EXPERIENCES OF PRINCIPALS IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE REGARDING THEIR CAREER PATHWAYS

by

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DECLARATION

I, Mzamani EliahNkuna, hereby declare that the dissertation,**Experiences of Principals in Limpopo Province Regarding their Career Pathways**, is my original work and that all sources that were consulted and quoted have been acknowledged in the Reference list.

22.08.2014

Mr Mzamani Eliah Nkuna

Date

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, Nyikani, Tintswalo, Hoxani, Makungu, Phindhani and Somisa, without whose support I could never have completed the work. I appreciatethe sacrifices they made while I was studying for this degree.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore the pathways followed by school principals in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. The aim was to explore the pathways principals followed in order to determine knowledge, procedures and processes that lead to the appointment of quality principals in schools. Formal and informal pathways that teachers aspiring to be principals take were identified in addition to exploring what motivated the principals to apply for their posts. Little research has been done on the topic of career paths of school principals in the South African context and therefore,this study makes acontribution to the knowledge-base of career pathways of South African school principals. A qualitative study approach, using semi-structured interviews, was employed. A total of ten participants were selected using purposeful and convenience sampling. The researcher obtained consent from the participants and assured them of anonymity, confidentiality and their right to withdraw from the study at any time they felt uncomfortable in continuing to participate in the study. The main questions participants were asked wereconcerned with their experiences as principals in terms of their career pathways; the routes that they followed to principalship; and what motivated them to apply for the post. The collected data wastranscribed categorized and presented as themes with direct quotations from the participants to support the themes. The findings of this study were compared with the available literature on similar studies to determine similarities and differences. Conclusions were reached, recommendations were made and suggestions for future research on the topic were made from the findings of the study.

ACRONYMS

SMT – School Management Team

SGB – School Governing Body

SACE – South African Council for Educators

IQMS – Integrated Quality Management System

ELRC – Education Labour Relations Council

DoE – Department of Education

HOD - Departmental head

PAM – Personnel Administrative Measures

EEA- Employment of Educators ACT, 76 of 1998

SASA- South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1   INTRODUCTION

The appointment of educators to principalship positions has become a bone of contention between the Department of Education and the teacher unions in South Africa (Malangwane, 2007). Selection panels, under the watchful eye of the School Governing Body (SGB), tasked with the responsibility to select candidates for principalship positions create their own criteria for selection while the Department has its criteria as stipulated in policies, such as the Employment of Educator's Act, 76 of 1998 (Ngcobo,1996). This situation is a source of much dissatisfaction for teacher unions whose role in the selection process is a passive one. According to Malangwane (2007), the EEA, 76 of 1998, contains a clear description of the criteria that need to be satisfied for a person to become a principal, but selection panels and SGBs tend to ignore them. The non-aligned criteria used by the selection panels and SGBs have led to the creation of two distinct pathways to principalship: 'level hopping' and the traditional apprenticeship path (Dehaloo, 2008).

International literature on the appointment of school principals indicates that in most African countries, including South Africa, there have been no formal standardised criteria for principalship (Bush & Oduro, 2006). Before 1994 the appointment of school principals in South Africa was based, mainly, on teaching competence and commitment to work, including punctuality, regular attendance, adherence to due dates, obedience and self-motivation. There was no compulsory and specific qualification for principalship (Van der Westhuizen & Van Vuuren, 2007; Mestry and Singh, 2003) but only a Relevant Equivalent Qualification Value (REQV). Bush and Jackson (2002: 408) observe that in many countries there is still an, often unwritten, assumption that good teachers can become effective managers and leaders without any specific preparation. Appointment to a principalship was, mostly, based on recommendations by the outgoing principal who had a great influence on the process. In most cases succession meant nominating someone from within the school. There was no formal training or skills development in leadership and management for school principalship.

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Principalship was regarded as another job which, even though it was a senior one, could be done by any educator who excelled in teaching (Van der Westhuizen, 1991; Maile, 2000).

Since there were no national standards, structures or accreditation of school principals before democratic government in South Africa, the Department of Education in 2005 introduced the special training, standards and accreditation of the ACE programme (Palomares & Castillo, 2004; and Oosthuizen, 2005). Despite the education reform policies aimed at redesigning Educational Leadership and Management (ELM), there are still challenges with regard to the appointment of skilled and trained principals with a qualification of a national professional standard. The recent trend in appointment to principalship is that the highest post level (Post Level 3), deputy principal, should be a requirement for appointment to the position of principal as well as leadership and management training. However, this is not always the case because some candidates are appointed from a lower level (Post Level 1 or 2) to a principalship due to union influence.

Other principals are often appointed on the basis of a successful record as teachers with the implicit assumption that this provides an adequate starting point for school leadership. There is a similar picture in many European countries, including Belarus, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, the Netherlands and Portugal (Bush & Oduro, 2006). This notion leads to the view that a teaching qualification and teaching experience are the only requirements for leadership (Kitavi & Van der Westhuizen, 1997). Van der Westhuizen and Van Vuuren (2007) suggest, however, that a good teaching ability is not, necessarily, an indication that the appointed person will be a capable educational manager. The need for training and continuous professional development arises out of a growing concern that the process of appointment as school principal lacks rigor in ensuring that the criteria for the post are based on academic and professional qualifications - with a specific classroom teaching and learning focus (Van der Westhuizen & Van Vuuren, 2007).

The National Department of Education introduced the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) as a formal qualification for principalship in South Africa. Bush and Oduro (2006) argue that the requirements for a principalship post as set down in policies in South Africa are inadequate for such a high profile and demanding position. According to these researchers, principals play a crucial role in ensuring school effectiveness and without the necessary skills many are

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overwhelmed by the task. The requirements for the position as given by Dehaloo (2008) need to be revised to include a high qualification, such as a Master's degree and experience as an SMT member. Furthermore, knowledge and skills, such as leadership abilities and a competency in the management of finances, human resources and physical facilities, should be taken into consideration (Malangwane, 2007). As recommended by Su, Adams and Mininberg (2000), teachers aspiring to be principals should also have the following characteristics: be an instructional leader; be a guardian and communicator of a clear school mission; be a facilitator of frequent monitoring of student progress; be a provider of a positive school climate; be a provider of a safe and orderly environment; be a key decision-maker; and be an agent of change. Given the problems that still exist in the appointment of school principals despite the introduction of ACE suggests that there could be other pathways to principalship in South Africa (SA).

The purpose of this study was to explore different pathways to principalship and how the experiences of principals may suggest the criteria for appointing principals.

1.2   RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

My interest in the study was embedded in my personal experience as a teacher. Since starting my career as a teacher, I have applied for different positions in the management hierarchy, including that of principal, but it has always been difficult for me to progress through the ranks of management, while others have moved effortlessly through the ranks and have been catapulted directly into principalship. I worked as a classroom teacher for twelve years before I was promoted to the position of departmental head (HOD) in 2008 which I still presently occupy. There is not much available literature about pathways to principalship in South Africa. The studies related to principalship by Vander Westhuizen and van Vuuren (2007) and Mestry and Singh (2007) focus more on the professional development of principals. There appears to be a gap in the literature concerning research into the career paths of principals in South Africa and, particularly, which teachers aspire to the position of principal. This study, therefore, aimed at making a contribution to the knowledge-base of motivational factors and pathways to principalship in South Africa. I was interested in learning about, and understanding, the experiences of teachers who have progressed to principal positions and what motivated them to undertake leadership career advancement. Little is known about the factors that have enabled teachers to progress to principalship, especially in the South African context. This study was

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grounded in the fact that individual teachers have different qualities and come from different socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Despite their differences, they still compete for the limited principal posts in schools. The teachers who aspire to be principals may experience different challenges on their career pathways to principalship and little is known about such experiences.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of principals concerning their career pathways to principalship. In South Africa the process of appointing school principals is full of loopholes which has resulted in a lack of standardized pathways which teachers aspiring to be principals could follow to being appointed as principals. A study by Dalgleish (2009) indicates that teachers who aspire to be principals follow different pathways, some of which are formal while others are informal.

The acceptance of the different pathways was a result of the Department of Education bestowing powers of selection and recommending candidates for principalship on SGBs (SASA, 1996). SGBs, especially in South African schools, consist of parents of learners enrolled at the schools. In many instances parents selected to SGBs do not have the necessary knowledge to select suitable candidates for promotion posts. Malangwane (2007) laments that very few of the parents on SGBs are adequately educated, and that most have not progressed beyond Grade 12. The lack of adequate education of SGB members creates a situation where the selection process is flawed in terms of the misinterpretation of policies dealing with appointments and the formulation of criteria that are inconsistent with policies. The failure to interpret policies and to formulate suitable criteria for selection has resulted in under-qualified teachers and inexperienced teachers with little knowledge of management being appointed as principals. According to Skhosana (2004), many teachers have been promoted from the position of classroom teacher to that of principal over others with and more extensive experience in management. The present system of appointing a principal in the South African education system is unfair and needs to be critically assessed to undo the damage already done (Bush & Oduro, 2006). The purpose of this study was to explore the pathways followed by teachers aspiring to be principals in order to generate information and knowledge of the procedures and processes that lead to the appointment of quality principals in schools. The study advances an

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awareness of the barriers and factors that may contribute to the successful appointment of school principals.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question is: ***What are the career pathways that teachers follow to principalship?***

In order to address the main question, the following sub-questions were formulated:

- *What are the factors that contribute to an appointment to the position of principal?*

- *What are the formal pathways to principalship?*

- *What are the informal pathways to principalship?*

- *What are the experiences of principals with regard to the appointment process?*

- *What motivates teachers aspiring to apply for the position of principal?*

1.5 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The aims of this research are the following:

- To explore factors that contributes to appointment to the position of principal.

- To explore formal pathways to principalship.

- To explore informal pathways to principalship.

- To explore the experiences of principals with regard to the appointment process.

- To explore factors that motivate teachers aspiring to be principals to apply for principal positions?

1.6 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

A review of the available literature focused on career pathways to principalship and the experiences of principals of their own career pathways. It focused, specifically, on formal and informal pathways available to teachers aspiring to be principals and the challenges they faced

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on their way to principalship. Before continuing with the review, it was necessary to provide an explanation of pathways. According to Dalgleish (2009), a pathway is described as a path, course or route specifically, the sequence and events constituting either progression or regression of teachers aspiring to be principals and their attaining that position. Formal pathways to principalship can be described as career routes that are based on policies governing the appointment of principals, such as the Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998 hereafter referred to as the EEA, 1998 (ELRC, 2003), while informal pathways are those career routes that emerge due to the influence of selection panels under the guidance of SGBs.

In a study by Dalgleish (2009) on pathways to principalship, the formal pathway was identified as the 'traditional apprenticeship pathway' while the informal pathway was seen as 'level-hopping'. According to a study conducted by Dehaloo (2008) on the appointment process of education managers and its consequences for schools, it was also suggested that South African teachers aspiring to be principals have two different career pathways to follow, i.e., the formal traditional apprenticeship route or the informal pathway of level hopping. Both routes begin with obtaining a qualification as a teacher and entrance into the teaching profession. The literature review also focuses on the challenges that teachers aspiring to be principals encounter during their pathway to principalship and the factors that contribute to success as a principal, such as self–determination (Deci & Ryan, 1991).

1.6.1   Factors that Contribute to Success in Pathway to Principalship

Apart from the formal, traditional apprenticeship pathways and the informal level-hopping pathways described by Dalgleish (2009), the route to principalship is also determined by a variety of factors, such as type of school (primary vs. high school); enrolment size (P1 school vs. P4 school); geographical location of school (urban vs. rural), qualification and the performance level of the school (Palomares & Castillo, 2004). According to the study by Palomares and Castillo (2004), these factors contribute to decisions made by teachers aspiring to be principals concerning their choice of pathway to principalship. The study further maintains that teachers aspiring to be principals take decisions to follow a career path by considering issues, such as financial benefits, workload and distance. In another study on the role of the principals at an academically successful farm school, it was suggested that many teachers aspiring to be

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principals choose schools that will bring more financial benefits, such as a school with a large enrolment and one which is nearer to the applicant's home (Nongauza, 2004).

The literature also suggests that education plays a major role in the progression to principalship. In his study, which was conducted over a 6 year period, Bottery (2004) found that the majority of principals in American schools achieved upward mobility by acquiring an education. This implies that teachers aspiring to be principals with a higher education have an advantage in being appointed to lead schools of their choice. Domenec (2009), Papa Jr., Lankford and Wyckoff (2002) and Dalgleish (2009) are of the opinion that qualifications play a major role in the upward mobility of teachers aspiring to be principals. According to these studies, individuals who are more qualified experience a quicker path to principalship in both primary and secondary schools than those less qualified.

1.6.2 Challenges Faced by Aspiring Principals on their Pathways to Principalship

Teachers aspiring to be principals face challenges, such as a lack of exposure to management due to historical and cultural norms in South Africa (Moorosi, 2010). The study indicates that teachers who aspire to be principals face challenges in the anticipation phase, such as a lack of support from many principals who are hesitant to co-opt and train teachers by means of delegation and results in teachers having little knowledge about the running of a school. Coleman (2004) agrees that a lack of exposure to management activities serves as a challenge to teachers aspiring to be principals and this lack of exposure to management activities renders them vulnerable as they lack the management experience that is required for appointment to principal positions.

Teachers aspiring to be principals also fail to be properly prepared for the position because of a lack of training opportunities in the form of workshops which should be provided by the Department of Education. If provided, formal training would make teachers aspiring to be principals more confident; improve their knowledge and skills in management; and upgrade their qualifications in management (Walker and Qian, 2006). Other challenges that aspirant teachers face in the acquisition phase, include bias in the appointment process especially during selection and interviews; favouritism by selection panels; and nepotism (Dalgleish, 2009). The criteria

used for selection usually favours people who are known to, or have some connection with, members of the selection panels (Moorosi, 2010).

Studies by Mugweni, Mufanechiya and Dhlomo (2011), Mathipa and Tsoka (2000) and Coleman (2004) show that many teachers aspiring to be principals have a low self-esteem about their capabilities. According to these researchers, many of these teachers have a low self-opinion of themselves which disadvantages them in successfully being appointed as a principal. Mathipa and Tsoka (2000) also note that a lack of self-confidence is reflected in feelings of inadequacy which may be caused by applicants' realization of their lack of leadership and management knowledge. Many teachers aspiring to be principals do not receive the necessary support and encouragement from their principals and the Department of Education and the research contains evidence that supports the fact that the teachers do not succeed due to lack of support (Sperandio & Kagoda, 2010). Sometimes, the support given to teachers aspiring to be principals is discriminative and only provided to those favoured by the principal (Paulsen, 2009); this lack of support and guidance results in feelings of inadequacy to perform satisfactorily as principals of schools.

