notable that schools that are located internationally can avail of accreditation and legitimacy from a number of sources. Accreditation can be obtained from international membership associations that have merit and are considered legitimate, such as CIS (COIS, 2021) and COBIS (COBIS, 2020). IB World schools become authorised by their organisation to offer IB programmes of education (IBO, 2021). French schools overseas can seek accreditation through the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AEFE, 2021). International schools also seek legitimacy by other means such as that achieved by marketing to local constituencies. Large private companies that own groups of schools have some

advantages in this domain. While local education authorities may have some say about whether this legitimacy holds authenticity, the complexity and diversity of international education has created the space for many types of schools to exist. Importantly, there is no single global authority to oversee them.

One of the factors contributing to this complexity in international education is a lack of definition. Schools that categorise themselves internationally as 'British' or 'English medium' encounter this phenomenon. The challenge in developing any definition is that it needs to be appropriate enough to take account of different contexts and that it needs to be inclusive (Knight, 2004). A definition helps to avoid confusion and also helps to develop a common understanding of what is being discussed. In this perspective, a definition is useful because it helps to differentiate things. The vast majority of schools that are located internationally and that identify as 'British' are not accredited by the DfE in England. It is the legitimacy of this accreditation by a national government that contributes to the uniqueness of BSOs in the international context.

This study has found a definition for the BSO and the BSO principal in the complex world of international education, and, by doing so, it has situated the BSO sector uniquely within the broad corpus of research in education. Furthermore, by building on a typology of international schools that was already designed (Hayden et al., 2016), this study has differentiated the BSO principal from other forms of international school leadership. This differentiation supports the perceptions of the BSO principals in this study who evaluate their schools as being unique.

6.2.1 *Developing a definition for the BSO*

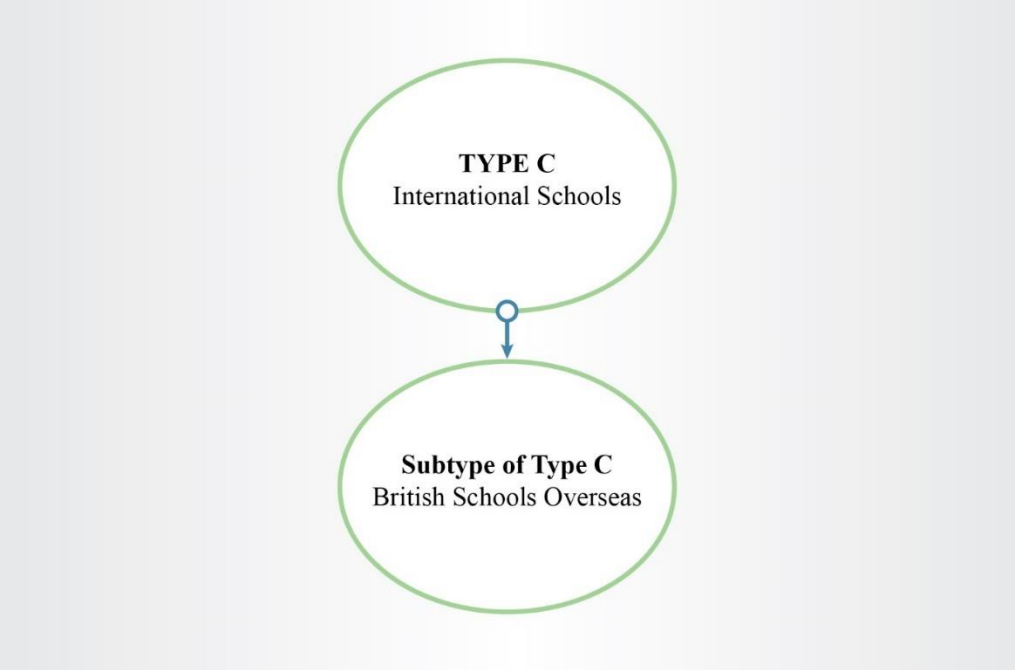
In their 2013 research, Hayden & Thompson categorised international schools as Type A, Type B and Type C. In later research (2016), they argue that Type C international schools are those that are a newer form of commercially operated school aimed largely at host country nationals. They also argue that this Type C international school can incorporate a number of different sub-types that would be better represented separately (Hayden et al., 2016).

The document analysis of all BSO inspection reports in the date frame for this research indicates that while the families of some students are globally mobile expatriates, the majority of students attending all BSOs are host country nationals. The analysis of these BSOs' websites shows that all these schools

charge tuition fees. Recruitment advertising in online educational portals such as TES (Tes, 2021) show that these schools recruit and pay the salaries of contracted principals, teachers, and administration staff. The sheer size of the student population of some BSOs, as reported in inspection reports, indicates large flows of income based on tuition fees alone. Accounts submitted to the Charities Commission indicate clearly that some BSOs generate millions of euros in income (Catherine's, 2019; Haysmacintyre, 2020a, 2020b). They are, therefore, commercially operated organisations. All of these aspects situate the BSO as a Type C international school, under Hayden & Thompson's categories. However, there are further distinctions to be made from Type C.

The BSO is one of a limited number of types of school in the world that is accredited by a national government that is not the government of the country where the school is located. Furthermore, BSOs are registered and listed on the DfE's GIAS database alongside all other recognised schools in England. BSOs are endorsed by the British government's post-Brexit DIT export strategy. They are mentioned specifically in '*Action 13'* out of a total of 23 actions in the DIT's International Education Strategy where the overall ambition is to increase education exports to £35 billion per annum by 2030 (UKGov, 2019). Therefore, placing the BSO as a sub-type of Hayden & Thompson's Type C category is practical. The BSO should correctly be represented separately as a sub-type from other types of international school that are categorised as Type C (Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 British Schools Overseas as a sub-type of Type C



Building on this typology framework, as categorised by Hayden & Thompson (2016), allows the BSO to stand alone among international schools, including those that identify as English medium international schools. Therefore, taking all this evidence into account and isolating this form of school enables a definition to be developed by this study. The BSO is a unique form of international school that is endorsed by the British government and accredited by the DfE in England. Stabilising the definition of the BSO allows this study to situate the BSO uniquely, and on its own, among the complex environment of international schools. Isolating the BSO from all other types of international schools, including English medium international schools, will enable researchers to examine it more closely from various different perspectives in future. Securing a working definition of the BSO contributes to supporting the perception that BSO principals in this study have of the unique environment in which they are evaluated.

6.2.2 *Defining the BSO Principal*

Within this sub-type context, the definition of the BSO principal may also be situated. The existence of the BSO principal is confirmed as a real-world individual in several legitimate and independent sources (AoBSO, 2020; COBIS, 2020; GOV.UK, 2021b; HMC, 2020; IAPS, 2020). As the formal

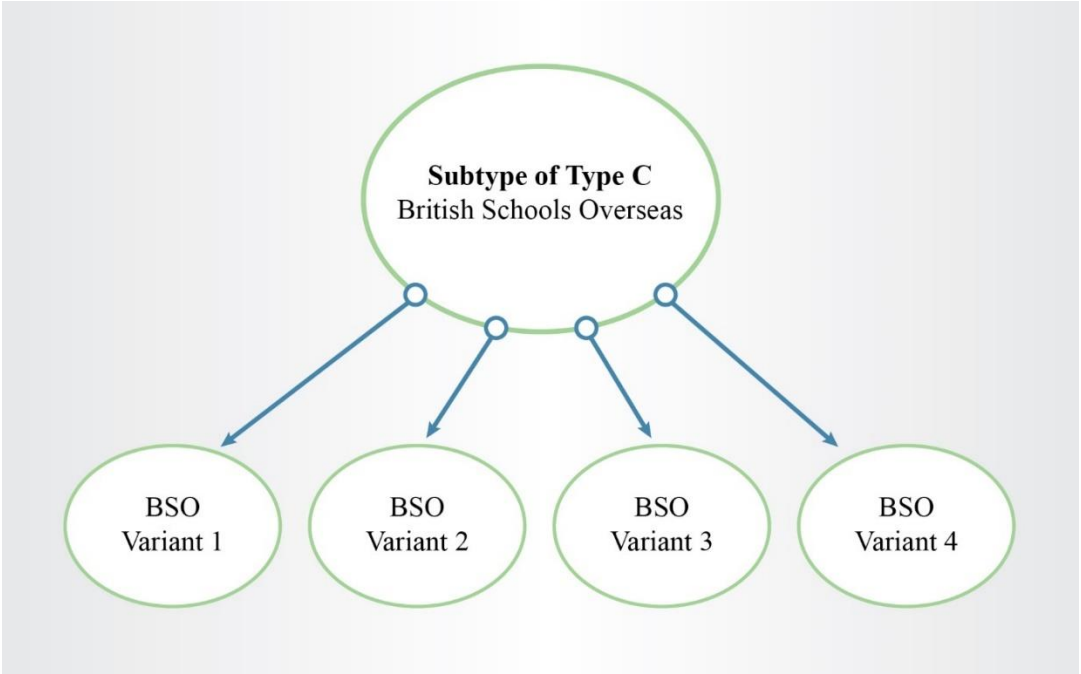
school leader of a BSO, the principal is often named in school inspection reports that are approved by the DfE and that are monitored by Ofsted. Furthermore, the BSO principal is formally named on the GIAS database that is the DfE's official public record (GOV.UK, 2021b). As such, these principals' names are formally recorded alongside the names of every recognised school principal in England. The BSO principal is, therefore, given legitimacy as a nationally accredited actor in school leadership. Taking this evidence into account and isolating this formal school leader from other forms of international school leader enables a definition to be developed. Having earlier defined the BSO, the defining of the BSO principal is an important step. The BSO principal is a unique international school leader who is engaged in leading a BSO that is endorsed by the British government and accredited by the DfE in England.

Stabilising the definition of the BSO principal allows this study to situate the BSO principal uniquely, and on its own, in the complex environment of international school leadership. Isolating the BSO principal from all other forms of international schools' leadership allows us to examine the role more closely from a range of different perspectives in future. Securing the definition of the BSO principal contributes to supporting the perceptions that the BSO principals in this study hold of the unique environment in which they are evaluated.

6.2.3 *The structure of BSO ownership*

This study has established that the BSO is a sub-type of Hayden & Thompson's (2016) Type C international school. Extending from this sub-type, there are four variants of BSO ownership that emerge in the findings of this study (Figure 6.2). All of these BSO variants are individually accredited by the DfE and are comparable to independent schools in England. These variants are different in their ownership structure. Each variant influences the governance structures of their respective BSOs and affect the evaluation perceptions of the BSO principals who lead them.

Figure 6.2 BSO Ownership Variants



BSO Variant 1 is a franchise that pays fees to a private independent school in England for the use of its brand. While Bunnell (2020) reports on the growth of franchise arrangements among international schools, these arrangements are also found in the BSO sector by this study. The analysis of BSO inspection reports for this research shows that several examples of this variant are documented in the reports. In the example in the interviews, the principal of the school (Mark) is highly aware of the structure of the school governance of his BSO because of its composition. The governing board includes members of the owning company as well as members who represent the private independent school in England. The tuition fees for this variant are higher than surrounding schools and the school is marketed as a premium product. The focus on achieving the highest possible grading in a BSO school inspection is evident in an analysis of its marketing literature and from the evidence derived from the interview with the principal. The reputation of the school and the high academic achievements of its students feature strongly in the online marketing material of the England-based school, where its relationship with Mark's school is acknowledged. The BSO Variant 1, as a school that is accredited by the DfE, is comparable to the franchisor in England.

The franchising school in England, that was just described, is a registered charity. Private independent schools that are registered as charities can claim tax advantages in England from the fee income that they receive from comparable and related franchised schools that are located overseas. As registered charities, these schools in England are not liable to income tax or corporation tax on income or gains derived from charitable activities. This income is relatively lucrative as evidenced in annual accounts that are submitted to the Charities Commission in England. Yet, Mark described the governance as "inferior" compared to his previous experiences of private independent schools in England and he also described how the governance doesn't "function" like he would expect a governing board to operate. He felt that it was not the best school that he had ever worked in, despite the high grading that the school had received in a recent BSO inspection. He believed that he could "run rings" around anyone tasked with evaluating him. In some respects, this perspective is a challenge to this BSO's comparison to independent schools in England. There is not much research about franchise arrangements or about attempts to replicate independent schools in an international environment. The emergence of this arrangement regarding franchising of school brands is a relatively new phenomenon. The research is limited on the impact of this franchised school on the education of its students and its actual comparability to private independent schools in England. The BSO inspection report offers some insight into its capability to educate students. However, the governance structure indicates a substandard perspective in Mark's evidence, despite the school's profile, relationships and high inspection grading.

