



# MSEAM

THE MALTA SOCIETY FOR EDUCATIONAL  
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## SUSTAINING PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT: A CHALLENGE TO MALTESE EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

**PRESENTER:** Dr Rose Anne Cuschieri

**DATE:** Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017

**TIME:** 4.00pm – 5:30pm

**VENUE:** Gozo College Secondary school (ex-boys' secondary school)

### SESSION BRIEF:

Inspired by the work of Karp (2015) and personally being a great believer in the importance of *willpower* in people who occupy leadership posts, I embarked on a study on this phenomenon, among leaders in the field of Maltese education. The cohort includes people who form part of SMT in Maltese Church schools, but also national policy makers, and people who occupy topmost positions in the Maltese educational system.

This particular area of leadership seems to be very under-researched and mostly overlooked by researchers (Karp, 2015). Yet being a quality that predicts positive outcomes in many areas of life (Baumeister and Tierney, 2011), and bearing in mind that undeniably willful leaders achieve results (Bruch and Ghosal, 2004), led me to delve into the importance of willpower in acts of educational leadership.

Using a grounded approach, through in-depth interviews and questionnaires, my study delves into how these educational leaders perceive *willpower*; how this affects their performance and to what extent and in which situations leaders exercise willpower; what aspects of the participants' personality characteristics influence willpower abilities and vice versa; how leaders try to develop further their willpower and how they deal with negative thoughts; and how leaders understand the process of willpower.

Results so far show that willpower is certainly an important capacity for leaders, influencing human dynamics and situational outcomes. It is also a dimension which gives people that extra energy which puts impetus in their roles and behavior. Evidently willpower is a phenomenon exercised by many, to some degree or another, but which presence is overlooked or underestimated. It also transpires that willpower can also be dangerous at times if taken to an extreme.

Much more is needed to be researched in this particular area of leadership. This research will potentially add on to the available data on the topic and potentially open new doors for further research.

### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

Dr Rose Anne Cuschieri is presently the Director for Educational Services within the Secretariat for Catholic Education in Malta