1.7   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study employed a theoretical framework based on Deci and Ryan's Self-determination Theory (SDT) (1985) and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1954). According to Deci and Ryan (1991), self-determination theory is a macro-theory of human motivation, personality development and wellness. It is a theory that is used to explain the behaviour and experiences of principals on their career pathway to principalship.

Self-determination theory focuses on the connection between motivation and human behaviour. The theory examines the degree to which an individual's behaviour is self-motivated and how individuals achieve success through motivation (Ryan, 2009). It posits that a particular behaviour of the individual results from a particular type of motivation, such as, for example, intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Motivating factors occurring in individuals will bring self-determination and motivation to the individual (Deci & Ryan, 1991). The theory also examines the degree to which an individual's behaviour is self-motivated and how individuals achieve success through motivation (Ryan, 2009).

In self-determination theory, motivation varies along a continuum from intrinsic to extrinsic factors which provide motivation (Hill, 2011). Deci and Ryan's (1985) depiction of the motivation continuum is reflected in the following figure, Figure 1.1:

Behaviour controlled by others ⟵⟶ Self-determined behaviour

Source of

Motivation

| Extrinsic motivation | | Intrinsic motivation | |
| External regulation | Introjected regulation | Identified regulation | Integrated regulation |
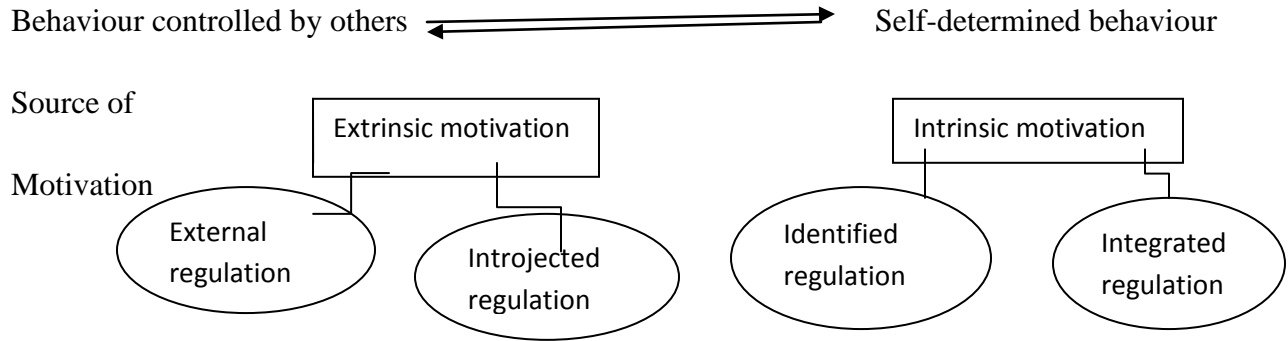
Figure 1.1: Self-Determination Continuum by Deci and Ryan (1985)

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is the second theory that has been used as a lens in analysing data collected in this study. The theory focuses on understanding how people are motivated and how they become successful and productive (Maslow, 1970). According to Maslow (1954), for an individual to succeed he/she must have met all the needs as indicated in the tier of needs - from the needs in the lower tier and moving from one need to another until all needs have been satisfied. According to Maslow (1954), the hierarchy of needs theory is represented in the following figure, Figure 1.2:

Self-actualisation

Esteem needs

Belonging and love needs

Safety needs

Physiological needs
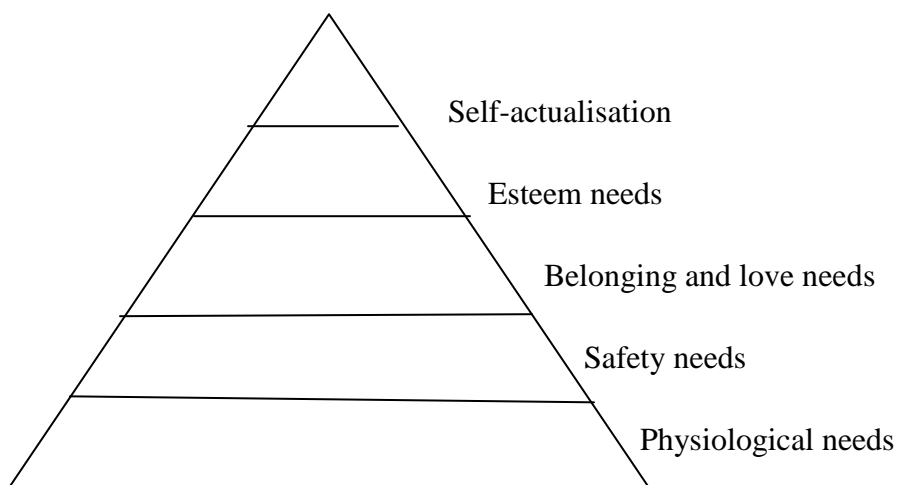
Figure 1.2: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's hierarchy of needs consists of five tiers which are: physiological needs (air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep); esteem needs (achievement, status, responsibility, reputation); belonging and love needs (family, affection, relationship, work group); safety needs (protection, security, order, law, limits, stability); and self-actualisation needs (Nyameh, 2013).

For the purpose of this study the experiences of principals with regard to what motivated them to apply for principalship were analysed and there was a concentration on the three top tiers, belonging and love, esteem and self-actualisation needs.

1.8   METHODOLOGY

1.8.1   Research Approach

This study followed a qualitative approach where participants were studied in their natural environment in order to make sense of the meanings they attach to the phenomena. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) define the qualitative approach as a naturalistic, interpretative approach concerned with understanding the meanings which people attach to actions, beliefs, decisions and values within the social world. Through a qualitative approach the researcher was able to explore attitudes, behaviour and experiences by using of face-to-face interviews (Murchison, 2010).

The researcher was particularly interested in understanding the experiences of principals and what motivated them to apply for their posts. According to (Paulsen, 2009), qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the issues being researched from the participants' perspectives. The use of a qualitative approach provided the researcher with the opportunity to experience the challenges, perceptions and experiences of the participants first hand in their quest for principalship (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

1.8.2   Research Design

This study used a phenomenology research design which was considered suitable as it attempts to examine people's perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular situation (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010). The research design aimed to understand the lived experiences of principals as they have lived them during their career routes or pathways to principalship. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) maintain that the purpose of phenomenology is to describe and interpret the

experiences of participants regarding a particular event in order to understand the meanings that the participants ascribed to the event.

1.8.3 Sampling

The methods of sampling that were used for this study were purposeful and convenience sampling.   Leedy and Ormrod (2010) describe purposeful sampling as a sampling strategy in which the researcher selects participants or individuals who will yield the most information about a topic or phenomenon under investigation. In purposeful sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand a central phenomenon (Cresswell, 2005). Purposeful sampling in this study allowed the researcher an opportunity to select participants who have experienced the process leading to appointment to the position of principal.   Convenience sampling involves choosing individuals who are, geographically, in close proximity to the researcher to serve as respondents (Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2009).

1.8.4 Research Site/Sample

The sample that was selected for this study consisted of ten school principals within a circuit in Limpopo Province in South Africa. The reason for selecting ten participants was to obtain in-depth and multiple data related to their experiences on the pathway to principalship. The principals were from both primary and high schools and included both male and female principals from the selected circuit. The researcher selected principals who had not been in their position for more than three years.   The reason for using this criterion was based on the assumption that the newly appointed principals may have better memories of their experiences than those who had been in the post for a longer time.   The researcher consulted with the circuit manager of the selected circuit to obtain support in gathering the information from newly appointed principals.

1.8.5 Data Collection

In this study the researcher used interviews as a way of collecting data. Merriam (2005) believes that the purpose of interviews is to find out what is on someone else's mind. Interviews allowed the participants to share their thoughts, experiences and views so that a clear picture of the phenomenon can be obtained (Merriam, 2005).

The researcher conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews which were conducted like normal conversations. In conducting in-depth interviews, the researcher, mostly, listens while the participants do the talking (Ritchie & Lewis, 2008). In-depth, semi-structured interviews were suitable for this study because they allowed the researcher an opportunity to probe with follow-up questions in order to obtain detailed information from the participants (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003).

The interviews started with simple questions requiring biographical information from the participants which included their qualifications and years of teaching experience. Asking biographical questions was used as an ice-breaker and assisted the researcher in establishing a rapport with the participants so that they could relax and feel comfortable during the interview process. After the initial questions, the interviews proceeded with open-ended questions requiring in-depth information about the research topic. For purposes of clarity the researcher probed participants to elaborate on their responses and used follow-up questions in order to get a clear understanding of the data being provided. During the interview a tape recorder was used with the consent of the participants to record all their responses. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) are of the opinion that it is important for a researcher to record responses *verbatim* for credibility of data. During the interviews the researcher also used handwritten notes for observations that were made and that could not be recorded. The researcher added further questions to the interview schedule as the data collection progressed for more clarity and depth; the collected data was transcribed before returning to the field to collect more data. The participants were given the transcribed material for feedback and an opportunity to add any information that they wished to share with the researcher. This process was done to enhance credibility of the data.

1.8.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process of systematically searching and arranging interviews, transcripts, field notes and other material that has been accumulate to enable the researcher to reach conclusions and describe findings (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010). Data was analysed in terms of the eight steps proposed by Neuman (2003) which are: the researcher transcribed the interviews *verbatim* and read through the completed transcripts to get a sense of the whole; the data was coded and clustered together in categories; major topics were identified; they were labelled; related themes were grouped together; the most descriptive themes were identified and categorised; codes were

assigned to the categorised data; a 'cut and paste' method was used to reassemble all the data belonging to the same category; and, finally, the data was used to start writing the research report.

1.9   CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness refers to the degree to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure (De Vos, 2002). In qualitative research, instead of using the term validity as is commonly used in quantitative research, qualitative researchers use words, such as trustworthiness, conformability, verification and transferability (Neuman, 2003; Creswell, 2005).

In order to make the study credible, the researcher used various techniques, such as member-checking and prolonged engagement. Firstly, credibility was ensured by means of probing for further information and by using follow-up questions during the interviews with the participants. Secondly, member-checking was conducted to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. Ritchie and Lewis (2008) describe member-checking as a process that involves systematically obtaining feedback about one's data, analytic categories, interpretation and conclusions from the study group. The researcher provided participants with transcripts of the interviews so that they could check the correctness of the information before starting with a data analysis. Member-checking was done continuously at all stages of the research process. Thirdly, the researcher made use of rich, thick description to describe participants and settings, in detail, which allows the reader the opportunity to decide whether the findings could be applied to other similar settings (Murchison, 2010). The researcher also provided an audit trail in the annexure for evidence of what was done in the research process.

1.10   ETHICAL ISSUES

After defending the research proposal at the Education Management Forum, the researcher applied, in writing, for ethical clearance to the University of Pretoria Ethics Committee and for permission to conduct the research in schools from the Department of Education. After receiving a consent letter from the Department of Education, the researcher informed the circuit manager of the selected schools of his intention to involve the school principals in the circuit as participants in the research.

The researcher provided all the participants with consent forms that contained the aims of the study and ethical issues, like voluntary participation, right of withdrawal from the study, anonymity and confidentiality. The researcher explained the contents of the form and provided sufficient time for participants to consider and sign the form agreeing to participate. After all the participants had signed and agreed to participate in the study, the researcher communicated with each individual and arranged suitable times and venues to conduct the interviews. All personal, face-to-face interviews were conducted at the participant's chosen venue.

1.11 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The intention of the study was to explore the experiences of principals and the various pathways to principalship. The study aimed to identify common problems experienced by teachers on their pathway to being appointed principal and what motivated them to pursue career advancement to leadership positions. The study could make a significant contribution to establishing factors that the Department of Education could consider for preparation programmes for teachers aspiring to be principals. The study could also bring about an awareness and understanding of alternative career pathways and career advancement routes that teachers aspiring to be principals could take to being appointed as principals.

1.12 DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was not to generalise findings beyond the context of the study. The study, although in-depth in nature, involved participants residing and working in one circuit only. The process of making appointments with the participants was time consuming and some interviews were re-scheduled due to the busy timetables of the participants.

1.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an overview of the study which includes background, statement of the research problem, purpose of the research, research questions, literature review, research methodology, the significance of the study and it's limitations. The next chapter, Chapter 2, deals with the literature review concerning formal and informal pathways to principalship; the challenge teachers experience on their career path to principalship; procedures, processes and

policies that relate to appointment as principal; and factors that contribute to the successful appointment to principalship.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This literature review focuses on the experiences of principals in their career pathways to principalship. It concentrates, specifically, on formal and informal pathways available to teachers aspiring to be principals and the challenges that they face in their career advancement to principalship. A career pathway to principalship is described by Dalgleish (2009) as a course or route specifically, the sequence and events constituting either progression or regression of a teacher aspiring to be a principal in attaining the position of principal. Such routes may be formal or informal. Formal pathways to principalship can be described as career routes that are based on policies governing the appointment of principals, such as the Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998 hereafter referred to as the EEA (1998) (ELRC, 2003), while the informal pathways are those career routes that emerge due to the influence of selection panels under the guidance of School Governing Bodies (SGBs). The formal pathway to principalship in a study by Dalgleish (2009) was identified as the 'traditional apprenticeship pathway' while the informal pathway was termed 'level-hopping'. In formal pathways to principalship teachers aspiring to be principals are expected to move through all the ranks before they become principals, while in level-hopping some of the stages of progression are skipped.

In South Africa teachers aspiring to be principals may follow the formal traditional apprenticeship route or the informal level-hopping pathways to principalship (Dalgleish, 2009; Dehaloo, 2008).   Both routes begin with obtaining a qualification as a teacher. The literature looks at different pathways that teachers aspiring to be principals follow to principalship and the factors that contribute to success or inhibit the successful progression to the position of principal. It also focuses on the challenges that teachers aspiring to be principals encounter on their pathway to principalship.

2.2   FORMAL PATHWAYS TO PRINCIPALSHIP

According to Malangwane (2007), the traditional apprenticeship pathway is a systematic progression of candidates to principalship where candidates get promoted through all levels of

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management up to principalship. Various studies, such as those by Dalgleish (2009), Oplatka (2006), Papa, Lankford and Wyckoff (2002) and Menstry and Singh (2007) acknowledge that the traditional apprenticeship route to principalship begins from the position of classroom teacher and progresses to departmental head, to deputy principal and, eventually, principal by means of promotion. In New Zealand, Australia, Britain, China and South Africa teachers follow the formal pathway through the hierarchical school structure as a career path for promotion and progression (Bush and Oduro, 2006). The route begins with a teacher training certificate, diploma or degree in education which serves as the entry level into the teaching profession and, then, progresses from classroom teacher to departmental head, deputy principal and, finally, to principal (Dalgleish, 2009). The traditional apprenticeship career path enables teachers to move through the ranks or levels of management to principalship (Su, Gamage & Mininberg, 2003). For each level of appointment there are specific requirements as determined by the ELRC (2003), such as excellence in managing curriculum; managing human resources; managing the staff appraisal system; staff development; and the ability to liaise with the school community.