BSO Variant 2 is structured as a business that delegates a Head Office to manage its affairs with the school. The Head Office in this structure uses a system of KPIs as quantifiable targets for its BSO principals (Audrey, Karen, Rebecca, Sam). The principals are evaluated based on data that includes specifically measured targets including student outcomes, staff retention, student admissions and inspection outcomes. The use of a KPI system, such as this, reflects a perspective that principal evaluations can be measured effectively. The progress of the KPIs for these principals is tracked using software systems and it is reviewed at various times during the year to help indicate whether the principals are on track to meet their KPIs. Among the evaluation perceptions of these principals are that success is measured by whether they meet their KPIs and by whether they receive a reward for

doing so. Grissom et al. (2015) argue that measuring principal efficacy using assessments, such as student outcomes, raises important questions about reliability and validity. Evidence found in this study indicates that these principals can manipulate student data to satisfy their KPI demands. The evidence also indicates that some of these BSO principals carry a significant burden in trying to achieve their KPIs. Furthermore, the evidence indicates that there are limited avenues for supporting the development of these BSO principals. The principals reported that they sought support from family members, from other colleagues and from social media. The evidence also suggests that there does not appear to be much investment in the development of these principals and this impacts their evaluation perspectives. The importance of this evidence to the BSO context is significant, not least in how these BSO principals perceive evaluation.

BSO Variant 3 is a structure of school ownership that is dominated by a single proprietor. In the interviews, it emerges that two of the principals did not have a formal personal evaluation conducted on them. They were evaluated informally (William, James). The nature of the evaluation of another principal (Ian) is different in some respects but is also informal. He is given direct feedback in the form of opinions about his work from the perspective of the owner of the school. Whether the evaluation is formal or informal, opinions are formed by stakeholders as their life is affected by what is being evaluated (Mitchell & Lee, 2019; Saraite-Sariene et al., 2020; Yarbrough et al., 2010). When evaluating a performance, stakeholders have different perceptions of performance (Andersen et al., 2016). The evidence indicates that this the case for these principals.

The BSO principals in Variant 3 perceive that among the reasons that they did not have formal personal evaluations conducted on them is because they are prepared to stay with the school for a long number of years. In many respects, the lack of a formal evaluation by the school authorities, in these examples, is a form of evaluation in itself. The perspective reflects a form of agreement that once the position of the principal is stable, then there isn't a need for the principal to be formally and regularly evaluated by the school authorities. The evidence indicates that if a BSO is run as a business, such as Variant 3, and if this business is content with the incumbent principal, then the need for a formal evaluation by the school authorities is reduced.

BSO Variant 4 is a structure that is the responsibility of a board of trustees established by the local British community. The evaluations of these principals are significant (Jenny, Phil, Mark, Charles, Donald). Some of these principals engaged external consultants to evaluate them on behalf of their schools. This use of external consultants is a practice that is prevalent in England (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019). Some of the external consultants who evaluate the principals in this study also work for membership associations. One principal (Donald) is evaluated by a HR director who has given him KPIs that were unlike the explicitly quantifiable KPIs in Variant 2 schools. Another principal (Charles) feels evaluated by a governing board that is senior in nature and that is focused on how he managed the financial aspects of the school.

The nature of the evaluations of these principals in Variant 4, to a large extent, incorporate an evaluation of the school's performance. Student achievement is one of the elements that categorised some of these schools as high performing. These principals consistently linked their perceptions of their performances with the high performance of the school. These perceptions are affirmed by the evaluations conducted by the external consultants who gave positive feedback. The evidence, particularly from Jenny, Phil and Mark, indicates that it is expected that their evaluations reflect the perceptions of high performance and respectability that are held by the community and trustees about their schools. In Charles' case, his ability to return the school to financial stability is perceived by him and his governors to be an aspect of high performance. Studies about excellent school principal leadership has support in empirical evidence, but there are aspects that are not easy to measure (Kane, 2017; Leithwood, 2019; Leithwood et al., 2008; Northouse, 2019; Pietsch & Tulowitzki, 2017). Accounting for all of these aspects informs the search for efficacy in school leadership. Keddie (2013) argues that, depending on the context, some individuals thrive in the performative demands of an audit culture. Phil found his evaluation affirming and Mark was challenged to find anything negative in his school inspection report. However, Jenny was underwhelmed by her evaluation and appeared unsurprised. In other variants, Audrey comments that the school context defines the principal and Sam found that achieving his targets was a burden. How evaluators arrive at qualitative opinions is not clear in assessing BSO schools or their principals. There are a wide range of elements that inform the evaluation. The perspective of leading a school that has aspects of high performance has an influence

on the view that these principals have of evaluation, particularly when they link themselves to those high performing aspects. This evidence also has implications for principals whose schools may not be high performing, particularly in terms of well-regarded performance aspects such as student achievement and school inspection outcomes.

6.3 Procedures

Procedures capture the ways that the BSO principals in this study are evaluated. The methods used in their evaluations and the motives for their evaluations that emerge in the data, while diverse, offer some linkages to the ownership structures. The way in which these BSO principals are evaluated highlight a number of distinctions in the evaluation process. The different processes used to evaluate these principals, and the reasons for evaluating them, impact their evaluation perceptions.

In the survey, when the participants are asked about their evaluation process, it is evident that most of these BSO principals have experienced some form of evaluation. The methodological possibilities for evaluating BSO principals is evident in the interviews. Some of the principals are informally evaluated while others have more system-based KPI evaluations conducted on them. The evidence indicates that external evaluators use some form of instrument to evidence their findings. The methodologies used by external evaluators include 360-degree evaluations, surveys, questionnaires and interviews. The evidence also indicates that external evaluators, as paid consultants, tend to give feedback by writing reports.

Attempts to informally evaluate these principals are subject to the perspectives and opinions of individuals. The evidence shows that evaluation perceptions include an aspect where the principal 'feels' accountable, particularly in the absence of any formal evaluation method. In psychology, feelings can provide individuals with information about their interaction with the environment around them (Reber, 2016). Sometimes, in this perspective, relying on feelings may result in making accurate judgements, but there are times when the judgement may be biased because the source of the feeling may not be related to the object being judged. According to Reber (2016), disentangling correct information from incorrect perceptions is often difficult: "That is why mud sticks" (p. 74). This aspect appears to have added an array of evaluation concerns to the perceptions of the principals in this

study. Depending on the context and the evaluation format, some of the BSO principals in this study feel accountable to individuals or feel accountable to a combination of individuals that include the CEO of the owning company, the chair of the governors, an associate and a DoE. In many respects, concerns that are related to compliance portray that these principals are anxious to present the right impression. Most of the research participants agree that their evaluations give a fair impression of them, but some commented on the reliance on opinions rather than facts in the evaluation process. The evidence indicates clearly that qualitative assumptions are made about these BSO principals with varying degrees of supporting evidence. School owners appear to voice their opinions without supporting evidence and the external advisers were known to the principals prior to conducting their evaluation. These aspects also highlight the nature of personal relationships within the BSO community.

In other examples in this study, as the principals describe being evaluated, they relate a narrative that is based on quantifiable data such as that evidenced by the use of KPIs. Most of the survey participants agree that they are evaluated using an internal instrument and, in the interviews, one of the instruments was found to be KPIs. Contextualising the KPIs and having them monitored by the Head Office indicates that there is a system in place among some of the BSOs. Rebecca states that when she moved schools, she discovered that a similar system of evaluation based on KPIs was in place. However, there does not appear to be a coordinated system among the schools in the research for using KPIs and schools tend to have their own individual systems.

There is a narrow aspect to measuring a school principal's performance using KPIs. In some respects, this system may be referred to as a form of simple arithmetic as the results of the KPIs were based purely on numbers. The principals in this study referred to their "core" KPIs. The measurement of student retention, of student admissions and of staff retention as well as the setting of targets for the results of inspection outcomes are assessed by school owners as being an important part of what the principal should be doing. In the literature, there are studies that indicate that there are many aspects to a principal's role that cannot be measured easily (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019; Grissom et al., 2015; Heffernan, 2018b). In attempts to satisfy the requirements of their KPIs, there is evidence in this study that some BSO principals find ways of manipulating the results that are expected by the school

authorities, specifically in student progress and student achievement. In other instances, principals are credited in BSO reports with operating the kind of school that produce outstanding student outcomes, but there is limited background evidence to show how principals actually influence these outcomes. The principals in this study had 360-degree evaluations conducted on them by external evaluators. These instruments were also used by non-specialist external companies and by HR directors. The 360-degree evaluation is a specific instrument that is used for gathering data and dispensing feedback (Donaldson et al., 2020). The evidence in this study suggests that the choice of instruments was limited in their usefulness for evaluating these BSO principals, for example, the 360-degree evaluations incorporated many aspects of a school evaluation. So how these evaluators arrived at their judgements about the principal is not clear.

This study also found evidence that the nature and the methodology of the 360-degree evaluations involved long business orientated surveys, excessive data gathering, imprecise results and politically motivated designs. While surveys can be a valuable source for obtaining a panoramic view around the principal (Davis et al., 2011; McPeake et al., 2014), the design for their uses in this study appears imprecise. Some of the principals used surveys that they designed themselves, but the participants knew that the principal designed the survey and this influenced the results. Some of the BSO inspectors used survey results for their own interpretation that were taken from surveys that were conducted by different evaluators. Some of the principals felt that the parents in their school were tired of surveys. How all of these surveys were interpreted is relevant to what was expected from the results. The evidence indicates that there is a wide variety of perspectives in how the surveys are interpreted and used as part of the principal evaluation process. The evidence also indicates that the use of these evaluation instruments, such as the 360-degree evaluation and the survey, was aimed at the result more so than the process.

The motives for evaluation show the some of the reasons for evaluating the principal included comforting the owner that the principal was doing a good job. There were also reasons that portrayed attempts at applying good practice and in these attempts, the principal was able to choose their own evaluators. Other motives for evaluating the principals were that evaluations were useful for setting rewards. The evidence shows that the results of these types of evaluations offered no surprises and the

results were not in doubt. The evidence indicates that evaluation motives were directed at getting a positive result for these BSO principals in their evaluations.

Evaluation practices in national settings often involve the use of instruments that are researched. For example, the United States uses instruments such as the 360-degree, evidence based, multi-rater scale VAL-Ed system, as explained in Chapter 3. While these systems may have their advantages, they still do not capture the essential elements of the present-day principal (Donaldson et al., 2020). There still exists a limited availability of evidence on the impact of 360-degree evaluation systems (Youngs et al., 2020). Yet, self-designed non-calibrated versions are used by these external evaluators who conduct evaluations on the BSO principals of these large schools. Some of the BSO principals found them interesting, while others found them tedious. It appears that principals expect more from their external evaluations, not least in terms of the quality.

The lack of evidence to support judgements is highlighted in Ofsted' annual reports by the Chief Inspector of Ofsted to the Secretary of State for Education (see Appendix S). All of the evidence found in this study indicates that these BSO principals are mostly exposed to subjective opinions and judgements for which the supporting evidence is scarce. This evidence also indicates that there is a lot we do not know about the how judgments are made in the real world and that the black box nature of such judgements requires continual research. This appears to be the case in this study even when instruments are used.

6.3.1 *The influence of governance on procedures*

AGBIS is the membership body that represents the interests of governing bodies of ISC schools (AGBIS, 2019c). It claims membership from the vast majority of independent schools whose principal leadership belong to the other membership associations, such as HMC and IAPS. Governance guidelines are provided by AGBIS to independent schools in England and overseas. While there is no requirement for BSO schools to join AGBIS, some BSOs are members. One of the criteria for overseas membership is that the school must provide a current inspection report that has been conducted by a DfE-approved inspectorate for BSOs.

Specific guidelines for the role of the governing board and for the role of the chair of the governing board are provided by AGBIS. In the standards for BSOs, there is a specific standard for the

suitability of the proprietor and staff. In this standard, commentary is often made in BSO inspection reports on the ownership of the school. AGBIS also provide guidelines for good practice in the evaluation of the principal.

The evidence in this study provides examples of where the chairperson of the owning company had direct access to the principal of the school and where the chairperson directed the principal of the school, even when there was a board of governors with its own chairperson in place. Further evidence indicates that the principals discuss the direction of the school with the owning company chairperson. In traditional constructs in England, the principal is accountable to the board of governors (AGBIS, 2019c; Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019). The evidence shows that the ownership of the school has influence over the principal, over the governing board and over the running of the school. Recognising the authority held by this chairperson, and being closely aligned to that power source, is important for the principals in this study. There is an awareness among the principals of the authority of the owning company chairperson, but there is also the chairperson of the governing board to consider within this context. The power sources in school governance appear to be directed towards individuals, as described earlier, more so than collective governance. The principals interact with the chairperson, whether that individual is chairperson of the owning company or the chairperson of the governing board more so than with other members of school governance. The positioning and authority of governing boards in some of these BSO environments requires further investigation. The overall authority and composition of governing boards appears to depend on the school context, even though each BSO is required to have one. For the principals in this study, the governance arises from the ownership structure in its various forms and has a direct influence on their perceptions of how they are evaluated.

