

**LEADERSHIP INFLUENCES UPON PUPIL ATTITUDES  
AND BEHAVIOUR IN PARISH RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS  
-IMPLICATIONS FOR ADMINISTRATORS.**

**A Thesis Presented to**

**The Faculty of Education, Nursing and Professional Studies**

**The University of New England**

In Partial Fulfilment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Educational Administration (Honours)

by

**Anne-Marie Barnett D.S.A. (A.C.A.E.), G.D.E.S.(U.N.E.)**

December 1995

## ABSTRACT

The objective of this thesis was to investigate the attitudes and behaviour of leaders and their influence on the pupil attitudes and behaviour within parish rural primary schools. Three Catholic primary schools in the Maitland Diocese of N.S.W. were chosen for the study. The schools were of similar size, economic circumstances and geographical situations. The participants in the research included 82 pupils from years 5/6, 4 teachers and 3 teaching principals.

A qualitative approach was chosen, utilizing questionnaires and individual interviews, processes which fit well into the Survey Research Model. The Self Description Questionnaires (SDQ1 and SDQ111), (Marsh 1982, 1990) were used to identify and evaluate levels of self-concept in both pupils and staff, to examine the relationship between pupils and staff, to assess any direct influence of school leaders upon the self-concept, attitudes, behaviour and morale of both pupils and staff.

The relevant literature suggests that the influence of the principal is a key factor affecting school climate. This research demonstrates that attitudes and behaviours of the principal influence the self-concept of staff and pupils.

The conclusions have a number of implications for educational administrators among which is the fact that Pastoral Care was a high profile activity in each of the

schools, suggesting that Pastoral Care should be a major item on the agenda of school leaders, especially Principals when looking to improving school climate and pupil welfare.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis was produced as a result of the cooperation of a number of people. I would particularly like to acknowledge the contribution of the pupils and teachers who were the participants in this study for giving so willingly of their time. I am most grateful to my husband Richard for his encouragement, patience and help in typing and preparation of drafts. Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor, Dr. John Spencer, for his generous assistance.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	Page
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1 The Focus Of The Research	1
1.2 Methods Of Data Collection	2
1.3 The Nature Of The Role Parish School And Its Role In Self-Concept Development	3
1.4 Defining Self-Concept	13
1.5 Initiation Of The Research And Its Objectives	16
1.6 Overview Of Study	21
<b>2. SELF-CONCEPT IN THE LITERATURE</b>	
2.0 Introduction	23
2.1 Development of the Self-Concept	23
2.2 Leadership	30
2.3 School Leaders And The Self-Concept	37
2.4 Organisational Climate and the Self-Concept	40
2.5 Measuring the Self-Concept	43
2.6 Historical developments in Self-Concept Research	46
2.7 Conceptual Framework	55
<b>3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	
3.0 Introduction	58
3.1 Data Collection Methods	59
3.2 Survey Research	61
3.3 The Shavelson Model	63
3.4 The Interview Format	66
3.5 Choice of Method	68
3.6 Chosen Instrument	70
3.7 Selection of schools for the research program	72
3.8 Implementing the research program	77
<b>4. RESEARCH RESULTS- THEIR ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION</b>	
4.1 Collation of responses	83
4.2 Analysis of individual school responses	84
4.3 Analysis of data across the schools surveyed	93
4.4 Perceived ramifications of the analysis	96
<b>5. CONCLUSIONS</b>	
5.0 Introduction	98
5.1 Major Conclusions	99
5.2 Recommendations drawn from the research	104
5.3 Suggestions re the role of administrators in the context of developing self-concept in both teaching staff and pupils	109
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	
<b>APPENDICES</b>	116

## LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig 1: Conceptual Framework
- 2: The Survey Research Model
- 3: Mechanisims of an Interview
- 4: A Retrospective View of the Pattern of the Complete Study
- 5: A Retrospective Model of the Pattern of Inquiry During Stage 3
- 6: Results of scores in School 1
- 7: Results of scores in School 2
- 8: Results of scores in School 3
- 9: Results of scores in All Schools
- 10 Results of scores in all schools according to sex.

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: SDQ Scoring Raw Scores Total Self Scale . Based on the SDQ1 Normative Archive.

- 2: Individual SDQ1 scores of pupil responses in School 1
- 3: Results of teacher responses in School 1.
- 4: Individual SDQ1 scores of pupil responses in School 2
- 5: Results of teacher responses in School 2.
- 6: Individual SDQ1 scores of pupil responses in School 3
- 7: Results of teacher responses in School 3
- 8: Pupils' Perceptions of Their School Principal
- 9: Pupils' Relationships With Teachers
- 10: Pupils' Sense Of Identity at School