In South Africa teachers aspiring to be principals move to principalship by following the traditional apprenticeship route which is represented by Menstry and Singh (2007) in the following figure, Figure 2.1.
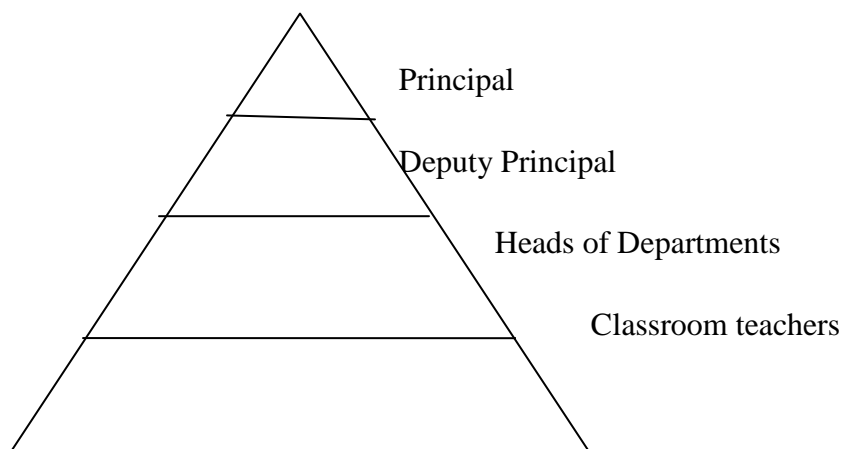
Figure 2.1: A Typical Hierarchical School Structure Representing a Traditional Apprenticeship Path.

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The structure depicts an apprenticeship pathway that teachers aspiring to be principals can take to principalship, climbing the ladder of power one step at a time (Menstry & Singh, 2007). In South Africa the minimum teaching experience required for the principal position is 7 years (ELRC, 2003). Besides experience, no other requirements exist in policy; qualifications are an unwritten requirement of selection panels. Van der Westhuizen and van Vuuren (2007) are of the opinion that South Africa is one of the countries that do not require a compulsory and specific qualification for principalship. Statistics to validate promotion to principalship are not available in South Africa since studies about the topic have not been extensively conducted apart from a limited number of studies about preparation for principalship (Mestry & Singh, 2007).

In New Zealand teachers aspiring to be principals obtain principalship through formal pathways and in a study by Patuawa (2006) about the experiences and perspectives of beginning New Zealand principals it was found that those who participated in the study reached principalship through different routes. Some principals achieved principalship at a young age due to early preparation. These principals followed a career path that started from classroom teacher and, it seems, moved quickly and directly to the position of principal as a result of preparation and education which is an indication of the importance of preparation for principalship. Teachers aspiring to be principals who take their time and prepare for principalship get there more rapidly than those who do not prepare. Some principals only reached principalship by first moving to a position as senior teacher, then to that of deputy principal and, finally, to a principal's position. These principals do not undergo formal preparation for principalship but are fortunate to receive support from either their principal or district managers who see their potential. Some principals in Patuawa (2006) study started as assistant principals and progressed to deputy principal and principal, while others moved through all the levels of promotion in the management, including teacher, departmental head and deputy principal to reach the position of principal. From the literature, it seems that teachers aspiring to be principals in New Zealand reach principalship through formal pathways

The literature on pathways to principalship in the United States (US) suggests formal structures in the appointment to the position of principal. Aspirant principals begin by being classroom teachers and progress to becoming local school teacher leaders, then assistant principals and, finally, to being appointed principal (Johnson-Taylor & Martin, 2007). Teachers who aspire to

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be principals tend to choose roles and experiences that will help them acquire the competencies, skills and abilities required for success in the role of principal (Walker & Qian, 2006). A study by Farmer (2005) about the career paths of principals in North Texas schools describes two major formal pathways followed by teachers to reach principalship. The first one is from teacher to departmental head, assistant principal and, then, principal. The study found that 48% of the principals interviewed started their career route from being a teacher to promotion as departmental head/head of administration, deputy principal/assistant principal and, eventually, principal. The study further showed that 31% of principals followed an alternative formal path that started from teacher to assistant principal and principal, which is the second major pathway. Both groups of principals followed the traditional apprenticeship path but the difference is, apparently, in the size of the schools to which they were appointed.

Some studies have shown that the size of the school plays a role in the fast-tracking of aspirant teachers in promotion to principalship. In Farmer's (2005) study the pathway to principalship in a small school starts from teacher to departmental head and, then, to principal or from teacher straight to principal, while in large schools the pathway starts from teacher moving to departmental head and, then, to deputy principal and, finally, to principal. In large schools there are many levels in the management hierarchy through which teachers aspiring to be principals must pass before reaching principalship. However, the above implies that teachers who aspire to be principals and who are working in smaller schools may reach principalship faster that those working in bigger schools (Dalgleish, 2009). Another study by Papa *et al.* (2002) about the career path of principals in New York state schools shows that 11% of principals have been classroom teachers; 26% of principals have spent 10 years teaching; and 80% have been assistant principals prior to becoming principals. Both studies find that the majority of teachers aspiring to be principals in American schools follow the traditional formal apprenticeship career path. It seems, therefore, that in US schools the education system has a structured and formal progression path to principalship.

The formal progression to principalship calls for preparation programmes. In their study Bellamy and Portin (2012) focus on the conceptualisation of principal preparation programmes and suggest that preparation programmes for principals in Australia should be implemented and that they should begin early in a teacher's career. Teachers aspiring to be principals should work

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with colleagues and assume leadership roles, while receiving support that allows them to develop new capabilities which lead to different career options. Depending on whether teachers show excellence in areas, such as instructional specialists, assessment specialists and administration, they may choose a career path as instructional leaders, curriculum assessment specialists or principals. In the case where teachers excel in administration, the career path would be from teacher to assistant principal and, then, to principal. According to Su *et al.* (2003), there is no available pre-service training for principals in Australia; principals are, usually, appointed using the formal traditional apprenticeship career route that begins from classroom teacher to head of department and school principal. The lack of formal pre-service training for principals, at times, results in the appointment of teachers to principalship on the merit of good practicing teacher records (Su *et al.*, 2003). The Australian model, apparently, assists in developing leaders with experience in all aspects of school leadership and avoids recruiting teachers with no leadership skills to perform the role of school principal. Likewise, in the UK teachers who are considered for principalship are those who have had the opportunity to gain experience in whole school management system (Stevenson, 2006). These teachers usually follow a career path that involves roles, such as whole school management and administration, on their journey to principalship (Stevenson, 2006).

Studies by Dalgleish (2008), Oplatka (2006) and Papa *et al.* (2002) recognize that location also plays a role in assisting teachers who aspire to be principals to reach principalship. Although formal progression may be a career pathway to principalship, the length of time it takes for a teacher to be promoted to a principal's post depends on the location (rural or urban) where the school is situated. A person in a rural school can reach principalship faster than a person working in an urban school due to different pathways existing in the different locations. A teacher aspiring to be a principal in a rural school can reach principalship by starting as a teacher, then becoming an assistant principal and, finally, being appointed as a principal or by moving directly from being a teacher to being a principal (Farmer, 2005). The different pathways are all formal, but the differences result from the location and size of the school.

Accessing principalship is the most difficult activity that many beginning principals have experienced on their career route but certain expectations for the post may also present problems (Walker & Qian, 2006) as teachers aspiring to be principals are expected to comply with district

edicts; address personal issues; balance program budgets; serve as leaders for students learning; be visionary leaders; and have good conflict resolution skills (Stevenson, 2006). In South Africa such competencies are not used as set criteria for appointment to the post of principal and, hence, the emergence of informal pathways which allow teachers aspiring to be principals to reach principalship through other routes.

2.3   INFORMAL PATHWAYS TO PRINCIPALSHIP

A South African study of female principals' career paths by Moorosi (2010) describes informal pathways as routes that teachers aspiring to be principals take to reach principalship but which are not, totally, based on policies for appointment. These informal pathways have resulted from the discretion of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) that have vested powers to select candidates for principalship (Malangwane, 2007). SGBs may decide on their own criteria whereby classroom teachers are promoted directly to principal positions, thus skipping a number of progressive managerial posts. The process of skipping levels on the promotion continuum to fast-track promotions is referred to as level hopping (Dalgleish, 2009 and Dehaloo, 2008). Level hopping is common in smaller schools and elementary schools where the allocation of ranks is determined by the size of the enrolment (Stevenson, 2006). In terms of the EEA, 76 of 1998, school-based teachers are employed in terms of ranks or levels, ranging from Post Level 1 to Post Level 4. The post levels are designated as follows: Post Level 1 is for classroom teachers (CS1), Post Level 2 is for heads of departments (CS2), Post Level 3 is for deputy principals (CS3) and Post Level 4 is for principal (CS4). In the South African education system it is possible for CS1 teachers to apply for any position within the school hierarchy. This is in compliance with the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996, which gives permission for any teacher to apply for promotion to any post level of choice within the school hierarchy. This situation is a result of the lack of specific criteria for promotion to principalship. The only requirement in the policy is that a candidate must have a REQV 13 qualification and 7 years teaching experience to be appointed as a principal (ELRC, 2003).

In the US teachers aspiring to be principals also reach principalship through informal pathways. The study conducted by Farmer (2005) on career paths to principalship in Texas public schools reveals that 25% of the principals served as subject administrators but not as assistant principals. These principals have level hopped one rank of assistant principal to that of principal. The study

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also finds that 12% of the principals moved directly from a teaching position to a principal position. Another study by Miller (2008) which examines the career paths and leadership of male principals in elementary schools of Ohio shows that 11% of principals have never been classroom teachers and 12% of elementary school principals moved directly from a teaching post to that of principal. These principals level hopped various levels in the management hierarchy to principalship. This practice is educationally unsound and could give rise to insurmountable challenges that may result in poor performance in schools. Level hopping disadvantages the appointment process and renders it ineffective as it puts candidates who have no managerial knowledge and skills in principal positions.

In the case of New Zealand, some principals acquired principalship without a proper qualification, such as a relevant degree in education (Patuawa, 2006). They were appointed on the basis that they were teachers with a teaching certificate and in possession of excellent teaching records. Some principals reached the position of principal within the first three years of teaching which suggests that experience is not a standard requirement for the appointment of principals in New Zealand.

In most African countries, such as Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria, being appointed as a principal is not always in terms of predetermined criteria (Kitavi & van der Westhuizen, 1997). In these countries principals may be selected for principalship without the proper qualifications due to political influence. Community members have the power to influence the school board's decision to appoint a person who is favoured by the community. This person may be a political figure whose leadership has been noted by the community that, then, believes that he/she has the ability to lead and manage the school. In this way the candidate can successfully obtain principalship even though he/she does not have the relevant qualifications or appropriate experience for the position. According to Bush and Oduro (2006), the Ghana Education Services does not have set criteria for appointing school principals. In many instances classroom teachers who have a good record of performance are appointed as principals (Bush & Oduro, 2006). In view of the situation occurring in most African countries in selecting principals for schools, there is a need for education departments in these countries to develop and implement standard criteria that could be used to select principals. The present trend in the selection of principals in most African countries is full of loop holes that promote discrimination, bias, nepotism and political

interference. It also assists in creating ineffective schools because of ineffective school leaders. Kitavi and Van der Westhuizen (1997) maintain that achieving a principalship is an emotion-laden situation and that the school principal is the key ingredient for success in a school.

It seems that all over the world teachers reach the position of principal through informal pathways and, as a result, education systems around the world seem to accept it as the norm. What is more surprising is that even in countries with clear preparation programmes for principals, such as the US and the UK, some principals still managed to obtain their principalship through routes other than the formally accepted one.

According to Dehaloo (2008), Post Level 1 teachers are classroom practitioners and it is not educationally unsound to appoint them to a principalship post due to a lack of management and leadership experience. Post Level 1 teachers have a great deal of knowledge concerning the delivery of the curriculum as classroom practitioners, but they lack the required knowledge and skills to manage and lead. It is the responsibility and mandate of the SMT, especially the principal, to deal with the professional management of the school rather than Post Level 1 teachers who lack experience. Employing Post Level 1 teachers to principalship inundates the system with inexperienced school principals. Dehaloo (2008) suggests that level hopping is a fundamental contributor to the myriad challenges that schools face today as many ill-prepared and ill-equipped individuals have been selected as principals of schools, much to the schools' detriment. In support, Mestry and Singh (2007) lament that the lack of stringent criteria and the absence of a qualification for the appointment of principals have resulted in many principals under-performing in their leadership and management roles in schools.

2.4   ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS OF LEVELS ON THE PROMOTION SCALE

This section of the literature review focuses on the role and expectations of the various levels along the management hierarchy to principalship. The literature attempts to explain what teachers who are aspiring to be principals and who move through the ranks are expected to possess and do while striving for a principalship. In terms of the ELRC (2003) the various ranks in management, starting from the lowest to the highest rank, are: classroom teacher, departmental head (HOD), and deputy principal and principal. The literature provides information about the

role and expectations for each rank, starting from departmental head for teachers who aspire to be principals as they move towards principalship.

2.4.1   Departmental Head (HOD)

According to the ELRC (2003), the head of department is responsible for providing leadership and management in a particular subject. All teachers teaching a particular subject answer to the head of department who has responsibilities which include engaging in class teaching; being in charge of a subject in a particular phase; controlling the work of teachers and learners in the department; advising the principal about the division of work among the staff in the department; developing a policy for the subject; and assisting in the planning and general management of the school. These various responsibilities assist in preparing those aspiring candidates to gain knowledge and competencies required for principalship. The main responsibility of a departmental head as outlined by Ringel, Gates, Chung, Brown and Ghosh-Dastidar (2004) and the ELRC (2003) is to provide instructional leadership to staff in a particular subject or phase. The importance of this role is confirmed by Oplatka (2006) who is of the opinion that instructional leadership is one area that provides learner success and, therefore, improves the status of school through its improved learner performance.