Another influence on the governance is provided by the DoE, who was generally found in Variant 2 schools that had a Head Office. The role of the DoE is very relevant in the evaluation of some of the BSO principals in this study. Schools in England expect that the board of governors is the final evaluator of the principal's performance (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019), and in some BSOs this is the case. However, the presence of the DoE has shifted the position of the board of governors both from the perspective of AGBIS (2019c) and its guidelines for independent schools, and from the perspective of

state schools in England as researched by Eddy-Spicer et al. (2019). The DoE is the supervisor of the principal, but the DoE is also found to give opinions on the school performance as found in some BSO inspection reports. The DoE is sometimes a member of the board of governors and reports to the owner of the school. The DoE evaluates the principal and decides if the principal has achieved the expected KPIs. The evidence indicates that the DoE influences the role of the governing board and the evaluation perceptions of the principal who views the DoE as a direct supervisor.

There are further influences on BSO governance that affect the evaluation understandings of the BSO principal. In terms of stakeholder representation, there are examples of governing boards in this study where there aren't any parent members. There is also evidence of a practice where an associate of the owner works in the school quite close to the principal and is involved in the day to day running of the school. The role of this associate, who is not a member of the governing board or a bursar, is one that disrupts the practices of this particular BSO principal. There are other examples of influence such as schools where family members related to the owner work in the school on a daily basis. The accountability structures for these principals in their daily work are opaque.

In guiding the governing boards of independent schools in England, AGBIS recommends careful thought and planning in selecting members for governing boards (AGBIS, 2019c). Members should be from a "diverse range of backgrounds" (p. 6). AGBIS guidelines state that while some parents are "beneficial" (p. 7), it is guided in the manual not to have too many parents on the governing board. However, BSO inspection reports sometimes highlight the role of parents in the school. BSO inspection reports also comment sometimes on accountability being directed by the governing board towards the principal and comment on how well the ownership recognises the lines of accountability for the principal. The perceptions of governance of the BSO principals in this study vary because of the interpersonal relationships that is found among the governors. The role of the associate and the role of family members are not reported in BSO inspection reports where accountability structures for the principal are described clearly.

While it is expected in schools in England that a governing board is representative (Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019), it can also be expected that a representative governing board influences the principal's evaluation perceptions. Governing boards that are not representative further develops the argument put

forward by Jenny that governance issues need to be addressed in BSOs. She argues that more work is required to improve governance by those that influence BSO governance, such as membership associations and the DfE through its standards. Governing boards that have limited parental input at the school governance level is not unusual in the independent sector in England, but diversity is expected (AGBIS, 2019c).

In BSOs, good governance practices appear to be challenged in managing the actions of some school owners that have influence over governing boards leading to perceptions of inequity. Diversity considerations at a governing board level influences the evaluation of these BSO principals. The presence of associates and family members influences the informal evaluation possibilities for these BSO principals, and influence their understandings of how they are evaluated. An analysis of the evidence presented notes that, despite the variety of challenges at a governance level, BSO accreditation allows these BSO governing boards to be comparable to those found in independent schools in England.

6.4 Capacity for evaluations

Capacity presents the perceptions of BSO principals about those who evaluate them and their perceptions of their evaluation abilities. The principals had a range of evaluations conducted on them and their perceptions of these evaluations processes varied. Throughout this exploratory study, the terminology used to describe the process of evaluating BSO principals has many interpretations. There is no cohesive or universal way in which these BSO principals are evaluated.

The BSO principals in this study perceive that those who carry out their evaluations have the ability to do so. The survey participants believe that their school governing boards are aware of what successful principalship looks like. However, the nature of private independent schools means that each board of governors or ownership structure is different. They have different expectations and have different perceptions about successful BSO principalship.

The term ‘head teacher performance management’ is a process of evaluating the principal’s performance that derives from England (DfE, 2015; Eddy-Spicer et al., 2019). Elements of this process is referred to by principals in the study, but they use different terms. The term evaluation, as it

might be conducted on themselves, is not a term that is easily understood by the BSO principals in this study. The principals have various interpretations of what it means. The context informs the evaluation, but more importantly, these principals accept methods of evaluating them that are varied and diverse.

The capacity of the principal to be evaluated has many perspectives. The principals in this study are experienced with long standing careers. This is an important element in their evaluation process. Time and experience are perspectives to be considered in the measurement of successful leadership (Hargreaves & Fink, 2012; Moos et al., 2011b; Sinnema et al., 2015). The principals do not expect to be surprised in their evaluations. They have an influence on their evaluations and the context influences the way they are evaluated. They have prior knowledge of when an evaluation takes place. The quality of the instrument that the evaluators use to make their assessments of the principal is an influence on what these principals think of their evaluation. The evidence indicates that if an evaluator uses instruments that the principal has knowledge of, such as 360 appraisals or surveys, then the principal places more value on the use of these instruments as an accountability tool, and they tend to use the instrument's results in self-accountability. The science behind these instruments does not appear to be understood well by the principals in the study. Proper evaluation encompasses all methods necessary to reach judgements, but these judgements should be defensible (Stufflebeam, 2001; Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). In this perspective, those carrying out evaluations are required to be selective in their choice of methods and try, if possible, to develop a suite of methodological approaches designed to give a broad overview of the reality being evaluated. All of the evidence indicates that the capacity of the principals, the competencies of evaluators and the effectiveness of the instruments in this context require further development and research.

6.5 The Way that Results are Used

There is very limited literature on the BSO principal, or on BSOs as a sector. There is some reporting on BSOs in Ofsted-monitored Inspection Reports and the Chief Inspector's Annual Reports that are submitted to the Secretary of State for Education in England (Ofsted, 2012a, 2013, 2014, 2015a, 2016, 2018a, 2018b, 2019). However, there is no reporting on the evaluations of BSO principals or how

these results are used. The evidence in Chapter 5 indicates that there are few development advantages for the BSO principals in their evaluations. The results from the principals' evaluations are not widely shared. In most instances the results are shared only with the principal and the chairperson of the board of governors, or with the DoE if there is one. Most participants in the research do not share their evaluations with colleagues. However, most of the participants agree that the way that they are evaluated could be improved and that there are better ways of evaluating them. The evidence indicates that where attempts are made to formally evaluate the principal, their willingness to share their evaluation is impeded by the process. This evidence signals some issues with the way that the results are used and about the perceptions of others regarding the evaluations that might lead to concerns among these BSO principals. They prefer to keep them confidential by sharing them with the chairperson of the governing board only or by categorising them under contractual formalities. Contractual aspects, such as confidentiality, also signal the possibilities that exist for those principals who are adept at negotiating their own contracts. Rebecca states that principals were "sworn to secrecy" and that rewards that were given to principals depended on the agreement that they made with the school authorities at the beginning of their contracts.

BSO inspection reports also give some limited feedback on principals, they are published publicly. The way that the BSO inspection results are used also have an influence on these BSO principals' evaluation perceptions.

6.5.1 *The influence of the BSO inspection in evaluating the principal*

In a BSO inspection report, the observations on the principal and the leadership are spread throughout the document. An analysis of the BSO reports shows that there is a specific section in each BSO report that deals with the standard related to leadership and management (DfE, 2016a). However, it is challenging to extricate explicit judgements on the principal, as these comments are mixed with general commentary and judgement on the overall leadership. BSO inspectors do not set out to make a judgement on the principal as an individual aside from leadership. In the ISI's inspection framework, inspectors of BSOs are encouraged to adopt a 'best-fit' approach against the standards including the standard for leadership and management (ISI, 2018). This aspect relies on the professional judgement of the inspection team. It is relevant that there is no explicit reporting on how qualitative judgements

are actually made regarding the standard for leadership and management. In Ofsted's Annual Reports about the operation of the BSO inspection scheme (Ofsted, 2012a, 2013, 2014, 2015a, 2016, 2018a, 2018b, 2019), the Chief Inspector comments on the variation in format, structure and reporting detail contained in the BSO Reports. In these reports, commentary is sometimes made on the principal as an individual. However, the standard relates to leadership and management that includes others such as the governors, the owners and the other leaders in the school. In BSO reports, the reporting and the commentary on the principal as an individual is at the direction of the reporting inspector, who writes the report. It is notable that the role of the BSO principal is readily identifiable as a school leader, whereas others such as a particular governor or the role of bursar are not as readily identified. As a consequence, this commentary informs the principal's personal evaluation and the principal's understanding of evaluation. The principals in this study realise the significance of a BSO inspection of their schools. For some BSO principals, the inspection outcome is a core KPI and has significance for the principal on whether the KPI is achieved following the inspection. Any commentary on the principal in the BSO report influences their perceptions of evaluation. In many ways, the overall process also influences the BSO principal's autonomy as a leader.

6.5.2 *The BSO principal's autonomy in leadership*

Leithwood (2019) draws from significant empirical research undertaken over many years when outlining the personal qualities of school leaders and their impact on school performance. He argues that when cognitive, social and psychological qualities "act in synergy", then a large contribution is made to leadership success (p. 39). Another measure of effectiveness is the grading system that is used by Ofsted. Outstanding is the highest achievable grade in the scale used in the inspection of schools framework conducted by Ofsted (Ofsted, 2019c). Instruments such as the VAL-Ed offer empirical measurements of principal efficacy (Porter et al., 2008). The literature highlights that the accurate evaluation of excellence differentiates from those elements that are harvested from subjective opinions (Crawford et al., 2017a; OECD, 2013; Radinger, 2014).

The evidence found in this research illustrates high levels of control and compliance are required of BSO principals by the ownership and governing boards of BSOs. This evidence is clearly at odds with that which is identified as signals of efficacy by the literature on school principal leadership. Many of

the leaders of BSOs in this research are graded highly by Ofsted and often the principals are identified as being ‘visionary’ and ‘inspirational’. However, this research has found that BSO principals are expected to comply with narrow KPIs such as those aimed at student achievement targets and inspection outcomes. If these KPIs are achieved, then the principal receives a reward. It is also evident that the ownership structure of most of the BSOs is such that many decisions about school improvement are not within the principals’ remits. Much of the financial decision-making and the infrastructural developments are taken by the ownership and not by the principal. The expected levels of compliance and the control over their roles diminish these BSO principals’ ambitions towards efficacy as described by Leithwood (2019). Furthermore, the influence of direct supervisors such as DoEs and the practices of school owners in dispensing informal evaluations also, arguably, serve to stymie the full potential of some BSO principals. In many respects, these aspects differentiate the BSO principal from formal school leaders found in most national systems, where principals set directions for their schools (Donaldson et al., 2020).

What is also significant is that the BSO principals’ perceptions of the use of KPIs is that they are fair and accurate. Almost all of the research participants agree that their school knows what good principalship looks like. Yet, their ability to practise as a school leader appears reduced to a function merely to satisfy homemade KPIs. These aspects of compliance and control are significant not only in terms of autonomy in school leadership, but also in terms of assessing principal efficacy. Evidence in this study indicates that BSO principals are subject to levels of expectation and compliance that place them at the level of follower rather than that of leader. This shift in position influences how they allow themselves to be evaluated and influences their perceptions of their evaluations.

Nevertheless, from a DfE perspective, these principals are comparable actors to the principals of independent schools in England that are accredited and recorded in similar fashion. Recording and monitoring the results of the inspections of accredited schools is an important aspect in providing quality assurance to the overall system.

6.5.3 *Recording and monitoring the results of BSO inspection reports*

Providing quality assurance for BSOs is found in the voluntary inspection system established for their schools. However, establishing an accurate list of accredited BSOs for a purposeful sample is difficult from a single reliable source. The formal recording and monitoring of accredited BSOs provides legitimacy to the evaluation perceptions BSO principals. The evidence indicates that the formal recording and monitoring of BSOs provides a challenge for the DfE.

Having an accurate number of principals and having the correct names of the principals was relevant in the context of selecting only the BSO principals of accredited schools to take part in the research. Accuracy for a purposeful sample is important (McPeake et al., 2014). There is a limited number of principals of BSO accredited schools available at any point in time. Sometimes, getting access to research participants can be challenging (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These are some of the reasons that establishing a reliable list of currently accredited BSOs for this research was important.

Another reason for accurate recording is that the main aim of a BSO inspection report is to inform parents and prospective parents about the quality of provision within the inspected school, and to inform them how their school compares with independent schools in England (DfE, 2016a). The expectation in the DfE standards for BSOs is that the "standards implemented by schools will ensure policies and procedures of a quality at least as high as those required in independent schools in England" (p. 6). In the standards that inspectorates have to meet in a BSO inspection (DfE, 2014a), the arrangements should "command public confidence and be publicly accountable" (p. 4). It is also a requirement in the standards for inspectorates that reports will be "published on the internet and will be available from the schools and the inspectorate" (p. 9). The GIAS database underpins the overall BSO voluntary inspection scheme and its quality assurance. As outlined in Chapter 4, the supporting GIAS database (GOV.UK, 2021a) offers a formal public record of BSO inspection reports on which the schools listed by the DfE can be found by parents and prospective parents. It is also used by the DfE, by other government departments and by government partners to contact schools, to update systems, to perform analysis and to inform policy decisions. The result of passing an inspection allows schools to be listed on the GIAS and to be issued with a URN alongside all other accredited schools in England. An accredited school with a valid URN can allow NQTs to complete their final probationary

year at these schools before being allowed into the teaching profession in England. These aspects also recognise the school as being British and as being comparable to independent schools in England. However, the GIAS does not accurately record all accredited BSO schools or BSO principals. Database entries on the GIAS system were found to be out of date by this study and the names of the principals were inaccurate.

In addition, this research attempted to establish the accurate contact details of school principals for purposeful sampling as outlined in Chapter 4. Seven schools that were listed as accredited BSOs on the DfE's GIAS database could not be included in this study for validity reasons. These schools were formally accredited, but they did not have principals to run their schools. The principals were substituted by unqualified managers, or by owners in some cases, who took over the running of the schools after the principals had left their positions.

It is relevant that there is no reliable source where parents and prospective parents can find the names of accredited BSOs or the names of the principals of accredited BSOs. Furthermore, BSOs are also listed on the same database as every other accredited school in England. This finding points to vulnerabilities in the DfE's formal public record of all accredited schools in England and overseas. The information inaccuracies in the GIAS database creates an unreliable element in the foundational structure for the overall BSO voluntary inspection scheme. A concerning perspective is that these vulnerabilities appear to be present for a number of years. Any misgivings about the GIAS database and its accuracy undermine part of the function of how one aspect of the evaluation of a BSO principal is informed.

There are further challenges for the DfE in terms of the monitoring and the provision of quality assurance in BSO inspections. Principals in this study sought approval from their school authorities to apply for BSO inspections as a means of quality assurance. There is a financial cost attached to these evaluations that are conducted on their schools and sometimes a justification for this expense is required by the school from the principal. The reason for this justification is that the value of external quality assurance may not always be recognised among stakeholders. Audrey reveals that, despite the importance of a BSO inspection to her perception of quality, the local school inspection is given greater relevance by parents. Jenny reveals that the credibility of her external evaluator, who arrived

from England, was very important to her governing board. It was relevant to them that he had a certain status and that he understood the BSO context. Mark and Phil were also evaluated by external consultants and they emphasised the importance of the evaluators' knowledge and experience of the BSO environment.

As stated earlier, Ofsted is commissioned by the DfE to carry out monitoring on the independent inspection providers. However, the level of monitoring of the BSO inspection scheme appears low (see Appendix R), and the reason for this appears to be to do with funding. This perspective is consistent with some of the concerns expressed in 2018 by Ofsted's Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman in relation to inspection monitoring of independent schools in England (Spielman, 2018a). The reality is that the DfE are charged with monitoring and implementing quality assurance in the education system in England, and in the absence of Ofsted's commissioning, there does not appear to be another substitute. The *Quality Assurance Framework* outlines that the DfE's principles of quality assurance and assumptions about data are a key component in providing quality (DfE, 2020b). The impact of the level of quality assurance on the quality of the inspection providers' work, and the low level of monitoring by Ofsted on the activities of the inspection providers under the BSO scheme, requires further research. The influence that this low level of quality assurance monitoring has on the evaluations of BSO schools, and its affect on the evaluations of BSO principals at a local school level, also requires further research.

Principals rely on the BSO inspection scheme for legitimacy and for external quality assurance in order to differentiate themselves from other forms of British international school. Any inconsistency in the overall BSO inspection scheme, including the monitoring of quality assurance and how accredited schools are formally recorded, influences the evaluation and the perceptions of evaluation that BSO principals hold.

6.6 Summary

In summary, this chapter discussed the findings of the study under four broad headings – environment, procedures, capacity and the way that results are used. This framework has helped to keep coherence to the overall investigation. The findings and their relationship to the literature and the wider world

were all discussed. There are many perspectives in relation to the evaluation perceptions of the BSO principal. Exploring the environment has revealed the similarities that the BSO principal has with the broader subject of leadership, and also the differences. Defining the BSO principal has contributed to isolating those differences and to pointing out the contextual differences where the BSO principal is located. The procedures have helped to highlight the instruments used in the evaluation and to illuminate the powerful influence of governance. Capacity has portrayed how these principals have developed techniques to survive in the environment, while the way that results are used has raised questions for the overall sector. This report now moves to its concluding chapter where some research conclusions are drawn, and the contribution and limitations of the study are addressed. Some possibilities for future research are also offered in this final chapter.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter is designed to bring together the concluding parts of a lengthy investigation that aimed to explore the evaluation perceptions of the BSO principal and to discover how BSO principals are evaluated. As with any study, highlighting the conditions under which it is conducted is relevant in order to address both the limitations of the study and to consider the contribution that the investigation makes to the field of research in education more generally.

In attempting to answer the research questions, further possibilities for research begin to emerge and these are discussed here also. It is hoped that, by illuminating some of the lived experiences of a sample of BSO principals, this study lays some foundations for future research in this specific area as well as adding to the broader spectrum of phenomenological studies. This chapter begins with a reflection on what has been learned in the first instance and then moves to bring the inquiry to a close.

7.2 Research Conclusions

The rationale for examining this lucrative, global and yet previously under-explored area of education is to broaden the corpus of knowledge by providing evidence-based findings about the evaluation of BSO principals. In leadership theory, comparative forms of leadership contribute to an understanding of the nature of the BSO principal, both in terms of formal school leadership and principal efficacy. Evaluation theory offers a basis for considering how the evaluation of a BSO principal might be approached. In the context of leadership typologies (Bush & Glover, 2014; Leithwood, 2019), there can be little doubt that the BSO principal holds a recognisable place in the educational leadership domain. The investigations carried out in this study not only confirm a position for the BSO principal in the current corpus of literature, but they also provide a lens through which to view this unique formal school leader in future work. The flexibility of using phenomenology as a qualitative methodology (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Van Manen, 2014) has offered a unique approach through which the study could interpret the experiences of the participating principals. The social constructivist paradigm (Creswell & Poth, 2018) has allowed for variables that require further explanation and that supported the gathering of the research data from multiple sources. The thematic

analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013) has drawn out emergent themes from the data. An adapted framework (OECD, 2013) has provided a platform for coherence, as well as a structure for reliable and credible data management.

The evaluation perceptions of the BSO principals in this study are diverse in many respects and they are heavily influenced by the contexts in which they are located. The BSO environment is an outlier in international education in that it is accredited by the DfE in England and, at the same time, it is endorsed by the British government. The investigation has shown that attempts have been made by this accreditation and by this endorsement to bring aspects of the historical context of the BSO principal, as they were developed in England, to new contextual locations around the world.

The study has also shown that the BSO principals perceive that their role in leading schools internationally is comparable to independent schools in England and they stress the uniqueness of this comparison throughout the inquiry. However, a broader analysis of the international schools' context indicates that both their situated leadership and the accreditation of their schools have been disorientated in recent years, due to the numbers of schools being established that call themselves 'British' (ISCResearch, 2020a). It is therefore relevant for this study to situate the BSO sector in the geography of the broader literature by building on a typology of international schools that is already established (Hayden & Thompson, 2016). From this viewpoint, extricating the BSO and developing a definition for the BSO principal in the complex world of international education is significant. This working definition supports the perception of uniqueness that these BSO principals hold and allows the sector to stand exclusively at an international level.

Continuing to follow this methodological strategy reveals that the structure of BSO ownership and the inductive discovery of four variants of BSO helps to explain how the governance of BSOs evaluate their principals differently. The motives and methods for evaluation are linked to these variants of ownership structure, and these aspects inform the evaluation perceptions of the participating principals. In the evidence provided by the principals, the diversity of their evaluation experiences reveals that a range of methodologies are used to evaluate them. The evidence indicates that the evaluations of BSO principals were not shared with school stakeholders generally and this dimension in itself offers further insight into how and why evaluation as a tool may, or may not, be egalitarian,

liberating or even helpful. The methodologies and instruments used to evaluate BSO principals, as evidenced in this study, are often imprecise and they produce varying degrees of usefulness to support evaluation processes. This perspective is validated in theories of school leadership evaluation where research has shown that principal evaluation is a complex issue (Anderson & Turnbull, 2016; Fullan, 2020; Grissom et al., 2015). However, by and large, the participating principals perceived that they were being evaluated fairly and accurately within their context. They also expressed a belief that there are ways to improve BSO leadership evaluations so that BSO principals could relate better to their school communities and engage more fully in their own professional development.

As school leaders, the BSO principals in this study are subject to a range of leadership evaluation criteria. Perspectives are given in BSO inspection reports, they are given by KPI promoters and they are given by various formal and informal evaluators that assess the principals' professional and personal attributes as school leaders. However, and given the evidence, this highlights the question if some of these principals are subjected to levels of compliance and control that, in many respects, situate them as mere participants in commercial enterprises and not as leaders in education. The study has shown that there are aspects of control and expectation in their environments that clearly thwart their school leadership autonomy. The authority held by school investors, the control held by those who design business focused KPIs and the expectations held by supervisory DoE roles all provide evidence for this view.

This research shows that, for some of the BSO principals, the local governance is significantly different to what is expected in terms of representation in England. From this standpoint, the evidence indicates that BSO principals, such as the sample group in this study at the very least, require further help from the architects of accreditation and the promoters of standards towards forms of governance that are more representative of what is expected in comparable schools in England.

In terms of BSO inspection reports, the participating principals perceive that that their performances are quality assured. However, the judgements that are made in BSO inspection reports requires a further level of evidence that might provide more value to BSO principals and their schools. The Chief Inspector of Ofsted recommends that sufficient evidence is required before arriving at the qualitative judgements that BSOs receive during inspections. Recommendations like this are a

consistent challenge for the inspectorates. Efforts to improve the overall system are commented on annually by Ofsted (see Appendix S). However, the frequency of quality assurance monitoring of the accreditation process by Ofsted is comparatively low (see Appendix R). In the independent sector in England, which is a related sector, the frequency of quality assurance monitoring also appears to concern Ofsted (Spielman, 2018a).

Another aspect of quality assurance is found in the recording system for BSO data that includes formal accreditation details. The GIAS database during the lifetime of this research was unreliable. There does not appear to be any formal accurate list of BSO schools' information. The registering of a BSO on this GIAS database creates an explicit public record of their accreditation and this also forms the basis of the BSO principal's status. A school that is not accredited is not a BSO and the principal of a school that is not accredited cannot claim to be a BSO principal. If the public record is unreliable to any extent, then this might serve to undermine the overall BSO voluntary inspection system.

In terms of ability, the evidence in this research indicates that the participating BSO principals have the capacity to be evaluated, but their perceptions of this capacity appear to be geared more towards achieving a positive result in the context of their evaluations rather than developing the process of school improvement. The principals in this study, to a significant extent, arranged and were in control of their own evaluations. They appeared eager to align themselves to the perception of their schools and were keen that their schools were highly rated in BSO inspections (see Appendix Q). The continual focus on the high performance of their schools arguably offers a perspective that is misaligned with processes that might further develop and support these principals. It also appears, from this research, that the BSO principals do not always engage in their evaluations for quality outcomes. The evidence for this perspective may be viewed from follow-up information regarding how the careers of the participating principals progressed in the year following their interviews for this research. It is interesting to note that only three (n=3) of the interviewed principals still retained their positions (Mark, James, Donald). In terms of the other principals, three (n=3) moved on to other roles that did not involve leading schools and six (n=6) were dismissed from their positions. High principal turnover can be viewed as significant, particularly in a post-Brexit era where the British government are promoting a global trade strategy that includes British education. If the BSO sector is an important

part of the UK's post-Brexit strategy, then the supporting and monitoring of an effective quality assurance system for the evaluation of BSO principals and their schools is very relevant.

7.3 Limitations of this study

This exploratory study offers a range of compelling research data, but the interpretation of this data has its limitations (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Flick, 2018a; Yin, 2015). The onus is firmly and consistently placed on the researcher to understand the limitations of the research and to avoid any perils in the inquiry process (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña, 2015). Phenomenological research, like other forms of research, is confined to issues of context and so, the evaluation perceptions of BSO principals, may require deeper quantitative analysis for policy makers. As with all small-scale studies, the findings are not intended to be transferable beyond the context of the study or into a wider spectrum of school principals. Similarly, the sample size of the study is not intended as representative of the BSO principal population.