2.4.2   Deputy Principal

According to the ELRC (2003), the deputy principal is the third position to principalship (Post Level 3). The deputy principal plays an important part in the management of a school as the main roles of the deputy principal are to assist the principal in managing the school and in promoting the education of learners in a proper manner and to maintain a total awareness of the administrative procedures across the total range of school activities and functions (ELRC, 2003). Deputy Principals are responsible for the general management of the school where they are expected to give proper instructions and guidelines for various activities, such as time-tabling and the admission and placement of learners. They are also responsible for making regular inspections of the school to ensure that the school premises and equipment are being used properly and to maintain discipline in the school (ELRC, 2003).

In their study about the changing roles of assistant principals Katz, Ailen, Fairchild, Fultz and Grossenbachen (2003) suggest that assistant principals play an important role in the day-to-day

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running of schools which includes teacher evaluation; the monitoring of teaching and learning; classroom walk through or what Vander Westhuizen terms "management by wandering around" which assists deputy principals to collect information about the progress that teachers make in teaching and learning; and whether teachers are making effective use of teaching and learning resources. Katz *et al.* (2003) believe that assistant principals should become pro-active and should not wait for things to happen; they should spend time shaping ideas, changing attitudes and challenging others to do their best, creating high expectations and maximising the talents of others. In this way deputy principals can ensure getting noticed when it comes to promotion to principalship.

The ELRC (2003) also stresses that deputy principals should be in possession of excellent communication skills. They should be able to use these skills when meeting with parents concerning learners' progress and conduct; when liaising on behalf of the principal with relevant government departments; in maintain contact with sporting, social, cultural and community organisations; and when assisting the principal in liaison work with all organisations, structures, committees and groups that are crucial to the school.

2.4.3   Principal

The position of the principal, at Post Level 4 or CS4, is the highest position in the school (ELRC, 2003). The principal of a school is expected to make sure that the school is managed satisfactorily and in compliance with applicable legislation, regulations and personnel administration measures as prescribed by the Department of Education (ELRC, 2003).

 In the study by Papa *et al.* (2002) it is recommended that a person aspiring to be a principal should be competent; have a vision that is shared by others and have the ability to create both short and long term goals; he/she should be able to persevere and have the experience and the ability to create an effective school organisational culture. Stevenson (2006) adds that teachers aspiring to be principals should be able to over-come growing pressures created by expectations of productivity, ethnic diversity and the pressure of social cohesion a pressure created by the expectation that schools should address different problems that generate feelings of disengagement and alienation amongst people, especially the youth of the community that is served by the school. In support, the IEL (2000) in the report of the Task Force on principals

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adds that a person aspiring to be a principal should be a good instructional leader as he/she will be responsible for the success of teaching and learning and for strengthening professional development, accountability and decision-making in the school. The report further maintains that a good principal should be a visionary who is able to demonstrate energy, commitment, entrepreneurial spirit, values and a conviction that children will learn at high levels.

Mestry and Singh (2007) believe that a teacher aspiring to be a principal should be someone who has the ability to improve communication with different stakeholders; who has an interest in the school; and who is guided by principles of democracy when engaging with staff and parents as this practice creates an atmosphere of healthy professional relationships. The ELRC (2003) also depicts a teacher aspiring to be a principal as a person who has the ability to co-operate with members of the school staff and the school governing body in maintaining an efficient and smooth running school; a person who meets with parents concerning learners' progress and conduct; and one who participates in departmental and professional committees, seminars and courses in order to contribute to, and update, professional views and standards.

2.5   CHALLENGES FACED BY ASPIRING PRINCIPALS

Moorosi (2010) suggests three phases that teachers aspiring to be principals go through in their quest for principalship, namely: anticipation, acquisition and performance. The literature focuses on acquisition as at this point teachers aspiring to be principals encounter more challenges. According to Moorosi (2010), the acquisition phase involves the selection and appointment of principals. It is in the acquisition phase that aspiring principals encounter challenges that, at times, become barriers to their aspirations. Moorosi (2010) feels that most teachers aspiring to be principals encounter challenges in the acquisition phase, such as discrimination against women; bias in favour of men; considering people with more experience against those with little experience; nepotism, a disadvantage for those unknown to the SGB and selection committee. These challenges usually contribute negatively when teachers aspiring to be principals attempt to obtain a principalship.

Studies by Johnson-Taylor and Martin (2007) and Coleman (2004) identify lack of exposure, low self-esteem, lack of motivation, demands of the job, lack of assertiveness, lack of skills and experience, lack of career orientation and male cultural domination as the challenges experienced

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by teachers aspiring to be school principals. The following provides an explanation for these challenges.

2.5.1 Lack of Exposure and Support

Moorosi (2010) and Coleman (2004) believe that a lack of exposure to management and support is a challenge to teachers aspiring to be principals due to historical and cultural norms in South Africa. Many principals in schools are hesitant to co-opt and train teachers on-the-job through delegation. This leaves teachers aspiring to be principals with little knowledge about the running of schools. They also lack support from people who are already in management positions, such as departmental heads, deputy principals and principals (Moorosi, 2010). The researcher is of the opinion that providing support to teachers aspiring to be principals would assist them to master the knowledge and skills that are a prerequisite in the management of institutions. Support can result in a positive motivation for the teachers, giving them courage and focus to acquire principalship because they would gain the knowledge and skills required to manage. Insufficient knowledge and a lack of skills are as a result of lack of preparation and training opportunities in the form of workshops which should be provided by the Department of Education. Formal training, if encouraged by the Department of Education, would assist teachers aspiring to be principals to increase their confidence and improve knowledge and skills in management which may result in better management practice (Walker & Qian, 2006).

2.5.2 Low Self-Esteem/Low Self-Opinion/Lack of Self-Confidence

Studies by Mugweni, Mufanechiya and Dhlomo (2011), Mathipa and Tsoka (2000) and Coleman (2004) show that many teachers aspiring to be principals have low self-esteem in terms of their capabilities. According to these researchers, many of these teachers have a low self-esteem of themselves which discourages them from successfully achieving principalship positions. Mathipa & Tsoka (2000) indicates that a lack of self-confidence is brought about by feelings of inadequacy which may be caused by a realization of their lack of leadership skills and management knowledge. This researcher believes that people who have had negative experiences when applying for a principal's position find it difficult to go through the process again and, hence, their reluctance to apply again in the future. Many teachers aspiring to be principals do not receive the necessary support and encouragement from their principals (Sperandio &

Kagoda, 2010) and the Department of Education which may result in a lack of knowledge about the processes involved in management. Sometimes, the support and guidance given to these teachers is discriminatory and it is only provided to those favoured by the principals (Paulsen, 2009); this results in feelings of inadequacy to perform satisfactorily as principals of schools.

2.5.3   Lack of Motivation

Lack of motivation is another challenge that teachers aspiring to be principals experience when applying for principalship positions (Kaparou & Bush, 2007; Coleman, 2004). They are afraid to apply because of the stress that accompanies the responsibilities of the position (Kaparou and Bush, 2007); their lack of motivation to apply for principal positions in schools is also because they fear discrimination, nepotism and bias and women aspiring to be principals, especially, cite added responsibilities as a deterrent to applying for principal positions. It is true that many women, especially in South Africa, are expected to fulfill certain other roles in terms of home-making, raising of children and other duties regarded as belonging to the female domain. These roles, coupled with the workload of principal, weigh heavily on women to the point where applying for principalship seems to be impossible (Coleman, 2004). In support, Kaparou and Bush (2007) report that aspiring principals are aware that applying for a principal position will bring added responsibilities.

2.5.4   Demands of the Job, Time and Salary

In its 2000 report on the Task Force on principals the IEL cites various factors which discourage teachers from applying for a principalship, such as increased accountability and the responsibility of raising students to high levels and meeting standards without adequate support as well as dealing with legal and special education issues. The report also cites issues, such as poor salary in the light of the tasks that principals are expected to perform; the lack of parental and community support and the negativity of the media and the public towards schools; and the time that principals spend doing their work which leaves them with very little for a life of their own (Mathipa & Tsoka, 2000).

In view of the IEL report, the researcher is of the opinion that principals are not paid enough when the workload that comes with the principalship is taken into consideration. It is true that most principals enter principalship for financial gain (Stevenson, 2006), but their expectations

are usually shattered when they realise how small the difference in pay is between that of the deputy principal and the principal.

2.5.5   Lack of Assertiveness

Although stereotypes exist, a lack of assertiveness also seems to be a challenge of promotion, especially for women aspiring to be principals. It may be pointed out that women are, sometimes, unable to voice their concerns about issues that are related to their work environment; they may be faced with difficult situations at work which could be solved by simple voicing them, but usually choose to keep quiet. Mathipa and Tsoka (2000) further suggest that the reason why women lack assertiveness is because of their caring, loving, accommodating, tolerant, sympathetic, patient and passionate nature. Because of their nature, women do not assert themselves even when the situation demands it; they are unable to stand firm on their rights to such an extent that they cannot express their feelings, views and opinions in a straightforward manner.

2.5.6   Nepotism

Studies by Mshiyeni (2006) and Coleman (2004) indicate that nepotism is a challenge that deters teachers aspiring to be principals to apply for principal positions. According to Coleman (2004), nepotism occurs when SGBs and the Department of Education have a preference for a particular candidate who is known to, or has a connection with, them. According to Moorosi (2010), nepotism is a challenge for teachers aspiring to be principals in the acquisition stage of the appointment process. At this stage SGBs take a decision to recommend their preferred candidates for appointment, disregarding performance. The reason why SGBs and the Department practice nepotism arises from their power of recommendation. They abuse this power by appointing people in terms of favouritism. Mshiyeni (2006) laments that this practice by influential members of SGBs renders the appointment process corrupt. Ngcobo (1996) adds that some candidates who attend interviews are already assured of the posts and only go there as a formality.

2.5.7 Lack of Skills and Experience

According to Bloot and Browne (1996), a lack of skills and administrative experience is a challenge that frequently impedes teachers aspiring to be principals to, successfully, achieves principalship. They further indicate that the reason for the lack of skills and administrative experience is due to fewer teaching years and a lack of opportunities to practice administrative work in their institutions. In many instances teachers aspiring to be principals are not provided with opportunities to participate in management where they would gain valuable experience. Selection committees do not consider selecting candidates with little experience (Moorosi, 2010) and this leaves the teachers with little chance of being appointed as principals.

2.5.8 Male Cultural Domination

Dehaloo (2008) indicate that women aspiring to be principals are attracted to principalship posts to the same degree as men, but that they are systematically ignored in the process by selection committees and SGBs because of a mindset that principalship is for men. Women have, traditionally, been associated with subordinate positions in schools while men are associated with positions of leadership (Kaparou & Bush, 2007). This negative view appears to suppress women who attempt to gain access to positions of leadership because society views leadership positions as masculine. Kaparou and Bush (2007) refer to Greece where patriarchy ensures that society is based on a male model; where men are at the top and women at the bottom. In the work place male domination, due to social perceptions, is prevalent. Bloot and Browne (1996) maintain that employers stereotypically select men to senior positions by looking at the capabilities of employees based on their sex and ignore what they are able to do. This is a clear indication that employers are blinded by the perception that women are subordinate when selecting candidates for principalship.

2.5.9 Illiteracy of Members of SGBs

A study by Mshiyeni (2006) on the role of school governing bodies in the appointment of educators found illiteracy in SGBs as a challenge faced by teachers aspiring to be principals and that in many members mostly the parent sector of the SGB it is a result of low levels of education. Illiteracy of SGB members occurs mostly in previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa and this result in incompetency on the part of SGBs during the appointment

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process (Mshiyeni, 2006). The study also reveals that the illiteracy of SGBs has disadvantages which may affect the appointment process, such as making it difficult for parents to understand government policies even when they are communicated to them; preventing adults from contributing effectively and meaningfully to social, economic and political life of the new democratic South Africa; making it difficult to capacitate a person who is illiterate; and impacting negatively on the role of parents in decision-making. The researcher believes that when illiterate parents are involved in the appointment of principals, they may find difficulty in making sound decisions during the appointment process which will result in the appointment of undeserving people.

2.5.10 Lack of Career Orientation

A lack of career orientation was also identified by authors, such as Mathipa and Tsoka (2000) and Kaparou and Bush (2007), as a challenge to teachers aspiring to be principals especially women. According to these studies, women are not provided with equal opportunities when it comes to career orientation. Women are viewed as subordinate to men and for this reason many women do not involve themselves in planning their career. Coleman (2004) supports the fact that in a society where men are more likely to become leaders and where women have been stereotyped in a subordinate, supportive role, they are less likely to plan a career that includes principalship.

Culturally, men and women in South Africa are trained to conduct themselves differently according to the norms and standards of society (Rowe & Crawford, 2003). From a young age men are trained to behave like leaders while women are trained to conduct themselves as subordinates. Mathipa & Tsoka (2000) maintains that members of each group are taught separately how to conduct themselves in the future when they are expected to fulfill their roles as husbands or wives. Traditional cultural orientation seems to determine the role of men and women in society.

2.5.11 Discrimination

Studies by Mshiyeni (2006) and Kaparou and Bush (2007) indicate that discrimination is a challenge faced by teachers in their quest of principalship. The studies reveal that SGBs usually discriminate against candidates in terms of colour and gender. The study by Mshiyeni (2006) on

the role of school governing bodies in the appointment of educators suggests that racism and discrimination are still the biggest problems facing the world in the 21st century. Appointment committees practice discrimination by favouring some people rather than others during the appointment process. Ngcobo (1996) believes that discrimination often arises in the appointment process when SGBs recommend males because of the belief that a male principal makes a better manager. Kaparou and Bush (2007) lament the rising incidence of discrimination during the appointment process, and they discovered that discrimination based on sex or gender seemed to be on the rise in many parts of world, such as Greece and South Africa. A study by Gaus (2011) on factors deterring female teachers from holding principal positions in elementary schools in Makasar identifies discrimination, based on ethnicity and gender, being imposed on applicants for principal positions. The researcher feels that appointments should be based on competencies and knowledge rather than on the view that males are better than females in leadership and management positions.

Other challenges that aspiring principals' face in the acquisition phase includes bias in the appointment process, especially during selection and interview, and favouritism by selection panels (Dalgleish, 2009). Moorosi (2010) is concerned that the criteria used for selection usually favours people who are known to, or have a connection with, members of the selection panels.

The literature review continues by focusing on factors that contribute to success in appointment to principalship.

2.6   FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO SUCCESSFUL APPOINTMENTS

Apart from the formal, traditional, apprenticeship and informal, level-hopping pathways described by Dalgleish (2009), the route to principalship is also determined by factors, like type of school (primary vs. high school); school's enrolment size (P1 school vs. P4 school); geographical location (urban vs. rural) of school; qualifications and experience; acting on-the-job; and the performance level of the school (Papa *et al.*, 2002). These factors contribute to the decisions made by teachers aspiring to be principals on the choice of their pathway to principalship. Teachers aspiring to be principals take decisions to follow a career path by considering issues, such as financial benefits, workload and distance. In another study on the role of principals at an academically successful farm school, it was shown that many teachers

aspiring to be principals choose schools that will bring more financial benefits, such as those with a large enrolment and those closer to home (Nongauza, 2004).