The different locations of the research participants in this study posed a challenge. In the date frame, during which this research was conducted, BSOs were found in 47 countries across three continents (see Appendix B). While the locations of some of the participants were visited, the ability to travel to all the research locations was restrained due to time limits and due to cost factors. Had there been the opportunity to spend longer and to observe the BSO principals in their workplaces, then perhaps a more enhanced view could have been formed.

The global spread of the study also illuminated some limitations that emerged from the different cultural locations. In some cases, local cultural controls restricted the use of suitable video-conferencing software as a substitute for travel. Telephone interviews were used from some locations when videoconferencing may have revealed richer contextual data in some of the long-distance interviews.

Cultural and business perceptions held by some of the BSO principals influenced, and possibly diminished, the sharing of key documents that related to how their evaluations are monitored. This researcher's field data confirms that similar perceptions influenced principals' contributions and the limits to the evidence that they felt that they could share, even under anonymity.

7.4 Contribution of this study

This study set out to explore the evaluation perceptions of BSO principals and to discover how they are evaluated. The foundation and framework of the research design were designed architecturally to help find answers to the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña, 2015; Yin, 2015). The evaluation perceptions of a sample of BSO principals places a focus on a topic that is relatively under-explored and under-represented in the knowledge corpus.

This research provides the historical context for the BSO and helps to trace how BSO principals came into existence as part of the international schools' environment. It contributes to disentangling the BSO sector from other similar models, and it locates BSOs in an exclusive and unique position among international schools. This perspective has allowed this study to develop a working definition for the BSO and for the BSO principal. It is now possible to view the BSO sector as a separate sub-type of international schools with its own unique variants. The influence of these variants on the evaluation perceptions of BSO principals is informative and it provides a lens through which can be viewed how BSO principals are evaluated. The procedures for evaluating the BSO principals portray an array of motives and methodologies. Examining their evaluation perceptions helps to illuminate the lived experiences of the BSO principals in the study and, in particular, how they negotiate and survive in their local contexts. Their capacity for being evaluated highlights some deficiencies in the BSO system. The way that evaluation results are used impacts upon their perceptions of evaluation and it also places a spotlight on deeper questions as they relate to the wider world of the BSO sector.

This study provides an opportunity to look afresh at an area of international education that, in many respects, is different to what might be found in most national systems. It is arguably the differences in situations that provide learning opportunities, and similarities in themselves may help to provide affirmation that every learning encounter is different. It is intended that this study will offer opportunities for decision makers to be informed about the evaluation perceptions of BSO principals and thereby offer an intellectual potential by which similar or indeed different, scenarios may be considered.

7.5 Possibilities for future research

This study has explored an under-researched, yet fertile, topic for future research. There is no doubt that further examining the international schools' sector and the international schools' leadership field would have much to offer the corpus. The British government's focus on placing education as a key export element among its ambitions for international progression has developed significant potential for the BSO sector, but little knowledge still exists about the phenomenological functioning of this distinct environment. The study also offers a contribution to the broader examination of international school principal leadership and possibly opens the debate for exploring different other sectors in this important area. It further supports the possibilities for other nations to develop their international reach and to promote their own educational philosophies. The international environment has much to offer to national contexts, not least in the study of perceptions about evaluation. From this perspective, the evaluation perceptions of the principal behind the BSO inspection report might offer some worthwhile contribution.

7.6 Reflection

Conducting a PhD research journey about the evaluation perceptions of a group of BSO principals has been a remarkable experience. Providing opportunities to voice their experiences and discovering some of the truths about their evaluation understandings, including how they are evaluated and what informs their evaluations, has been a valuable undertaking. Despite the wealth of knowledge that is available to be gathered about the BSO principal, and the BSO sector, there is still an acute lacuna in the academic literature about how this environment functions and about how this leadership is evaluated. This study set out to partly fill this gap by providing a foundation cornerstone and a solid base upon which further knowledge may offer an elevated perspective. The hope is that this study achieved what it set out to do and, in the process, perhaps, also managed to draw attention to a unique educational environment that continues to grow in many parts of the world.

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Appendices

Appendix A Lord Agnew's Letter

Lord Agnew Kt DL
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the School System
Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

4th October 2018

Dear Colleague

BSO policy update: October 2018

I am writing to update you on the Department for Education's policy on British schools overseas.

As you know, we introduced revised standards for BSOs in September 2017. We were aware that these standards would be challenging, but it was clear from our public consultation that schools wanted to be recognised for the high-quality provision on offer and so consequently we introduced these more robust standards, which are on a par with standards for independent schools in England.

We knew that some standards would be difficult to meet in some countries and so undertook to keep the situation under review and we have done so now that we have had a full year's experience of inspections being carried out according to the revised standards. At particular issue are the standards relating to fundamental British values and protected characteristics as follows:

Curriculum policy and plans

Part 1: 2(1)(b)(ii) do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

Part 1: 2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation as set out in the Equality Act 2010

Teaching

Part 1: 3(i) does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

Part 1: 3(j) does not discriminate against pupils because of their protected characteristics as set out in Part 6 of the Equality Act 2010

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Part 2: 5(a) actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

Part 2: 5(b)(vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010

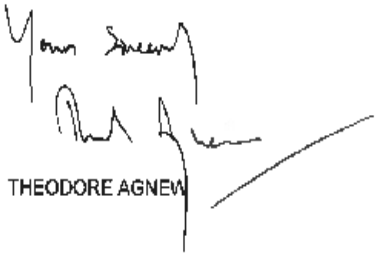
Part 2: 5 (b) (vii) encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England"

Already some schools judged to be outstanding in all other aspects have been unable to meet one or more of the above because to do so would contravene the laws of their host country. Thus far our position has been to acknowledge this situation on our website but not to grant BSO accreditation.

Having carefully considered the situation again, we clearly do not wish to do anything to undermine the absolute commitment to uphold fundamental British values and respect for those with protected characteristics. However, we have come to the position that we should acknowledge the quality of schools which meet all the BSO standards other than those which would set them against local laws.

We will therefore be granting BSO accreditation to schools that cannot meet one or more of the standards listed above, but meet all the other standards, provided that they can evidence that meeting one or more of the standards above cannot be achieved lawfully in their host country. Where such evidence is forthcoming, we will acknowledge on our website that the school meets all the standards that it is able to meet in that country and therefore should be granted BSO accreditation in that country.

I can therefore confirm that our policy is now to accredit schools in countries where to meet certain standards would be in breach of host country laws, as long as there is evidence to substantiate this, and all the other standards are met.



THEODORE AGNEW

Appendix B BSO locations on one date - 31st August 2018

	BSO locations: 31st August 2018	No. of BSO Schools	
1	Ascension Island	1	0.6%
2	Bahrain	3	1.9%
3	Belgium	2	1.2%
4	Brazil	1	0.6%
5	Brunei	1	0.6%
6	Bulgaria	1	0.6%
7	China	3	1.9%
8	Cyprus	2	1.2%
9	Czech Republic	6	3.7%
10	Dubai	23	14.3%
11	Egypt	7	4.3%
12	Germany	1	0.6%
13	Greece	4	2.5%
14	Guernsey	1	0.6%
15	Hong Kong	3	1.9%
16	Indonesia	1	0.6%
17	Italy	1	0.6%
18	Japan	1	0.6%
19	Jersey	3	1.9%
20	Kenya	8	5.0%
21	Korea	1	0.6%
22	Kuwait	9	5.6%
23	Luxembourg	1	0.6%
24	Malaysia	2	1.2%
25	Mexico	1	0.6%
26	Mongolia	1	0.6%
27	Morocco	1	0.6%
28	Nepal	1	0.6%
30	Netherlands	2	1.2%
31	Nigeria	4	2.5%
32	Oman	2	1.2%
33	Panama	1	0.6%
34	Portugal	1	0.6%
35	Qatar	6	3.7%
36	Romania	5	3.1%
37	Russia	3	1.9%
38	Saudi Arabia	4	2.5%
39	Singapore	3	1.9%
40	Slovenia	1	0.6%
41	Spain	16	9.9%
42	Sweden	1	0.6%
43	Switzerland	2	1.2%
44	Thailand	4	2.5%
45	Turkey	3	1.9%
46	United Arab Emirates	11	6.8%
47	Vietnam	3	1.9%
		162	

Appendix C Ethics Approval

Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University

Mr. Michael O'Sullivan,
School of Policy and Practice

3rd December 2018

REC Reference: DCUREC/2018/193

Proposal Title: The principal behind the report: school principals' perceptions of their own appraisals

Applicant(s): Mr. Michael O'Sullivan,

Dear Michael,

This research proposal qualifies under our Notification Procedure, as a low risk social research project. Therefore, the DCU Research Ethics Committee approves this project.

Materials used to recruit participants should state that ethical approval for this project has been obtained from the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee.

Should substantial modifications to the research protocol be required at a later stage, a further amendment submission should be made to the REC.

Yours sincerely,

Donal O'Gorman

Dr Dónal O'Gorman
Chairperson
DCU Research Ethics Committee

DCU Research & Innovation

Taighde & Nuálaíocht Tacaíocht
Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath,
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F research@dcu.ie
www.dcu.ie

Appendix D Plain Language Statement

Plain Language Statement

This is important information prior to consenting to take part in this study. This is a plain language statement in fulfilment of Research Ethical Guidelines as promoted by Dublin City University (DCU).

The title of this research study is "The principal behind the report: school principals' perceptions of their own evaluations". The aim is to interpret the lived experiences of school principals about how they are evaluated.

The research is part of a submission towards fulfilling the requirements for a PhD degree. It is self-funded and is carried out under the supervision of the School of Policy & Practice, Institute of Education, Dublin City University, Ireland.

Part of the study will comprise of a survey of international school principals, whose schools are accredited by the Department for Education in the United Kingdom, under the British Schools Overseas (BSO) scheme, as of 31st August 2018. At the end of the survey Principals will be given the opportunity to indicate a willingness to take part in a subsequent semi-structured interview on the same topic.

It is expected that participation in the survey will take less than 30 minutes, and participation in semi structured interviews will take less than one and a half hours.

Following the data gathering process, the opinions and views of experts currently working in the field will be gathered to provide deeper insight and to verify facts.

No personal data of any of the participants will be used, and identities of participants and their schools will be anonymised. However, while it is impossible for researchers to absolutely guarantee the confidentiality of information, every effort will be made within the limitations of the law. You, as a participant will be asked to take part under your own free will, and you will retain the right to withdraw at any time during the study. It is intended to respect all participants and to promote their rights.

The potential risks to you, as a participant, from involvement in this study are no greater than those encountered in everyday life. There will be no direct or indirect benefits accruing to you as a result of your involvement. It is not intended that the raw data collected will be used for further studies.

The data will be deleted or destroyed following its use for this study.

If you have any concerns about this research, and wish to gain an independent opinion, you should in the first instance contact The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9 (Telephone: + 353 1 7008000; email: rec@dcu.ie).

My contact details are as follows: Micheal (Mike) O'Sullivan (Student Number 16212824) Principal Researcher

School of Policy & Practice Institute of Education Dublin City University Ireland.

Email: micheal.osullivan92@mail.dcu.ie
Phone: +353 1 7008000

Appendix E Researcher's introductory email to participants

From: **Mike O'Sullivan** <micheal.osullivan92@mail.dcu.ie>
Date: Tue, 5 Mar 2019 at 18:42
Subject: Research Study
To: [redacted]

Dear Principal Colleague,

I am a practicing international school principal who is seeking your help.

Over the next two weeks, I will be conducting a research survey among school principals / CEOs / head teachers of accredited British Schools Overseas (BSOs) across the world. This is a study of principals' perceptions about their own evaluations. It is confidential and anonymous.

I would like to invite you to take part.

The title of the project is "**The principal behind the report: school principals' perceptions of their own evaluations**". This research will form part of a PhD thesis.

I would be really grateful if you could find some time from your busy schedule to complete the survey which will be emailed to you this week. The Plain Language Statement below should serve as an outline of the project.

best wishes

Mike O'Sullivan

School of Policy & Practice
Institute of Education DCU
Dublin, Ireland

DCU

Appendix F Penta International School Inspector qualification

Appendix G The Survey

Dear Colleague,
This is a confidential and anonymous survey.
An evaluation is a formal assessment of your performance made in some way by those to whom you are accountable e.g. the school board. A school principal may also refer to a CEO / Director / Headteacher of a school or schools. Your contribution to this survey is very valuable in helping to come to valid conclusions about what BSO school principals think of their own evaluations. Thank you for your time. Best wishes, Mike O'Sullivan.

* 1. I have completed this survey of my own free will, and I consent for this data to be used as part of this research study.