2.6.1   Education

The literature indicates that education plays a major role in a teacher's progression to principalship. In a study conducted over a 6-year period, Bottery (2004) found that the majority of principals in American schools achieved upward mobility by acquiring a higher level of education an indication that teachers aspiring to be principals with more education have an advantage in being appointed to schools that suit them. Studies by Domenec (2009), Papa *et al.,*(2002) and Dalgleish (2009) conclude that qualifications play a major role in the upward mobility of teachers aspiring to be principals. According to these studies, individuals who are more qualified experience a more rapid pathway to principalship in both primary and secondary schools than those less qualified.   This is because teachers who aspire to be principals in American schools take deliberate steps to reach principalship (Bush & Oduro, 2006) by being in possession of a Master's degree and a license proclaiming them certified principals (Van der Westhuizen & Van Vuuren, 2007). According to Mestry and Singh (2007), a teacher in the US is only eligible for a principal's post once he/she has completed a Master of Educational Administration degree.

In South Africa selection committees also consider qualifications when selecting candidates for principalship. According to the ELRC (2003), one of the minimum requirements for appointment to a principal position is a relevant educational qualification and the act stipulates that a person qualifying for appointment as a principal must have a recognised three year qualification (REQV 13), but selection committees still seem to have an unwritten rule about the required qualifications for the position of principal. Dehaloo (2008) laments that instead of following the requirements given in policies, such as the EEA (1998), selection committees use their own standards; in some committees the educational requirements for appointment to principalship is a B.Ed (Honours) degree while in other committees it is a three year teachers' diploma, which is inconsistent. It seems that the practices of various selection committees differ from the policy of the Department of Education regarding requirements for appointment.   Bush and Oduro (2006) are of the opinion that legislation and policies on the appointment of principals in South Africa

are not on par with the growing, analytical mind-set of the people and of international standards and, hence, the appointment of individuals without proper qualifications.

2.6.2 Experience

Various studies, including those by Patuawa (2006), Van der Westhuizen and Van Vuuren (2007) and Moorosi (2010), see experience as one of the main factors that contributes to success in achieving principalship. The Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) (2013) stipulates that the experience required for promotion to principal is 7 years. According to this policy, actual experience as well as appropriate experience related to education is taken into account for the purpose of appointment on Post Level 2 and higher, but interviewing committees tend to select candidates with the most experience in teaching and management (Malangwane, 2007).

Teachers who are experienced in management roles, such as admission of learners; control of teachers' work; and the formulation of policies, assist teachers aspiring to be principals to gain much needed experience to put them in good standing when competing with others for principalship (Patuawa, 2006; Moorosi, 2010). The study about principals' voice which explored the experiences of beginning principals with between 3-5 years' experience revealed that many participants attributed their success into principalship to their leadership experience (Patuawa, 2006). In the study the participants, when they were aspiring to be principals, gained leadership experience by performing various roles in management that were delegated by the principals of the schools in which they worked. Moorosi (2010) refers to this acquisition of experience in management roles as "training on the job". According to Rentchler (2012), the form of preparation for principalship identified most by participants in a study about pathways and professional advancement was experience.

2.6.3 Acting-on-the-Job

Another important factor that contributes to success in being appointed as a principal is acting-on-the-job, which is related to experience. In a study on women stepping up to principalship, Burgess (2005) maintains that a period of acting in the role of principal is valuable preparation for principalship. Some principals managed to obtain a principalship more quickly by first acting in the post. This occurs when a principal leaves the school because of retirement, death or a

transfer to another school with brighter prospects. The person who is second-in-charge, such as the deputy principal, then acts in the position of principal until the post can be advertised and filled (Dehaloo, 2008).

According to Moorosi (2010), teachers aspiring to be principals who are fortunate to act in the position of principal have an advantage over others competing for the same position as they have had the opportunity to gain knowledge and an understanding of management and leadership at the school. In the South African context there is an unwritten rule where by teachers who have acted in a position of principalship have an advantage of automatically being shortlisted for the position of principal during the selection process (Dehaloo, 2008).

2.6.4   Preparation and Training

Studies by Moorosi (2010), Mestry and Singh (2007) and Bush and Oduro (2006) suggest that preparation is an important factor that contributes towards success in being appointed as a principal. Moorosi (2010) describes three different phases that teachers aspiring to be principals go through in their career route to principalship; they are anticipation, acquisition and performance.

 In this study, the researcher focused only on the anticipation phase as it explains the steps that a teacher aspiring to be a principal takes in preparation for principalship. According to Moorosi (2010), the anticipation phase occurs when teachers aspiring to be principals start to, suitably, prepare themselves so that they can reach and acquire principalship by obtaining a proper qualification related to principalship, such as a teacher training qualification (certificate, diploma or degree in education). Recently, the Department of Education in South Africa proposed a new requirement for principalship in the form of the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in School Leadership. Teachers aspiring to be principals need to study for the ACE as preparation for principalship (Bush & Oduro, 2006). Another preparatory step that teachers take when aiming at principalship is to gain management experience (Moorosi, 2010) which is achieved through active participation or on-the-job training and learning while working as departmental heads and deputy principals.

 In South Africa there was no formal preparation programme for principalship before the introduction of the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in School Leadership, but teachers

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aspiring to be principals prepared by obtaining a relevant qualification that would put them in a good position during the selection process even though selection committees made appointments using other criteria, such as a successful record as a teacher rather than leadership potential; the personal appearance of candidate; the candidate being known to selection panel; the teacher's seniority in rank; and political connections, even though the candidate's qualification was irrelevant to education (Bush & Oduro, 2006).

In the US teachers aspiring to be principals take deliberate steps to prepare and progress towards principalship (Van der Westhuizen & van Vuuren, 2007). They register with universities that offer programmes for principals and receive a certificate, certifying them as a principal. After completing their studies, successful teachers aspiring to be principals are given a license to work as a principal. The board responsible for the appointment of principals puts the names of these teachers in a pool to await vacancies in schools within the district (Mestry & Singh, 2007). If such programmes were available to South African teachers, it would solve many problems, including the appointment of under-qualified principals and selection panels setting their own unwritten criteria during the selection of candidates. These programmes would also assist by providing the Department of Education with statistics of teachers aspiring to be principals taking steps to qualify as principals, because not all teachers want to be principals.

Internationally, in countries like England and Scotland, there is also evidence of training in preparation for principalship. According to the study by Van der Westhuizen and Van Vuuren (2007), teachers aspiring to be principals in England register to take an examination for the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) and in Scotland they register with the Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH). These bodies deal with qualifications, training and the certification of school principals (Van der Westhuizen & Van Vuuren, 2007). The situation is different in South Africa. According to Bush and Oduro (2006), in South Africa principals come to principalship without receiving formal preparation for their new role which result in them relying on their experience and common sense.

2.6.5   Aspiring Principals being Pro-Active

Besides acquiring a higher level of education, teachers aspiring to be principals do take action to gain knowledge and competencies concerned with how principals operate. The study conducted

by Van der Westhuizen and Van Vuuren (2007) shows that teachers aspiring to be principals take deliberate action to involve themselves in the management of schools. Many principals who participated in the study attribute their success to experience, deliberately acquired by involving themselves in activities of management and leadership in the school. They did not wait for tasks to be delegated, but offered and volunteered their services for the benefit of staff members and the school (Rentchler, 2013). Teachers who aspired to be principals confirm that they gained knowledge on management and leadership while they were either departmental heads or deputy principals (Van der Westhuizen and Van Vuuren, 2007). Patuawa (2006) advocate that teachers aspiring to be principals should become proactive and spend time shaping ideas, changing attitudes, challenging others to do their best, creating high expectations and maximising their talents in order to be notice for their capabilities in leadership and management.

According to Rentchler (2013), teachers aspiring to be principals must become their own advocates by taking action and networking which can have a positive effect on their career pathways and professional advancement. Activities that work in favour of these teachers include conducting action research related to a specific, identified school improvement area or sub-population; initiating a new programme or initiative and documenting the results; enrolling in professional organisation such as NAASP, IRA and NAESP, which provide access to journals and research; volunteering for tasks that are out of your comfort zone; volunteering to serve on a district or circuit committee for various activities; staying informed of district initiatives and state mandates; asking the principal to assign new responsibilities; helping others to solve a problem or serving on a task force that is working on a major organisational issue; locating a member or a coach; and taking on a highly visible community event that gives exposure to key individuals in the organisation.

As can be seen in the literature, it is to an individual's advantage to get about and positively take part in management and leadership activities without being coerced to do so, bearing in mind that the knowledge gained will help to acquire the post of principal. According to Su and others (2003), administrators who devote themselves to activities and demonstrate commitment, patience, professionalism and a positive attitude even in times of disappointment and frustration are the ones who will move ahead.

Other factors which indirectly contribute to success in achieving principalship and that affect decisions that teachers aspiring to be principals take in applying for the position of principal are: the size of the school or enrolment size (which have a direct bearing on salary, since a principal in a bigger school earns better than a principal in a small school); geographical location (aspiring principal also consider issues such as distance and whether the school is in an urban or rural area); and financial benefits (related to enrolment size) (Dalgleish, 2009; Nongauza, 2004; Miller, 2008).

2.7   CONCLUSION

This chapter has highlighted information from the literature review on the different formal and informal pathways that teachers aspiring to be principals follow to principalship around the world. It identified factors that contribute to the successful appointment to a principal's post which include education, experience, and preparation, acting on-the-job and being proactive in obtaining suitable qualifications for principalship.   The literature review also examined challenges that inhibit teachers aspiring to principalship in applying for the post. Some of these challenges are intrinsic and originate within the individual, such as low self-esteem and a lack of motivation, while other challenges originate from outside the person and may be caused by the present system of appointing principals, such as a lack of support, lack of preparation and male cultural domination. The researcher believes that it is not easy for an individual to acquire principalship without relevant qualifications, experience and proper preparation in the form of learning management skills. Those who prepare themselves properly have a greater chance of achieving principalship than others.

The research methodology will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 was a review of the relevant available literature regarding different pathways that teachers aspiring to be principals take to reach principalship. The literature review examined challenges that teachers encounter on their way to principalship as well as factors that contribute to a successful principalship. In this chapter, Chapter 3, the research approach, design and methodology of this study is discussed.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

This study followed a qualitative approach. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) define qualitative research as a naturalistic, interpretative approach concerned with understanding the meanings which people attach to actions, beliefs, decisions and values within the social world. By using the qualitative approach the researcher was able to explore attitudes, behaviour and experiences through the use of methods, such as face-to-face interviews (Murchison, 2010). The researcher was interested in understanding what principals had experienced on their pathway to principalship. According to Paulsen (2009), qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the issues being researched from the participants' perspective. She adds that a qualitative approach is based on an anti-positivistic approach as it refers to the meanings the research participants give to their everyday experiences and perceptions. The researcher was interested in understanding rather than in explaining.

The use of a qualitative approach provided the researcher with an opportunity to experience the challenges, perspectives, perceptions and experiences of the participants, first hand, in their quest for principalship. Qualitative research deals with aspects, such as observing, discovering, describing, motivating, experiences, thoughts, problems, behaviour and comparing and analysing characteristics or attributes of a particular unit (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). It explores attitudes, behaviour and experiences through the use of methods, such as face-to-face interviews and focus group interviews (Murchison, 2010). The approach gave participants the opportunity to define

personal experiences, perceptions and thoughts with regard to the challenges they were facing. It provided a platform for principals to provide detailed accounts of the experiences they encountered as they progressed towards principalship.

Qualitative research deals with understanding the unfolding lives and perspectives of others (Agee, 2009). The researcher chose this approach because the focus of the study was to provide an understanding of the experiences of aspiring principals on their pathways to principalship. For this purpose, the study started off with identifying principals with 3 years or less experience and who were working within Man'ombe circuit. The reason for choosing these particular participants was that their experiences were still fresh in their minds. Collecting data in the context in which the phenomenon was experienced provided the participants with a feeling of ease and without tension as they were familiar with their environment. This aspect of qualitative research is highlighted by Cresswell (2005) who maintains that a qualitative researcher often goes to the site to conduct research. Murchison (2010) also believes that qualitative researchers conduct qualitative research in natural settings and in the natural flow of the social life of the participants. Other characteristics of qualitative research are that the focus of the study is often on the process rather than on the outcomes; that the primary aim is an in-depth understanding of the actors and events; that the researcher is seen as the main instrument of the research process; that the main focus is on the perspectives of the participants; and that the phenomena are viewed holistically in their entirety (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) suggest various advantages to using the qualitative approach: the study will be conducted in a natural setting and it provides the researcher with the opportunity to study the behaviour of the participants as it occurs naturally; it provides an opportunity to collect data directly from the source; it is an opportunity to receive and record detailed narratives that provide an in-depth understanding of the participant's behaviour; and it focuses on participants' understanding, descriptions, labels and meanings. For the researcher this was an opportunity to delve deeper and unpack underlying layers of the participants' perceptions and experiences to ensure a clearer understanding to the phenomenon. For this study selected principals of schools within the Man'ombe circuit spoke of their experiences and shared thoughts about their career pathways to principalship. They provided detailed accounts of the challenges and factors that contributed to their success to achieving principalship.

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3.3   RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), a research design is a plan or blue print of what is intended when conducting research. This is supported by McMillan and Schumacher (2010) who state that a research design is a plan for selecting subjects, research sites and data collecting procedures to answer a research question. The research design as deduced from the above statements provides a clear guideline of what the researcher has to do in order to answer the research question.

The study employed a phenomenology research design which is described by Finlay (2008) as the study of phenomena, their nature and meanings. A phenomenological study attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular situation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) describe the aim of phenomenology as to transform lived experiences into descriptions of their "essence", allowing for reflection and analysis. Through the use of phenomenology, the researcher was able to obtain an intimate feel and insight into the participants' situations, which provided him with the advantage of getting a clear understanding of the perceptions, experiences and challenges they faced with regard to the phenomenon under study. The researcher was able to achieve this through conducting extensive interviews with the selected sample of participants. In relation to the research question, the use of phenomenology provided an opportunity to study it through the eyes and ears of the participants, thereby resulting in richer, detailed in-depth data.

 Phenomenology was suitable for this study as it attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular situation. It deals with the understanding of, and the meanings that people give a phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Through the use of phenomenology, the researcher had the opportunity to listen to the views of the participants concerning their experiences and their opinions related to applying for promotion. The participants had the opportunity to describe their career pathway experiences to principalship, including the challenges. The focus of phenomenology is on the way things appear to people through experiences and the researcher, using phenomenology, needs to draw out participants through well-crafted interview questions so that they provide a rich, textured description of their lived experiences (Finlay, 2008).

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The phenomenon for this study was the experiences of principals of their career pathways to principalship. The researcher aimed to use phenomenology to bring about an understanding of a phenomenon as explained directly by participants as they had lived it. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) and Lester (1999) see the purpose of phenomenology as describing and interpreting the experiences of participants regarding a particular event in order to understand the meanings that participants ascribe to the event; to illuminate the specific; identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation; to assist the researcher to gain insight into people's motivation and actions, and being essential in revealing the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives. In this study the researcher used information gathered from participants as they related their experiences to reach a clear description of the phenomenon as understood by the participants. Finlay (2008) indicates that phenomenology aims to investigate experiences as they are consciously lived by those experiencing them and the meaning that these people attach to them.

Phenomenology has certain special characteristics which made it suitable for this study. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), Finlay (2008) and Lester (1999), the special characteristics of phenomenology are that data is collected from the perspectives of the participants; it takes place in natural settings where participants feel at ease; it focuses on studying people and description of their lived experiences; and it explores intentional relationships between persons and situations. This study focused on studying principals and how they experienced their career pathways to principalship. Using phenomenology served to explain their lived experiences and how they overcame challenges to principalship. In order to achieve an understanding of principals' experiences of their career pathways, the researcher employed lengthy, semi-structured interviews which assisted in bringing him close to the participants.

As a researcher, one should be aware of the pitfalls that could derail a study in phenomenology. The disadvantages of using phenomenology as an inexperienced researcher are that it is difficult to detect, or prevent, researcher bias while conducting a research; it is difficult to ensure pure bracketing which may lead to interference in the interpretation of data; it is difficult for inexperienced researchers to interpret data; phenomenology requires the use of very small samples which renders it difficult for the research findings to be generalised; and

phenomenology make use of lengthy interviews to collect data and participants may have difficulty in expressing themselves, especially in cases where the study deals with sensitive issues, language barriers or age resulting in a misunderstanding of the interview questions (Finlay, 2008).

3.4   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), research methodology refers to the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project. It points to, or dictates, the types of research tools and research design to be used in a particular study. In quantitative research it is where the researcher indicates the research design, subjects, instruments, interventions and procedures to be used in the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In qualitative research, the researcher discusses the selection and description of the site and the participants, data collection methods and data analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Leedy & Ormrod (2010) defines the research population as the category of people that a researcher intends writing about in the report and from which the sample is drawn. McMillan and Schumacher (2010), on the other hand, describe a research population as a group of elements or cases: individuals, objects or events that conform to specific criteria and for which it is intended to generalise the results of the research. The research population should contain the same characteristics as the research sample drawn from it.

In this study the research population consisted of principals from schools in the Man'ombe circuit of the Mopani District, in Limpopo Province. The principals selected for the study were those who had had three years' experience or less as principals. For the purpose of this study only principals appointed after June 2010 were considered for sampling. The Man'ombe circuit is made up of 17 primary schools and 16 high schools a total number of 33 schools. From these schools only ten schools (four primary and six high schools) had new principals who fitted the sampling criteria.

3.4.1   Sampling

In order to carry out a study successfully, the researcher should think carefully about selecting participants who will yield the best information and he/she should be able to justify and provide

credible reasons for selecting the chosen sampling technique. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), sampling in qualitative research involves seeking out individuals, groups and settings where the specific processes being studied are most likely to occur. Sampling involves dividing the population into homogenous groups with each group containing subjects with similar characteristics (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2009) which allows the researcher to gather information and rich in-depth data from participants who have knowledge, experience and an understanding of the topic (Dalgleish, 2009).

The study employed purposeful and convenience sampling as a method of obtaining the required sample. Convenience sampling involves choosing individuals who are, geographically, in close proximity to the researcher to serve as respondents (Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2009). Leedy and Ormrod (2010) describe purposeful sampling as a sampling in which a researcher selects participants or individuals that will yield the most information about a topic or phenomenon under investigation. Qualitative researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being studied (Cohen *etal*. 2009). In a sense, qualitative researchers use purposive sampling to choose a sample specifically for a particular purpose. In this study, purposeful sampling allowed the researcher to select only the participants who would provide rich information or data about their experiences encountered during their pathway to principalship. Creswell (2005) stresses that in purposeful sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon. Therefore, the researcher concentrated only on individuals or participants who had a direct involvement with the situation in order to gather data that is rich and relevant. Ten principals, including both males and females who worked in both primary and high schools, were purposefully selected.

The selected participants had been appointed after June 2010 and had three or less years' experience as principals. The reason for selecting this particular sample was that these principals had recently gone through the process of appointment and their experiences were still fresh in their minds. They would remember most of what had happened to them and the information they provided was expected to be rich. The fact that the participants had encountered certain experiences on their career pathway to the principal position made them suitable as research participants for this study.

The criteria used in the sampling of the participants were experience, geographical location and type of school.

3.4.1.1 Experience

The researcher selected participants who had three years 'or less experience. The selected participants were those who were appointed after June 2010.

3.4.1.2 Geographical location

Only principals working in schools within the Man'ombe circuit were selected.

3.4.1.3 Types of schools

The study concentrated on sampling participants in primary and high schools only. Principals working in pre-schools, colleges and universities were not considered.

3.4.2   Data Collection

Data collection in qualitative research involves multiple forms of data, such as observation, interviews, objects, written documents, audio-visual material and electronic documents (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010). In this study the researcher used, mainly, interviews as a means of collecting data. An interview is an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest (Murchison, 2010). Thus, interviews involve two or more people who share ideas on a particular topic. Merriam (2005) describes an interview as a procedure that aims to search out the experiences, opinions and feelings of the participants a method that is frequently used in Social Sciences. De Vos (2002), on the other hand, defines interviews as an attempt to understand the world from the participants' point of view. Cohen *et al.* (2009) and De Vos (2002) suggest that the purpose of interviews is to find what is on someone else's mind; to evaluate or assess a person in some respect; to select or promote an employee; and to sample respondents opinions. The use of interviews allows interviewees to share their thoughts, experiences and views so that a clear picture of the event or phenomenon can be drawn. Similarly, Fraenkel and Wallen (2005) are of the opinion that interviewing is the most important data collection method used by qualitative researchers and that its aim is to discover what participants think, feel and know about a phenomenon.

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The advantage of using interviews as stipulated by McMillan and Schumacher (2010) is that interviews are flexible and adaptable. Cohen *et al.* (2009), in support, see an interview as a flexible tool for data collection which enables multi-sensory channels to be used, such as verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard ones. Interviews can be used for information from people with various problems, such as those who are illiterate or too young to read and write. When using interviews, responses can be probed, followed-up, clarified and elaborated to achieve specific accurate responses. During the interview the researcher has the opportunity to note verbal and non-verbal behaviour, especially in face-to-face interviews. Interviews allow the researcher the opportunity to motivate respondents and when interviews are used they have a higher response rate than questionnaires especially for topics that concern personal qualities or negative feelings.

Researchers, such as Frankel and Warren (2005), Merriam (2005) and Cohen *et al.* (2009), warn that in using interviews novice qualitative researchers have to be aware that they are expensive; time-consuming; open to interviewer bias; may result in interviewee fatigue since they are conducted over long periods; and that it may be difficult for the researcher to maintain anonymity as they are usually conducted face-to-face.

The interviews conducted in this study took between 60 and 90 minutes. The length of the interview time allowed the researcher to spend a prolonged amount of time with the participants, so that they could describe their experiences in detail and provide quality data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The extended time spent with the participants also provided the researcher with an opportunity to gain more insight into the participants' motivation and actions (Lester, 1999). The type of interview that the researcher conducted in this study was in-depth and semi-structured.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews are conducted like a normal conversation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). In such interviews the researcher listens mostly, while the participants do the talking (Ritchie and Lewis, 2008). Semi-structured interviews provide in-depth information and allow the researcher to work hand-in-hand with the participants. The fact that semi-structured interviews consist of more or less structured questions allows the researcher the opportunity to probe and follow-up whenever he/she is unclear about a particular point made by a participant (Bell, 2005). Neuman (2003) asserts that open-ended questions and probes yield in-depth responses about people's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings and knowledge. Interviews

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were, therefore, deemed suitable for this study to obtain data as well as further hidden information from the participants (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003) as the researcher was able to ask new questions and probe, depending on the responses of the interviewees; they were given the opportunity to elaborate on information where the researcher needed clarity. Merriam (2005) supports the view that semi-structured interviews are more flexible and allow new questions to be asked as a result of what interviewees say during the interview which can lead to new insights that were not initially anticipated (Best & Kahn, 2003).

The challenges experienced in conducting semi-structured interviews in this study included the fact that only a small number of participants could be interviewed because the process was time consuming and expensive. The researcher had to travel to the workplaces or homes of the participants to conduct the interviews, thereby incurring heavy travel costs. During the course of the research the appointment schedule, which was arranged by the researcher and the participants, frequently had to be changed due to participants not being available because of other commitments; the researcher had to telephone the participants to arrange another suitable time to conduct the interview. Some of the appointment had to be re-scheduled several times, making the process expensive.

The interviews started with simple questions asking for the biographical and personal information of the participants. Biographical information collected from participants included their qualifications, years' teaching experience, the number of times they were invited for interviews and the number of times they had applied for a principal's post. This process assisted the researcher in establishing a rapport with the participants and they could, then, relax and feel comfortable during the interviews. Cohen *et al.* (2009) believe that it is important for the interviewer to establish an appropriate atmosphere so that the participants may feel secure and talk freely. The researcher strongly feels that it is the responsibility of the interviewer to establish and maintain a rapport with the interviewees. After the initial questions, open-ended questions, requiring in-depth information about the research topic, were asked. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) suggest that qualitative research should include a thick description of the contextualised behaviour. The researcher requested the participants to clarify and elaborate on their responses by probing and posing follow-up questions in order to get a clear understanding of the rich, thick data being provided (De Vos, 2002).

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Leedy and Ormrod (2010) are of the opinion that it is important for a researcher to record responses *verbatim*. According to these authors, a researcher can use handwritten notes, shorthand, a tape recorder or a laptop computer to capture everything participants say. During the interview the researcher used a tape recorder with the consent of the participants to record all their responses and also took notes while participants talked. The recordings were, then, transcribed while the interviews were still fresh in the researcher's mind. According to Neuman (2003), it is important to transcribe recordings as soon as possible in order to strengthen the credibility of the research. The researcher provided the participants with the transcribed manuscripts so that they could correct information which they believed was incorrect and also give feedback in terms of additional information. This member-checking strategy helped to enhance the credibility of the research.

3.4.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process of systematically searching through, and arranging, the interviews, transcripts, field notes and other materials that have been accumulate to enable the researcher to establish findings (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Qualitative researchers make considerable use of inductive reasoning when analysing data. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) maintain that the analysis of data is subjective in nature. After a researcher has gathered data, it is analysed with the aim of gaining a new understanding of the situation or phenomenon being studied. Cohen *et al.* (2009) believe that qualitative data analysis is, mostly, interpretive, reflexive, reactive interaction between the researcher and the de-contextualised data that is an interpretation of a social encounter.

Data was analysed according to the eight steps proposed by Neuman (2003): the researcher transcribed the tape recorded responses *verbatim* and read through the complete transcripts to get a sense of the whole; all transcripts containing the richest information were selected and reread and a list of topics was compiled and clustered together to identify major topics; major topics were identified and labelled; related themes were grouped together and the most descriptive themes were identified and categorised; codes were assigned to categorised data; a 'cut and paste' method was used to reassemble all the data belonging to the same category; and the resultant data was used to start writing the research report.

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3.5 CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness refers to the degree that an instrument used for data collection measures what it is intended to measure (De Vos, 2002). In qualitative research the terms trustworthiness, conformability, verification and transferability are used instead of validity and reliability (Cresswell, 2005). Reliability in qualitative research is likened to words, such as dependability, credibility or consistency (Neuman, 2003). Instead of using the term, reliability, which is used mostly in quantitative studies, in this study the researcher chose to use credibility and trustworthiness, which are terms associated with qualitative studies. In order to make the research credible, the researcher used various techniques, such as member-checking, prolonged engagement and triangulation.

The researcher ensured credibility by probing and asking follow-up questions during the interviews with the participants and by member-checking. Ritchie and Lewis (2008) describe member-checking as a process that involves systematically obtaining feedback about the collected data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions related to the study group. The researcher provided participants with transcripts of the interviews so that they could check the correctness of the information before he started with the data analysis. Member-checking continued throughout all the stages of the research until the researcher was satisfied with the reliability of the collected data.

The researcher made use of rich, thick description to describe the participants and the settings, in detail, to allow any reader to transfer the information to other settings and be able to determine whether the findings could be applied to their settings (Murchison, 2010). The researcher has provided an audit trail in the appendices in the form of evidence of what action was taken during the research process. The researcher made an effort to suspend his own ideas and understanding that would interfere with the information provided by the participants. This was not an easy task as the study was a first for the researcher who is still finding his feet in conducting research.

3.6   ETHICAL ISSUES

After defending the research proposal at the Education Management Forum and, as the researcher, with the assistance of my supervisor I applied to the University of Pretoria Ethics Committee for ethical clearance and I also requested permission from the Department of Education to conduct the research in its schools. After receiving a letter from the Limpopo Department of Education agreeing to my conducting the research, I informed the circuit manager of the selected schools that I would be conducting research with principals from the selected schools.

I provided all the participants with consent forms that contain the aims of the study; information regarding their willingness to participate; and their rights during the research. The consent forms set out how the study would be conducted as well as how the information obtained from the participants would be used in the report. The contents of the form were explained and enough time was provided for participants to consider and sign it, agreeing to participate. Once all the participants had signed and agreed to participate in the study, each individual was contacted and suitable times and venues to conduct the interviews were arranged. All personal face-to-face interviews were conducted at the participants' chosen venue either work or home.

One ethical issue that needs attention, especially in social research, is the issue of anonymity. According to Wiles, Graham, Heath and Charles (2008), anonymity refers to not recording data in a way that will identify the participants from whom the information was obtained. The researcher maintained the anonymity of the participants by replacing their real names with pseudonyms or simple letters. This would conceal the real identities of the research participants from the readers. The researcher also made sure that the information provided by the participants remained confidential by not disclosing, or discussing it in ways that might identify them (Wiles *et al.*, 2008). The research report was written in a way that would not reveal individual participants while, at the same time, preventing any distortion of information.