2. I have a personal evaluation process which is carried out regularly

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

3. I have a personal evaluation process which is carried out internally by the school board.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4. I have a personal evaluation process which is carried out by a third party - an evaluator - engaged by the school board.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

5. I have never had a formal personal evaluation carried out on me by my current school board.

- ◯ Strongly agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly disagree

6. As a principal, I have never experienced a formal personal evaluation.

- ◯ Strongly agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly disagree

7. My school board is aware of what successful principalship looks like

- ◯ Strongly agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly disagree

8. The way I am evaluated is informed by a set of professional standards

- ◯ Strongly agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly disagree

9. The way I am evaluated is carried out using a researched instrument or framework

- ◯ Strongly agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly disagree

10. The way I am evaluated is carried out using an internal instrument or framework e.g. key performance indicators.

- ◯ Strongly agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly disagree

11. The way I am evaluated is very much linked to the operations and management of the school - more so than pedagogical leadership.

- ◯ Strongly agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly disagree

12. The way I am evaluated is very much linked to pedagogical instruction in the school - more so than operations and management.

- ◯ Strongly agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly disagree

13. I believe that the way I am currently evaluated is fair

- ◯ Strongly agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly disagree

14. I believe that the way I am currently evaluated is accurate

- ◯ Strongly agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly disagree

15. I know when my evaluation will take place

- Yes
- No

16. The way I am evaluated is a source of stress

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

17. The way I am evaluated is very much linked to the performance of the school e.g. student academic results

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

18. The way I am evaluated is very much linked to the management and retention of staff

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

19. The way I am evaluated is very much linked to the context of the school. The context informs my evaluation.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

20. My job depends on my evaluation.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

21. I believe that the way I am evaluated gives a fair impression of me

- ◯ Strongly agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly disagree

22. I receive a written report of my evaluation.

- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree

23. The way I am evaluated in this school does not really affect me in the longer term

- ◯ Strongly agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly disagree

24. I would share my evaluation with my teaching colleagues

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

25. I would share my evaluation with other teaching professionals, not including the school board

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

26. The way I am evaluated could be improved

- ◯ Strongly agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly disagree

27. There is a better way of evaluating me than the process to which I have been subjected.

- ◯ Strongly agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly disagree

28. What might you suggest could be added to, or changed, about the way school principals might be evaluated?

29. I am open to taking part in a more in-depth confidential interview about this research topic, so I am including my contact email in the box below

Appendix H The Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Perspectives of school principals of their own evaluations

"This interview is taking place on _____.

The interviewee is a practising international school principal, who has kindly offered to take part in this research. This interview is audio taped.

Can you confirm for the record that you have taken part of your own free will? Can you confirm for the record that you understand that you can withdraw that consent at any time during this interview?

Thank you for opting to take part in this research study.

The title of this project is "The principal behind the report: perceptions of school principals of their own evaluations".

The aim of the study is to gather data on the lived experiences of international school principals about how they are evaluated.

Evaluating your role:

1. Tell me about your school context.
2. Tell me about who might evaluate you.

The evaluation processes

3. Tell me about your evaluation process.
4. Discuss if your evaluation is informed by a set of performance standards.
5. Tell me about the instrument or process used for your evaluation.
6. Tell me why you think your evaluation process is fair or unfair.
7. Tell me why you think your evaluation process is accurate or inaccurate.
8. Is your evaluation similar to what a school evaluation/ inspection would say? Explain.
9. Tell me about the feedback you receive and how you receive it. Is there a next step?
10. Discuss your evaluation in terms of instructional/pedagogical leadership and whether it takes account of that aspect of your work.
11. Discuss your evaluation in terms of operational & management leadership and whether it takes account of that aspect of your work.
12. How does your evaluation affect you? ..Professionally? ..Personally?

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Use of results

13. Discuss if your evaluation is mainly based on the performance of the school.
14. Tell me how your evaluation might have/might not have enhanced your practices and behaviours?

Improving the system

15. Discuss if you share your evaluation with your colleagues.
16. Tell me about the things that your evaluation may not see about your work.
17. Do you think evaluators should be trained, and why?
18. Tell me what you would see as the important aspects of a school principal evaluation?
19. How do you upskill, or keep up to date?
20. Please discuss from whom you get the most professional support? Why?
21. If you were in charge of a school system, or a number of schools, how would you go about evaluating the school principals?

Appendix I Interview details

Interview Details

Principal	Age range	Gender	Interview mode	Interview Length
Mark	50-55	Male	Face-to-face	1 hr 35 mins
Audrey	40- 45	Female	Face-to-face	2hr 15 mins
Ian	40-45	Male	Face-to-face	1 hr 56 mins
Karen	50-55	Female	Face-to-face	2hr 32mins
Rebecca	45-50	Female	Telephone	59 mins
Phil	50-55	Male	Telephone	Cumulative calls 2 hours 32 mins
William	55-60	Male	Face-to-face	Cumulative meetings 2 hours
Donald	40-45	Male	Skype	49 minutes
Jenny	50-55	Female	Skype	57 minutes
Charles	50-55	Male	Telephone	1 hr 6 mins
Sam	50-55	Male	Skype	1 hr 15 mins
James	50-55	Male		1 hour

Appendix J Sample of perceptions emerging from themes

221 BSOps prefer to have some kind of evaluation- the way improvement is viewed

222 The BSOp is sometimes conflicted between their beliefs and the wishes of the board.- alignment with school plan

223 The BSOp believes the should always be gathering evidence for accountability, even in the absence of a formal evaluation.the way improvement is viewed

224 If the instrument involves a survey, then BSOp likes to know the content of the survey, and as far as possible the feedback as it arrives.

225 The BSOp believes that the vision for the school must be justified by them even when they have no influence over it..the way improvement is viewed

226 BSOps believe that chronology, and time /dates measurement are important in their evaluations. The way improvement is viewed

227 BSOps believe that their jobs are unique (data inputs)the way improvement is viewed

228 BSOps believe that the credit for good school test results (student outcomes) reflects on them (data inputs) and vice versa.the way improvement is viewed

229 BSOps believe that the abilities of the evaluator must be to a perceived standard.

230 BSOps believe they should not expect to be surprised about the results in their own evaluation – the way improvement is viewed

231 When it comes to their own evaluation, BSOps believe accuracy and validity is an influence. The way improvement is viewed

232 BSOps have a poor understanding of the evaluative validity of the processes and mechanics of their own evaluations.

233 BSOps believe that school self-evaluation processes are tiresome and that, depending on their experience, don't stress about them

234 BSOps believe that their street cred is important, and this is supported by the context in which they work, and the structural processes built around that context.- the way improvement is viewed

235 The perceived standard of evaluator that the BSOps holds is based on the experience of the evaluator. Abilities of the evaluator

236 BSOps believe that it is important that the evaluator has an understanding of their contextual role.

237 BSOps believe that local contextually based inspections are more valuable than other externally based inspections. The way improvement is viewed

238 Parents, according to BSOps, place more value on local inspection arrangements so that they can compare with other schools locally.

239 BSOps believe that the process in their evaluations is less critical than the outcomes.the way improvement is viewed

240 BSOps do not expect any surprises as the implications are low apart from marketing affects.

241 BSOps believe that their own evaluations are mired in politics

242 BSOps believe that irrelevant of the researched validity of an instrument, that instrument carries validity in their own evaluation. They don't know how they are evaluated.

243 BSOps have a poor understanding of the evaluative validity of the processes and mechanics of their own evaluations.

244 BSOps believe that their evaluations are accurate.

245 BSOps are not aware of the processes of the range of evaluation instruments available to them, and are very accepting of whatever process is used. They are not aware of valid methods of evaluating themselves.

246 BSOps believe that their street cred is important, and this is fulfilled by the context in which they work, and the structural processes built around that context.

247 For BSOps, the context in which they work enhances or takes from the confidence they have in their role. If they believe that they are trusted and supported, then confidence levels are high. If they believe that they are not trusted – manifested in micromanagement attempts by the chairman for example- then they feel demotivated and lack confidence.

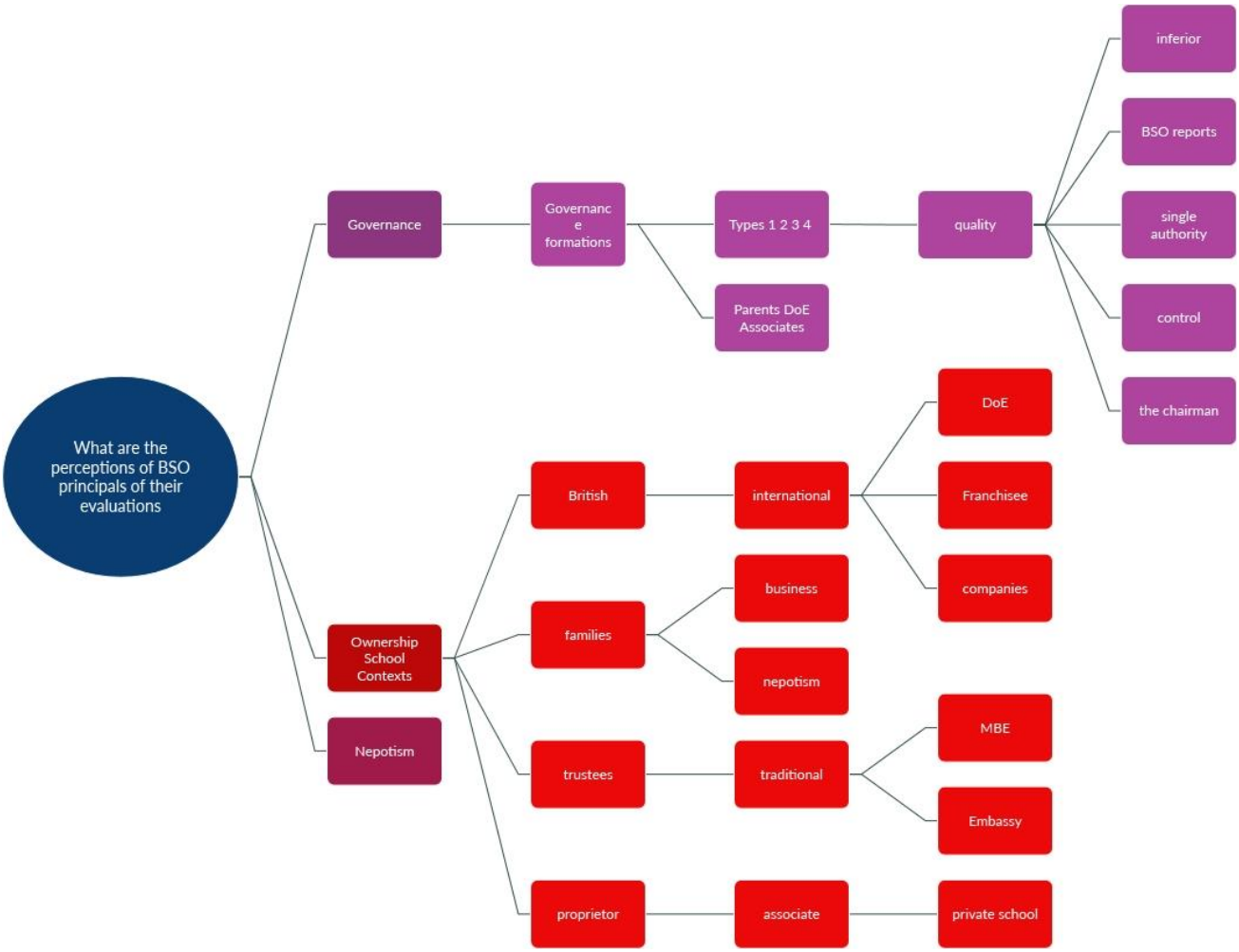
248 The structural processes built around the context in which they work might include things like sound processes for recruitment, administration, resource budgets. If these are managed well, then confidence is high. But if these processes have gaps and are unwieldy or untrustworthy, then this influences how BSOps feel in terms of confidence.

249 Career betterment BSOps believe that networks of supporting BSOps are essential.

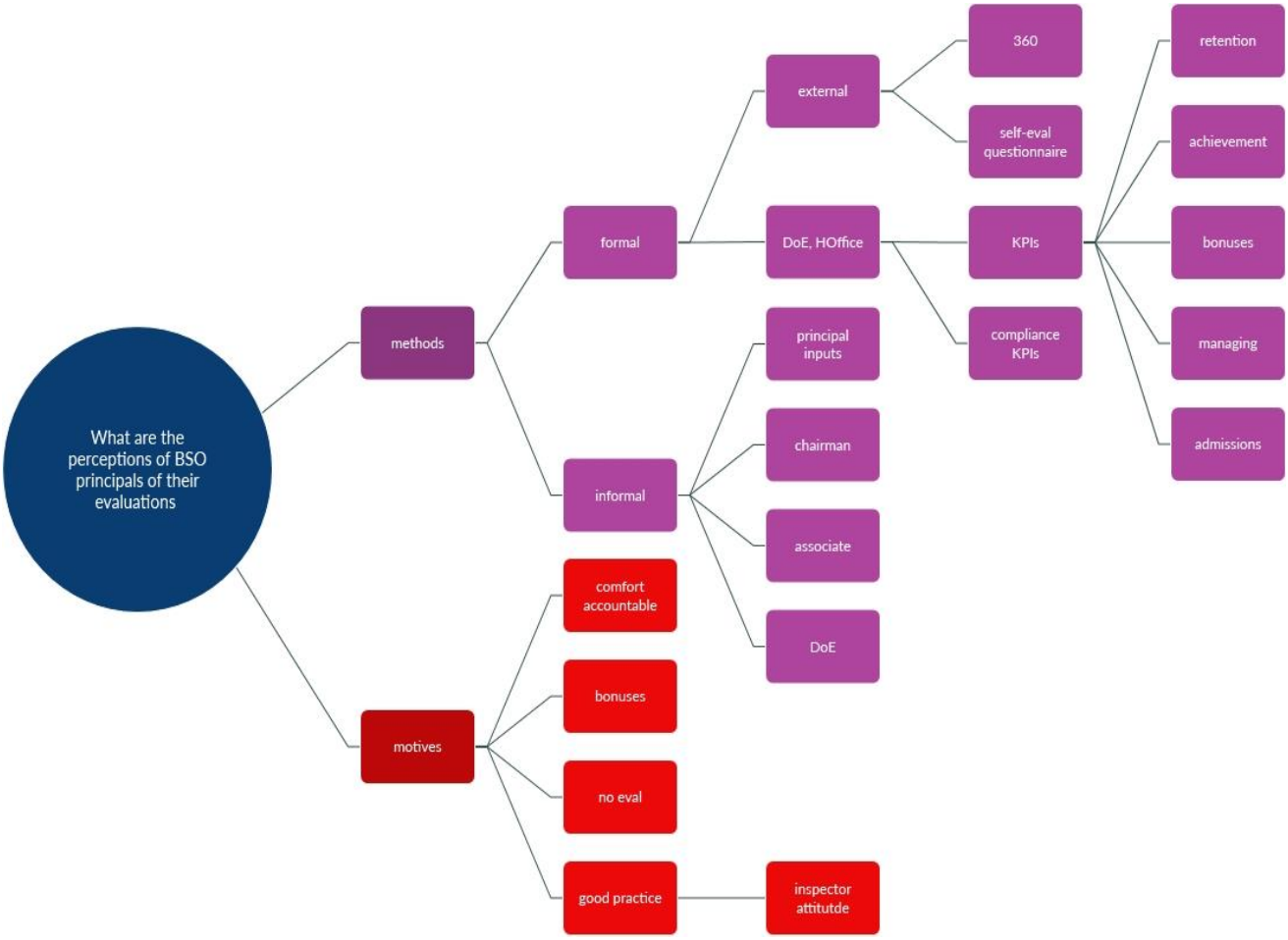
250 BSOps feel that they must seek legitimacy for their BSOs. BSOps do this in their conversations by associating themselves or their schools with legitimate people or institutions

251 Using the results of an inspection as an evaluative instrument (framework), or as part of an evaluative instrument has an influence on the BSOp's perceptions of their own evaluation

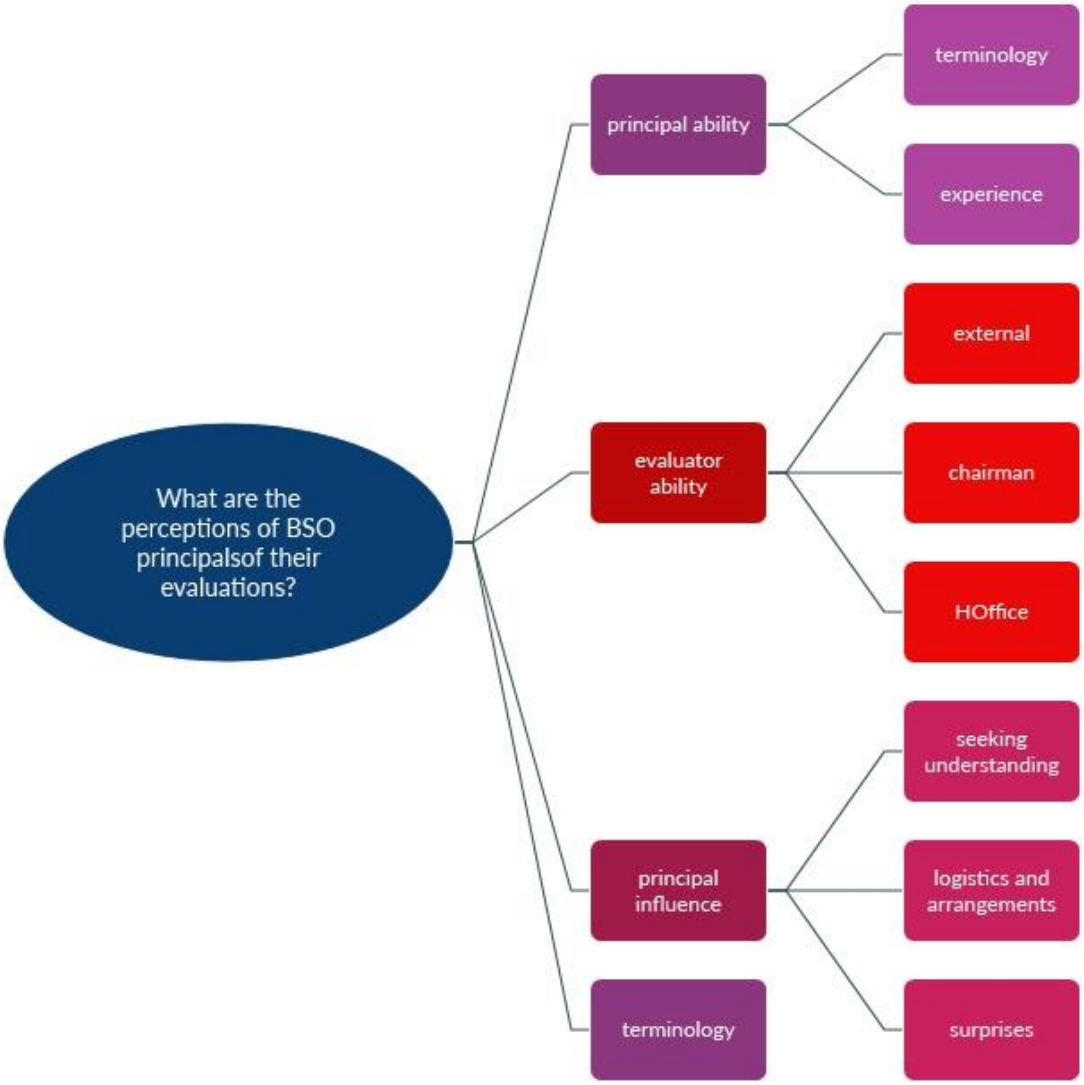
Appendix K Themes gathered under 'Environment'



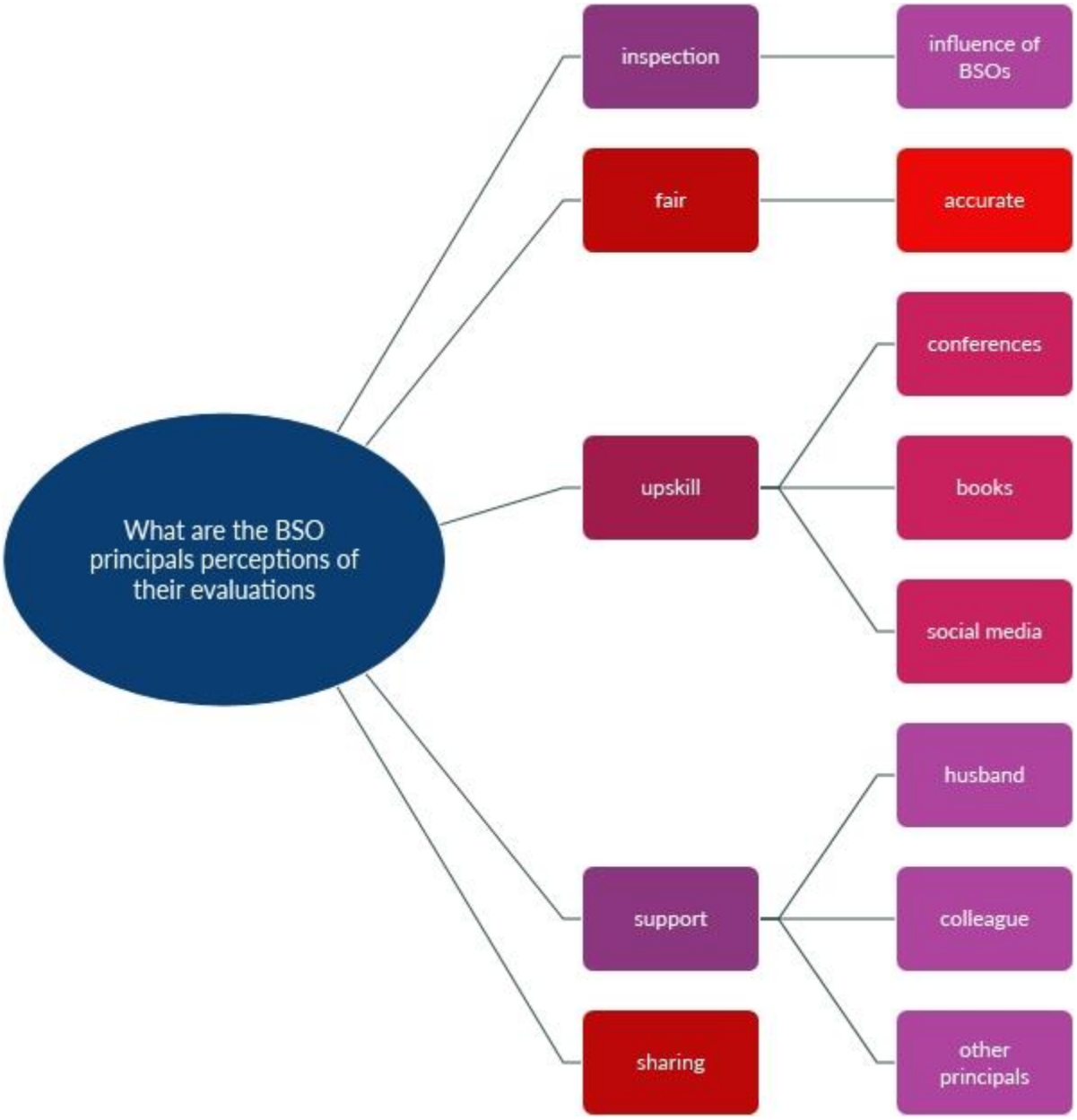
Appendix L Themes gathered under 'Procedures'



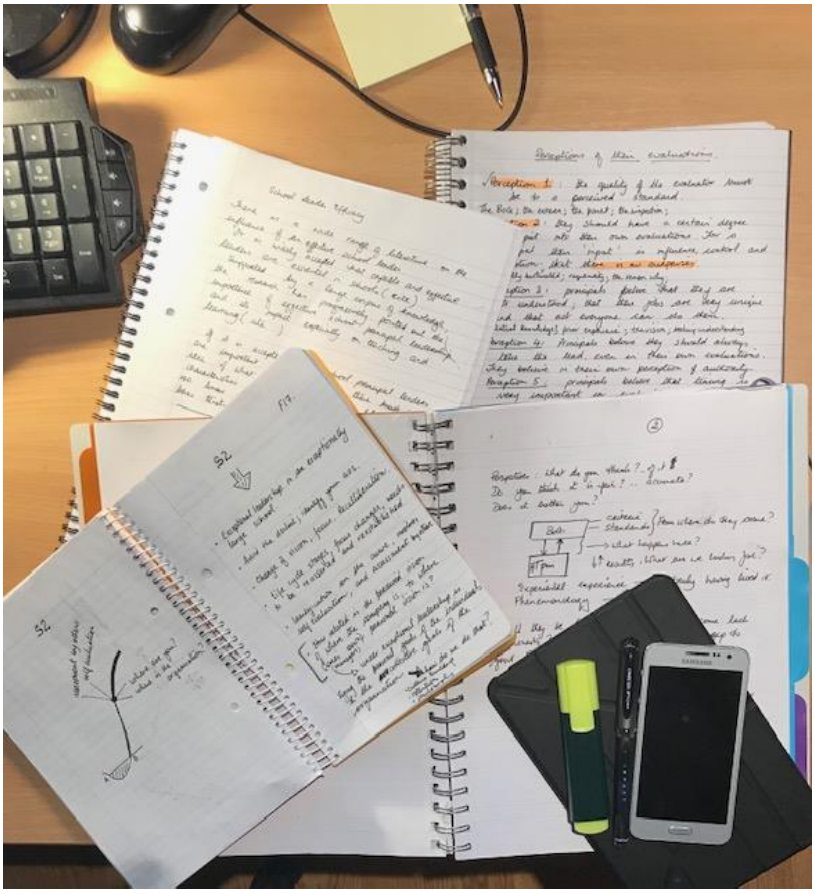
Appendix M Themes gathered under ‘Capacity’