3.7   CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the research approach, design and methodology and details of the selection of site and participants were given. The process of data collection and data analysis

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were also discussed. The next chapter, Chapter 4, presents the findings obtained from the interviews with the principals.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the data collected during the semi-structured interviews with the school principals is presented. The gap identified in literature was that there has been no clear research on pathways for teachers aspiring to be principals in South Africa and, hence, the need to conduct this study. An examination of the literature also suggests that there is a lack of knowledge on what teachers aspiring to be principals see as challenges that hinder them in achieving principalship as well as what motivates them to apply for principalship in the South African context. The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of principals on their career pathways to principalship. The questions asked were related to career pathways teachers follow in order to become principals; the factors that contribute to their appointment; the appointment process; and their motivation to become a school principal.

4.2. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

The data collected concerning the principals included information about their qualifications, gender and the types of school to which they were appointed. Table 4.1, below, contains the biographical information of the principals.

Table 4.1: Biographical Information of the Principals Involved in the Study

School	Highest qualification	Participants	Gender	Primary/Secondary school
School 1	B.Ed. (Honours)	Principal A	Male	Secondary
School 2	B.Ed. (Honours)	Principal B	Female	Primary
School 3	B.Tech degree	Principal C	Male	Primary
School 4	BA degree	Principal D	Male	Primary
School 5	B.Ed. (Honours)	Principal E	Female	Secondary

The qualifications of the principals involved in this study ranged from a junior BA degree to a B.Ed (Honours) degree. The highest qualification of Principals A, B and E was a B.Ed (Honours) degree while Principals C and D had junior degrees in the form of B.Tech and BA degrees, respectively.

In terms of gender, the principals were three males and two females. Amongst the principals, the female principals had the highest qualifications. The two female principals had the highest qualification, a B.Ed. (Honours) degree, while only one male principal had a B.Ed. (Honours) qualification; the other two male principals had junior BTech and BA degrees.

Regarding the type of school in which the principals worked, it seems that there is no formula for appointing principals in terms of matching type of school and gender. Anyone can be appointed to primary or secondary schools without regard for gender. Three of the principals were appointed to primary schools while two were appointed to secondary schools. The principals who were appointed to primary schools consisted of one female and two males, while those appointed to secondary schools consisted of one male and one female.

4.3   EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPANTS

The experience of participants in terms of their number of teaching years and as members of the school management team is summarised below in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Experiences of Participants According to Number of Teaching Years as a Teacher and as Member of School Management Team

Participants	Number of years as a teacher	Number of years having taught before promotion to a management position	Number of years as member of school management team before promotion to principal's position
Principal A	21	10	11
Principal B	20	7	13
Principal C	27	18	9
Principal D	28	15	13
Principal E	20	14	6

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Table 4.2 reflects the number of years' teaching of the selected principals and their years' experience as a member of the school management teams before their promotion to principalship. According to the data, all the principals had twenty or more years' teaching experience. Three of the principals had between twenty and twenty-one years' teaching experience while two of the principals had between twenty-seven and twenty-eight years' teaching experience. Some principals experienced a quick progression to management positions while others took a long time. Only two principals had spent ten years or less as teachers while the others had spent between fourteen years and eighteen years as teachers. It can be said from the findings of this study that experience as in number of years spent as a SMT member is a prerequisite for appointment to principalship.

As all the principals worked as members of the School Management Team before achieving promotion to principalship, it may be concluded that the management experience of the principals was obtained in their participation in the SMT. It can be confidently said that this is the stage in their career where they gained valuable management experience. Two of the principals had spent thirteen years as members of SMTs; one principal had spent eleven years and two had spent six and nine years, respectively. In the context of this study, it seems that being an SMT member is a prerequisite for progress on a career pathway to principalship.

4.4   RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THEMES

The research questions and the themes are reflected in the following table which is followed by a detailed explanation.

Table 4.3: Research Questions and Themes

RESEARCH QUESTION	THEMES
1. *What are some of the factors that contribute to appointment to a principal's position?*	1.Qualification prior to appointment as principal; 2. Individual's traits; 3. Interpersonal relationships; and 4. Experiences in a leadership position.
2. *What are the pathways to principalship?*	1. Formal pathways;

	2. Informal pathways; and
	3. Lack of formal structures for principal preparation programme.
3. What are the experiences of principals with regard to the appointment process?	1. Awareness of the requirement for appointment as a principal;
	2. Legislation and policies dealing with appointment to principal's position; and
	3. Challenges faced by teachers aspiring to be principals on their pathway to principalship.
4. What motivates teachers to apply for principal positions?	1. Intrinsic self-motivation; and
	2.Extrinsic motivation

The following presents the themes from the findings and their discussion.

4.5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS ACCORDING TO THEMES

The identified themes and sub-themes of the experiences of principals with regard to their career pathways are discussed in detail in the following sub-sections.

4.5.1 Theme 1: Factors that Contribute to Successful Appointments as Principal

Factors that contribute to the successful appointment of teachers aspiring to be principals include their qualification prior to appointment; individual's traits; interpersonal relationships; and experience in a leadership position and knowledge of leadership.

Qualification prior to appointment to principalship

The findings of this study indicate that teachers aspiring to be principals regard the need to obtain qualifications before they attempt to apply for promotion as a matter of importance. It seems that they regarded a higher qualification as a necessary requirement for promotion to a principalship as is evident from the fact that all the principals, except one who had a BA degree as the lowest qualification, had a formal professional qualification in Education Management at different levels, such as certificate, diploma and honours degrees. All the participants had a

diploma in office computer literacy. The participants seemed to have, intentionally, decided to upgrade their qualifications in order to improve their chances of career progression to principalship. They all agreed that a good educational qualification was a pre-requisite for appointment to a principal's post and they believed that their educational qualifications contributed positively towards their appointment as principals. The participants were also of the opinion that a relevant qualification could make a candidate competent in his/her application for a principalship. Responses from the principals included the following:

> *I believe that my qualifications made me a very competent individual. I was able to compete with others for selection due to my qualifications. I think that my qualifications played a role for my appointment as a principal* (Principal B).

> *A candidate who has a degree in educational management stands a better chance since a principals post deals with management* (Principal E).

> *During the process of shortlisting, a qualification is one of the requirements for appointment to principalship used as a criterion by shortlisting committees* (Principal A).

The findings of this study regarding qualifications prior appointment to position of principal suggest that education is an important factor in being appointed. Teachers aspiring to be principals who are in possession of a higher qualification and one in management may have a better chance for, and experience a quicker passage to, principalship. This finding supports the argument presented by Domenec (2009) that individuals who are more qualified follow quicker pathways to appointment as school principals than less qualified individuals in both primary and secondary schools. The finding reinforces that of Bottery (2004) which indicates that the majority of principals in American schools achieved upward mobility by acquiring a higher education qualification.

Individual's traits

Another factor that contributes to the successful appointment to a principal's position is the individual traits of the teachers aspiring to be principals. In this study individual traits seem to have contributed in participants' appointment to principalship. Most of the principals in this study indicated individual traits, such as hard working; having good communication skills; being visionaries; and possessing self-confidence, as enabling traits that contributed to their

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appointment as principals. Their individual traits seemed to have helped them to portray a positive self-image to the interviewing committee. One principal said:

> *I also think that the fact that I am a fluent speaker might have contributed to my success. Sometimes people get influenced when you speak fluently* (Principal C).

Another principal mentioned the fact that telling people what you are capable of doing can also score you more marks during interviews. It is often believed that a person who exhibits confidence during a presentation knows what he/she is talking about and this may influence members of the interviewing committee.

> *My confidence in myself might have also played a part. During the interviews, I explained about my abilities, capabilities and competencies that make me a better leader and manager* (Principal C).

> *During the interviews, I made it a point to mention all my abilities and capabilities when serving the school. I clearly indicated my knowledge of management such as curriculum management, financial management and knowledge of IQMS* (Principal D).

This suggests that teachers aspiring to be principals may have the power to influence appointment committees in terms of a positive outcome during the selection process. The influencing factor for a successful outcome may depend on the individuals' ability to express themselves positively, thereby, exhibiting positive traits and making the committee aware of their knowledge and capabilities. This finding corroborates what Rentchler (2012) discovered in a study about career pathways and professional advancement that citing certain activities works in favour of teachers aspiring to be principals and contributes towards successful appointment to principalship, such as conducting action research related to a specific identified school improvement areas or sub-populations; starting a new programme or initiative and documenting the result; enrolling with professional organisations; and volunteering to serve in community activities. The finding is in line with Patuawa (2006) recommendation that teachers aspiring to be principals should be pro-active and spend time shaping ideas, changing attitudes, challenging others to do their best, creating high expectations and maximising their talents so that their capabilities in leadership and management are noticed.

Interpersonal relationships

Some of the principals believed that their interpersonal relationships with other people and stake-holders with an interest in the school contributed to their appointment. The principals mentioned human relation traits, such as being approachable; a good organiser; successful communicator; good listener; and having the ability to attract the attention of others.

> *Some of my capabilities are that I am able to interact with people, I am a good communicator, I am able to provide a listening ear to those who need my assistance and I am very approachable* (Principal C).

The principals also mentioned the ability to work with, and for the community and participate in community activities which shows their involvement and interaction with the community as contributors to their appointment. It seems that the principals were promoted to the principal position at the same school where they worked, or they were promoted to a school situated in the area where they lived. The reason for this is that, usually, an individual provides support for, and is active in, the community in which they live but not always. One principal commented:

> *I also think that my willingness to participate in community activities and in professional bodies might have also contributed to my success* (Principal B).

Experience in leadership position and knowledge of leadership

Some principal participants believed that their appointment to principalship was due to their experience of a leadership position. They indicated that they had gained leadership and management abilities while working as teachers and as members of SMTs and their experience of leadership contributed to their appointment. One principal said:

> *I started teaching in 1986, which means that I have been teaching for twenty-eight years. In the twenty-eight years that I have been teaching, I gained a lot of knowledge in leadership and management as a classroom educator and member of the SMT* (Principal D).

Another principal suggested that the knowledge and leadership and management abilities that teachers obtain through the tasks that are delegated by the principal are important when it comes to promotions. The principals commented:

> *I can say that the experience that I have gained while performing the duties of a principal as a deputy principal in previous years put me in good stead when competing with other candidates* (Principal C).

> *That experience put me in good stead when I competed for this position* (Principal D).

There is a strong indication that a person who has experience and has gained important knowledge and skills in leadership and management stands a better chance of being appointed to a principal's position than someone with little experience. This finding supports Patuawa (2006) and Moorosi (2010) who maintain that obtaining experience in management roles, such as admission of learners; control of teachers' work; and formulation of policies, assist teachers aspiring to be principals and puts them in good stead when competing with others for the principal positions.

The principals also indicated that they acquired experience of leadership and management through the years they spent working on the SMT either as departmental heads or deputy principals. Most of the principals had experience of between ten and thirteen years as members of the school management team, except two who had less than ten years' experience as members of the school management team. A long stay in management positions ensured that the principals became experts in leadership and management. As one principal said:

> *I think that my experience that I have gained while I was a member of the SMT played a role towards my appointment as a principal* (Principal D).

The principals also indicated that they gained knowledge and leadership and management skills by being delegated management duties in their schools by their principals. It seems that delegation is advantageous in teaching people, who accept delegation, valuable knowledge and skills with regard to leadership and management which they would not have acquired from other sources. The principals mentioned some of the management duties which they were delegated,

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such as developing time-tables and school policies, curriculum management and liaising with various stakeholders on behalf of the principal. This delegation seems to have provided an opportunity for teachers aspiring to be principals to 'learn the ropes' of leadership and management through, what Moorosi (2010) called, "training on the job." The response of one principal confirmed this:

> *The principal used to delegate me to perform management responsibilities which were usually beyond my scope of duty as a departmental head, but I performed them willingly, knowing that I was the one who was benefitting* (Principal E).

Some principals indicated that the experience which they obtained over the years as teachers and as members of the SMT included knowledge of leadership and management skills, such as financial management; curriculum management; people management; and conflict resolution skills. They were able to acquire important knowledge and these skills by accepting delegation from their seniors.

4.5.2 Theme 2: Pathways to Principalship

The data collected from the principals indicates different career pathways to principalship. The findings from the interviews suggest that principals reach principalship through formal and informal pathways.

Formal pathways to principalship

According to Dalgleish (2009), a formal pathway is a career route that teachers aspiring to be principal follow to reach principalship based on policies governing the appointment of principals. From the collected data various formal pathways followed by the principals in the study emerged. One principal spoke of being a classroom teacher (CS1) before progressing to departmental head (HOD) and then to the position of principal. At first glance it seems that the principal might have skipped the level of deputy principal, but the principal still followed a formal pathway to principalship. The reason for the direct progression to principalship from HOD post, skipping the deputy principal position, is because the school was small and consisted only of CS1 teachers, a departmental head (HOD) and a principal; there was no position of

deputy principal. In a case like that, the principal would be appointed after being a departmental head.

> *I started as a CS1 educator. I worked for ten years before I got a promotion to a departmental head or HOD. I worked as an HOD for five years and got a promotion to the principal position* (Principal A).

Two of the principals achieved principalship by starting as classroom teachers (CS1) then becoming departmental heads (HOD), deputy principals and, finally, principals. These principals reached the position of principal through a formal pathway as they worked their way up by moving through all the levels or positions in the management hierarchy. This progression is also determined by the size of the school. The school in which these principals were appointed are large schools compared to the school in which Principal A was appointed.

> *I started as a CS1 educator or what you may call a classroom educator. I spent seven years as a classroom educator before I got promoted to a departmental head or HOD. I worked for eight years as an HOD before I was promoted to a deputy principal. I got the principal post after working for five years as a deputy principal* (Principal B).

The pathway followed by Principal B is similar to that taken by Principal E.

> *I taught as a CS1 for 14 years before I got promoted to a departmental head in 2008. I worked for 6 years as a departmental head before I achieved a promotion to a deputy principal in 2013. I only worked as a deputy principal for 2 months before I became a principal* (Principal E).

Another principal started the route as a CS1 teacher, progressing to senior teacher, departmental head (HOD), deputy principal and principal. This principal also followed a formal pathway to reach principalship; the difference is that the principal added a level by first becoming a senior teacher before being raised to the other levels or positions in the promotion continuum.

> *I started as a classroom educator and taught for 15 years. After 15 years, I became a senior educator. I worked as a senior educator for 5 years. After 5 years as a senior educator, I was appointed as a departmental head. I worked as an HOD for 2 years and got promoted to a deputy principal. I worked as a deputy principal for 6 years before I was appointed as a principal* (Principal D).