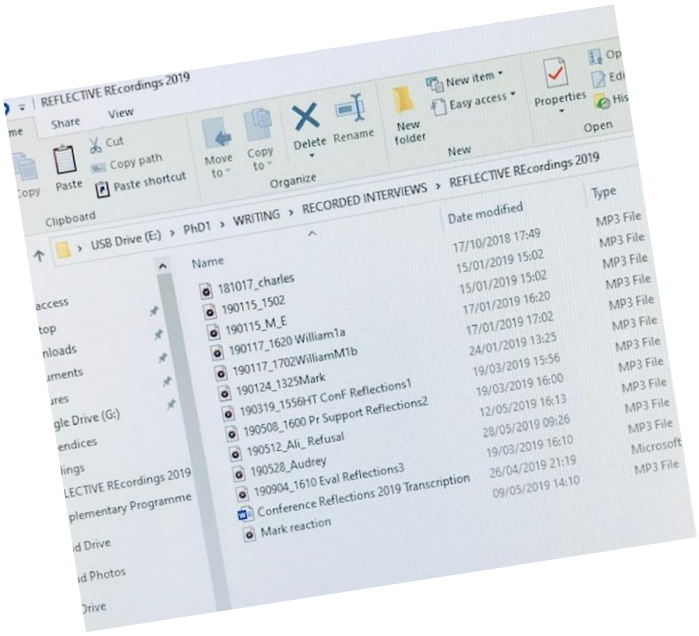


Appendix N Themes gathered under 'The Way That Results Are Used'

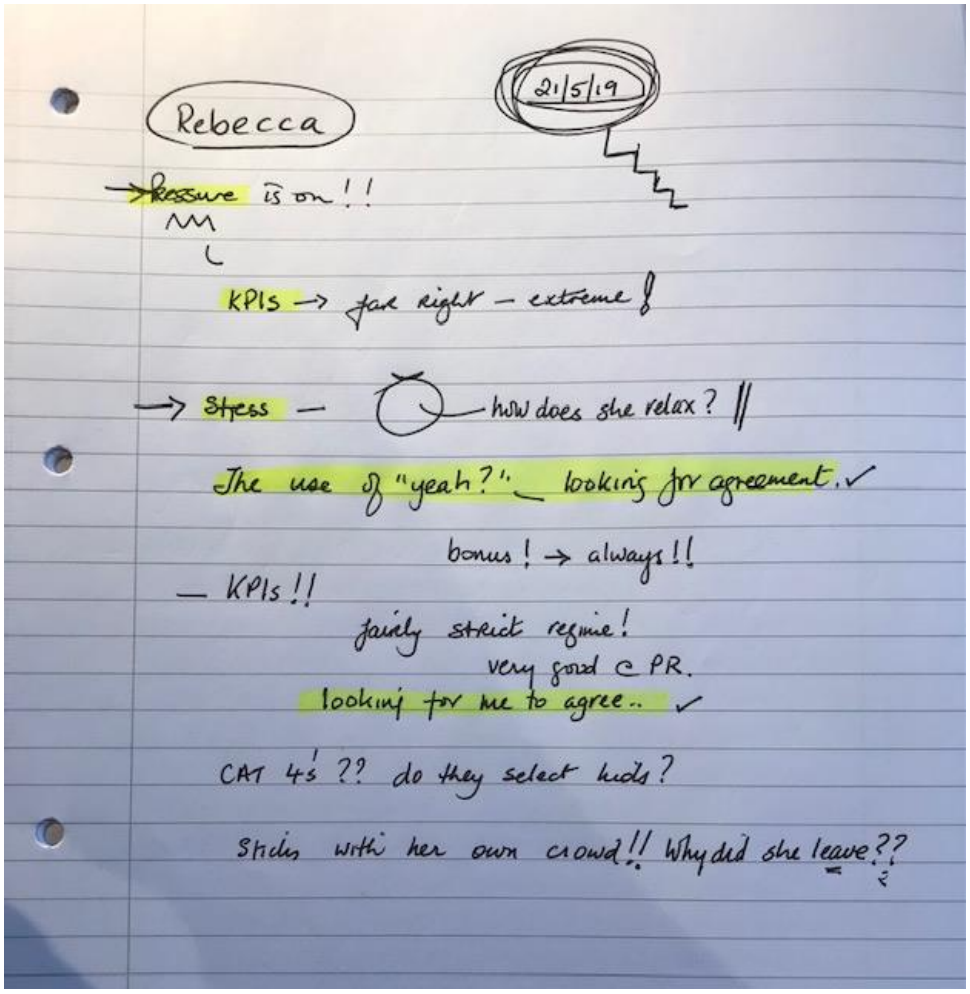


Appendix O Samples of Reflective Diaries & Audio Notes





Appendix P Field Note recording sample (Rebecca)



Appendix Q Sample from BSO Analysis Database (DB1)

Establishmen	tablishme	IS Accredited Mer	Inspector	spection Date	Leadership Rating	Country
St Catherines	BSO	COBIS Accredited	ISI	Nov-16	excellent	Greece
Maadi British	BSO	COBIS Accredited	ISI	Jun-16	excellent	Egypt
Modern Engli	BSO	COBIS Accredited	PENTA	Mar-16	excellent	Egypt
British Intern	BSO	COBIS Accredited	ISI	Mar-16	excellent	Malaysia
The British Sc	BSO	COBIS Accredited	Penta	Feb-16	excellent	Nepal
Lagos Prepara	BSO	COBIS Accredited	ISI	Feb-16	excellent	Nigeria
St Paul's Scho	BSO	COBIS Accredited	PENTA	Dec-15	excellent	Brazil
Campion Sche	BSO	COBIS Accredited	ISI	Nov-15	excellent	Greece
Prague Britisl	BSO	COBIS Accredited	ISI	Oct-15	excellent	Czech Republic
British Schoo	BSO	COBIS Accredited	ISI	Oct-15	excellent	Netherlands
King's Colleg	BSO	COBIS Accredited	ISI	Oct-15	excellent	Spain
GEMS First P	BSO	COBIS Accredited	EDEV	Jan-17	good	UAE-Dubai
Hillcrest Inte	BSO	COBIS Accredited	ISI	Nov-16	good	Kenya
British Embas	BSO	COBIS Accredited	ISI	Oct-16	good	Turkey
St Andrew's I	BSO	COBIS Accredited	G2G	Apr-16	good	Malawi
British Intern	BSO	COBIS Accredited	SIS	Apr-16	good	Turkey
The British Sc	BSO	COBIS Accredited	PENTA	Mar-16	good	China
Riverside Sch	BSO	COBIS Accredited	ISI	Feb-16	good	Czech Republic
Poznan Britis	BSO	COBIS Accredited	ISI	Feb-16	good	Poland
Jerudong Inte	BSO	COBIS Accredited	PENTA	Jan-16	good	Brunei Darussalan

Appendix R Annual Ofsted Reports Analysis

Ofsted Monitoring of BSO Inspection Reports

Ofsted Monitoring July to July	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Evidence based reviews	Not reported	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0
Reports Reviewed (off site)	Not reported	2	2	8	13	9	6	5	0
On site monitoring	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reports analysed	Not reported	all	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No. of Inspections	9	20	21	25	36	55	71	50	48
No. of Countries	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	18	25	26	31	21

Appendix S Annual Ofsted Reports' Recommendations

Inspectorates of British schools overseas

Annual Ofsted report recommendations

Part of BSO Reports Analysis

British schools overseas annual report 2013/14

Priorities for further improvement

Ofsted recommends that all of the inspectorates ensure that they:

- clearly report the impact of schools' safeguarding arrangements
- report on all four aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- ensure that areas for development in reports are clearly linked to schools' weaknesses
- include a section in all reports that explains how the inspection was carried out. This section should set out, as a minimum: how many days the inspection lasted, how many inspectors took part, their names and what activities took place.

British schools overseas annual report 2014/15

Recommendations

Ofsted recommends that:

- the inspectorates should continue to be approved to inspect British schools overseas
- the inspectorates ensure that there is consistency across different sections of reports,
- that the text matches the grades awarded and all areas for improvement are written clearly
- each inspectorate publishes its inspection documents on its website and provides up-to-date documents for Ofsted's monitoring.

British schools overseas annual report 2015/16

Recommendations

Ofsted recommends that each inspectorate should strengthen its quality assurance arrangements and ensure that:

- inspectors make consistent judgements regarding pupils' progress
- the information provided in reports is clear and unambiguous
- inspectors consistently report the views of pupils and parents
- inspection handbooks provide inspectors with comprehensive guidance.

British schools overseas annual report 2016/17

Recommendations

Ofsted recommends that, in line with the recommendation that we made in the 2015/16 report, all inspectorates ensure that:

- their inspection handbooks include detailed guidance on making judgements
- inspectors consistently report on the views of pupils and parents.

British schools overseas annual report 2017/18

Recommendations

Ofsted recommends that:

- overall judgements about the quality of the school's provision match the findings within the report's summary
- recommendations for improvement address all the important weaknesses identified within the report's summary, and do so with clarity and precision
- reports provide sufficient evidence to identify whether schools meet the standard for British schools overseas that relates to the encouragement of pupils' respect for other people, paying particular regard to all of the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

British schools overseas annual report 2018/19

Recommendations

Ofsted recommends that:

- reports demonstrate clearly how inspectors have considered the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 when reporting on whether schools meet the standards for British schools overseas that relate to the encouragement of pupils' respect for other people
- inspectors consistently report on the views of staff.

Appendix T Emails from DfE confirming GIAS accuracy

From: **OVERSEAS, BritishSchools** <BritishSchools.OVERSEAS@education.gov.uk>
Date: Fri, 7 May 2021 at 12:22
Subject: RE: BSO enquiry
To: Mike O'Sullivan <micheal.osullivan92@mail.dcu.ie>

Dear Mike

Thank you for your email.

Information about the BSO inspection scheme can be found on Gov.uk: British schools overseas inspection scheme - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

GIAS does contain an up to date list of accredited BSOs, however this information can also be accessed on Gov.uk where the schools are listed by country along with a link to their inspection report: British schools overseas: accredited schools inspection reports - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

I hope this is helpful. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

[redacted]

British Schools Overseas Policy

From: Mike O'Sullivan <micheal.osullivan92@mail.dcu.ie>
Sent: 03 May 2021 13:49
To: OVERSEAS, BritishSchools <BritishSchools.OVERSEAS@education.gov.uk>
Subject: BSO enquiry

Hello

I am a PhD researcher currently investigating evaluation in British Schools Overseas (BSOs).

There is very limited literature on the sector, and I would be very grateful for a little help.

Could you confirm please if there are any government policy documents relating to the BSO sector? and perhaps let me know where I can access them?

I am also keen to confirm if the Get Information About Schools (GIAS) database contains an up-to-date list of all accredited BSOs? ... and if not where could I find such a list?

There is a chance I am contacting the wrong section.

If that is the case, it would be very helpful if you could point me in the right direction.

Thank you for your time

best wishes

Mike O'Sullivan

Mike O'Sullivan

School of Policy & Practice

OVERSEAS, BritishSchools

to me

Dear Mike

Please accept my apologies for the delay in replying to you, [redacted]

The information on GIAS is updated by DfE. When we receive an inspection report, the school's record is updated with the new date of inspection and a link to the report. If a school's accreditation has elapsed, we will arrange to have the school's record archived and it will no longer be visible on GIAS. Normally accreditation lasts for 3 years. The exception to this at the moment is where a school's accreditation may have elapsed but they have requested an extension due to COVID.

I hope this is helpful.

Kind regards

[redacted]

British Schools Overseas

From: Mike O'Sullivan <micheal.osullivan92@mail.dcu.ie>
Sent: 08 May 2021 13:51
To: OVERSEAS, BritishSchools <BritishSchools.OVERSEAS@education.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: BSO enquiry

Dear [redacted]

I really appreciate your reply, this is very helpful information.

Can I ask if it is the British overseas schools who keep the information on GIAS updated? or how is that information kept updated there?

best wishes

Mike

Mike O'Sullivan
School of Policy & Practice
Institute of Education DCU
Dublin, Ireland