According to evidence in the collected data, the speed at which teachers, who aspire to be principals reach principalship, depends on the size of the school. A teacher working in a small school seems to have the advantage to reach principalship more quickly than a teacher working

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in a large school; a teacher working in a large school has more levels or positions to cover before reaching the position of principal than a teacher in a small school. Dalgleish (2009) confirms that teachers aspiring to be principals in small schools reach principalship faster than those in large schools. According to Farmer (2005) pathways to principalship in small schools start from teacher and then go to head of department and to principal while in large schools the pathway starts from the position of teacher and leads to that of departmental head (HOD), then deputy principal and, finally, principal.

Informal pathways to principalship

According to Dalgleish (2009), informal pathways are career routes that emerge due to the influence of selection panels under the watchful eye of SGBs. One of the informal pathways identified in this study is level hopping. Learning on the job and the lack of formal structures for principal preparation programmes may also contribute to the pathways that teachers aspiring to be principals follow.

Level hopping or skipping positions

Level hoping is described by Dehaloo (2008) as fast-tracking promotion by a process of skipping levels on the promotion continuum. In certain circumstances classroom teachers apply for principal positions and are appointed in those positions. This is the process of level hopping where the teacher has level hopped some positions, such as departmental head and deputy principal position, to reach that of principal.

In the findings of this study there is evidence that some principals were appointed without proceeding through all the different levels. As indicated in the collected data, one principal reached the position of principal through level hopping. The principal started as a classroom teacher, became a senior teacher, deputy principal and, then, principal. The principal level hopped the position of departmental head to that of a deputy principal before moving to that of principal.

> *I started as a classroom educator and taught for 18 years. I became a senior educator for only 1 year. I got promoted to a deputy principal. I was a deputy principal for 8 years before I got appointed as a principal* (Principal C).

It is evident that there was level hopping because a school that has a deputy principal has a departmental head, a position which the principal did not occupy in his career pathway. This resulted in the fast-tracking of promotion which made it possible for the principal to reach achieve principalship faster.

Level hopping should be discouraged as a pathway to the principalship as it disadvantages candidates who have to spend time moving through the ranks in order to reach principalship, while others catapult directly to the position of principal. This phenomenon may also have a negative effect on the management of schools and Dehaloo (2008) asserts that level hopping is a fundamental contributor to the myriad of challenges that schools are faced with today.

It seems that the role that the unions play in training of candidates for interviews aimed at the appointment of principals also contributes to the fast-tracking of appointment for teachers aspiring to be principals which results in level hopping. Some principals indicated that they attended workshops convened by their union where they were trained on how to approach interview questions during principalship interviews. The principals believe that these workshops by the union might have contributed positively to their appointment to principal positions. The involvement by teacher unions has been noted in recent times and teacher unions have been seen to take an active role in the appointment of principals in schools (Sikhosana, 2004). They have been seen to involve themselves in the preparation of members for the role of principal when the posts for principals' are advertised.

> *Our union (SADTU) arranged workshops to train educators on how to approach and unpack dimensions during interviews. These workshops were very helpful because they assisted in preparing me to present myself better during the interviews for this position* (Principal D).

Learning on the job

Learning on the job occurs when individuals who are already working in management have the opportunity to acquire new knowledge and skills through delegation and other means. Most of the principals indicated that they had gained a great deal of knowledge and many leadership and management skills while working as members of the school management teams in their schools before their appointment as principals. The knowledge and experience gained by these

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principals assisted them to accelerate their movement through the ranks and achieve principalship faster than most. According to Moorosi (2010), teachers aspiring to be principals gain experience in management through active participation or on the job preparation.

> *I was able to acquire leadership and management knowledge and skills through the experience I gained as acting principal. I can say that the experience that I gained while performing the duties of a principal and as a deputy principal in previous years put me in good stead when competing with others candidates for this position* (Principal C).

Learning on the job may be regarded as an informal pathway that teachers aspiring to be principals use to speed up their entrance to principalship. As shown in the collected data, all the principals in the study were members of school management teams where they worked for some years before they were promoted to a principal's position and, therefore, it seems that being a member of the SMT has its advantages when it comes to promotion to principalship. SMT members have the opportunity to learn and gain knowledge, skills and experience in leadership and management that puts them in a good position with a greater chance of success than those who work outside management when competing for principal positions. Learning on the job can be achieved by individuals who are appointed to a position which provides them with the opportunity to perform management duties, a fact that is supported by Burgess (2005) who indicated in an article about women stepping up to principalship that a period spent acting in a principal's role is valuable preparation for principalship.

Lack of formal structures for principal preparation programme

The data collected suggests the lack of formal structures for principal preparation programmes. All the principals indicated that they attended workshops and courses during their teaching careers, but none of the workshops and courses was aimed at preparing teachers for principalship.

> *I have never received any form of training or workshop that assisted me to be appointed as a principal* (Principal C).

The principals spoke of attending workshops and courses prior to their appointment as principals, but it cannot be said that the aim of these courses and workshops was to prepare them for principalship, although they did acquire some knowledge on leadership and management. The

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principals attended workshops on time management; policies governing educators; financial management; project management; conflict management; and labour relations. According to the principals, these workshops did not assist them in being appointed to principalship positions directly, but were useful when they assumed their work as new principals.

> *When I look back, I gained a lot of knowledge on school management from that workshop* (Principal E).

> *The knowledge that I gained did not assist me directly to achieve principalship, but played a role when I assumed principalship and started to implement the knowledge that I have acquired* (Principal D).

Most of the principals agreed that the workshops, even though they were not aimed at preparation for principalship, did assist them to perform well during their quest for principalship. This might be because, in most cases during interviews, the questions that members of the interview committees ask are based on aspects of management.

> *The course helped me a lot to achieve the principalship. In the interviews, one of the dimensions required knowledge of finances and the knowledge I gained through that course came to use* (Principal B).

The findings of this study imply that there is a gap in the preparation of candidates for school principalship. It supports Bush and Oduro (2006) who maintain that in South Africa there are no formal preparation programmes for principalship. It is only recently that the Department of Education has introduced a formal preparation programme in the form of the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in leadership aimed at improving principals who are already in the field as well as teachers aspiring to be principals especially teachers who are in management positions (Van der Westhuizen & Van Vuuren, 2007). However, it appears that the proposed preparation programme has not been rolled out adequately since some principals are still being appointed without the proper preparation for principalship.

4.5.3   Theme 3: The Principals' Experiences of the Appointment Process

All the principals were aware of the requirements for appointment to principal positions. When relating their experiences of the appointment process, the participant principals referred to their awareness of the requirements for appointment as a principal, indicating legislation and policies

dealing with appointment to principal positions; and the challenges faced by teachers aspiring to be principals on their pathway to the principalship

Awareness of the requirements for appointment to principalship

In speaking about their awareness of the requirements for appointment as a principal the principals referred to aspects, like qualifications; experience; adherence to application guidelines; the quality of presentation during interviews; competency and knowledge of leadership and management aspects and capabilities in carrying out management duties. They mentioned an educational qualification in education leadership and management as a requirement that shortlisting committees looked for in a candidate. One principal indicated that some information about the requirements for applying for a principal's post is available in the Government Gazette where the posts for principalship are advertised and qualifications is one of the requirements indicated in the gazette.

> *According to the gazette, a person qualifies to apply for a principalship post if he*
> *or she is a qualified educator and has 7 years' experience* (Principal A).

Another principal supported the fact that appointment committees look for qualifications as a requirement for appointment to a principal's position; a qualification as a teacher is regarded as a minimum requirement for appointment. Most of the principals have a qualification, such as a Senior Primary Teacher's Diploma (SPTD), while others have a Junior Primary Teachers Diploma (JPTD). According to the ELRC (2003), these qualifications are rated as REQV 13. The principals believed that a person who qualifies to apply for a principal's position must have qualified as a teacher. In other words, the requirement for appointment to a principalship is that the applicant must be in possession of a REQV 13 qualification which is regarded as a minimum requirement. This finding is in line with the requirements stipulated in the ELRC (2003) which indicate that the minimum qualification requirement for appointment into a principal position is a REQV 13.

> *One of the requirements for shortlisting candidates is that one must have a REQV*
> *13 as a qualification* (Principal C).

It seems, however, that as a minimum requirement the REQV 13 is not the only educational qualification required by shortlisting committees during the appointment process. Some principals indicated that they are aware of another educational qualification requirement in the

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form of a qualification in educational leadership and management. It appears that an educational qualification in leadership and management is a requirement for appointment into principalship because all the principals had a qualification in management. Three of the principals had a B.Ed. (Honours) degree in educational management; one had a B.Tech in management and one had a diploma in management. Mestry and Singh (2007) maintain that teachers in the US are only eligible for appointment to the position of principal once they have completed a Master of Educational Administration degree.

> *The panel expected to shortlist candidates who were in possession of a good or even superior qualification, especially in educational management* (Principal D).

Principals were also aware that evidence of registration with SACE (South African Council for Educators) as teachers is a requirement for appointment as principal. They indicated that when principal's posts are advertised, one of the guidelines for application is that candidates must attach a copy of their SACE certificate as a requirement. They also mentioned that shortlisting committees discard applications that do not have an attached SACE certificate.

> *They expected to shortlist candidate who were qualified as educators and who were registered with SACE* (Principal D).

This finding is supported by the ELRC (2003) which stipulates that registration with the South African Council for Educators is a requirement for appointment to a principal's position.

The principals were also aware that the appointment process required candidates to have appropriate experience which, they believed, included number of years 'teaching and years' experience in a management position. All the participant principals had twenty years' and more experience in the teaching profession: two principals had twenty years', one has twenty-one years' and two had twenty-seven and twenty-eight years', respectively. The principals also seem to have obtained experience as members of SMTs; three of them had more than ten years' experience working as members of the SMT while two others had less than ten years'. It can be assumed that this experience contributed to the principals being promoted to their present positions and, therefore, experience is a requirement for appointment to a principalship.

Two principals said:

> *I also think that the panel expected to shortlist candidates who had more experience (number of teaching years) and experience in management* (Principal D).

> *I also think that they expected a candidate who had more experience in management* (Principal E).

The finding is supported by the ELRC (2003) which stipulates that experience is a requirement for appointment to a principalship. According to the ELRC (2003), the minimum experience requirement for appointment to a principal's position is 7 years.

Some of the principals indicated that they were aware that the ability to adhere to application guidelines was also a requirement in applying for a principalship and that these guidelines were included in each gazette advertising posts for principals. Some of the guidelines identified by the principals include the arrangement of documents; evidence of registration with SACE; academic and professional qualifications; the certification of documents with a date stamp under three months old; and two testimonials.

> *I believe that shortlisting committees were considering issues of arranging documents in order as decreed in the gazette* (Principal A)

The principals believed that appointment committees shortlist by checking and removing applications which are not in line with the guidelines set out in the advertising gazette. All the principals agreed that it is at the shortlisting stage that applicants who do not qualify are left out.

> *I say this because news travel that other people's applications were discarded due to improperly arranged documents as well as uncertified documents* (Principal A).

Some principals deliberately include information about their knowledge of leadership and management in their CV's when applying for principals posts in order to sell themselves to shortlisting committees. Some leadership and management skills and competencies that principals mentioned include aspects, such as curriculum management; financial management; conflict management; people management; IQMS; communication; being a visionary; a good organiser; good human relations; and working with, and for, the community. The principals believed that being aware of these requirements was to their advantage because they were able to exploit the situation by finding the means to inform appointment committees of their capabilities.

> *I clearly indicated my knowledge of management aspects such as curriculum management, financial management and my knowledge of IQMS in the CV* (Principal D).

Legislation and policies dealing with appointment to principal's position

Principals and the teachers who aspire to be principals have some knowledge of the criteria used, and of the legislation and policies, that govern appointments during the appointment process. All the participant principals indicated that they were familiar with the guidelines that dictated the formulation of criteria by SGBs and appointment committees. The principals all pointed out that the information is accessible to anyone in the Government Gazette where posts are advertised. They mentioned guidelines, such as the arrangement of documents; certifying of documents; experience as in number of years 'teaching; registration with SACE; and teacher qualification. They all agreed that these guidelines are used by committees to formulate criteria for shortlisting candidates during the appointment process.

> *According to the gazette, a person qualifies to apply for a principalship post if he or she is a qualified teacher and has spent 7 years as a teacher* (Principal A).

> *I believe that shortlisting committees use experience in management* (Principal B)

Most principals indicated that they were aware that shortlisting committees also used educational qualifications as a criterion to shortlist candidates for appointment to a principalship. They said that shortlisting committees also looked for candidates who were in possession of a relevant qualification in management. The qualification can be in the form of a certificate, diploma or degree. One principal mentioned that in the appointment process where he was appointed to his present position, all the shortlisted candidates, except one, had a B.Ed. (Honours) degree; one candidate had a diploma. This evidence is a clear indication that qualifications as a teacher and in management are part of the criteria used by shortlisting committees in selecting appropriate applicants for the position of principal. One principal said:

> *One of the requirements for shortlisting candidates is that one must have a REQV 13 as a qualification. I myself have a REQV 15* (Principal C).

Another principal added the following:

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I was also aware that the shortlisting panel needed candidates who have experience, a diploma as an educator, registration with SACE, management qualification and may be in possession of a academic qualification such as a degree (honours, masters, or doctoral) (Principal D).

Principals were also aware of what was expected of them during the interview phase of the appointment process. One principal indicated that the interviewing committees expected candidates to express themselves fluently in English; relate their knowledge of leadership and management; financial management; conflict management; human resource management; curriculum management; communication; and the ability to work with and for the community. The principals suggested that showing a knowledge and understanding of these aspects of management was what interviewing committees want to hear and by responding with confidence a candidate stood a better chance of success.

In the interview process, interviewing panels look for candidates who show confidence and who are fluent when expressing themselves and who display knowledge and understanding of school management (Principal E).

An aspect that was raised by one principal, which might be the cause of much unfairness and many disputes in the appointment process, was that during interviews although the interviewing committees are given the power to formulate interview questions based on the guidelines for the position, sometimes members of the selection panel formulated questions that were outside the guidelines due to their lack of understanding or their low level of education. This could result in candidates' inability to answer the questions and, thereby, failing to meet the panel's criteria for the promotion post. One principal commented:

I believe that in any shortlisting and interview panels, there are issues or criteria that are only known by the panels, even hidden agendas (Principal A).

All the principals were aware of the legislation and policies dealing with the appointment of principals. Principals mentioned particular legislation and policies, such as the Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998, which deals with terms and conditions of employment for educators and the creation of educator posts in a provincial department and how these posts are distributed. Some principals had some knowledge of the South African School Act, 84 of 1996, which deals with the powers of recommendation given to SGBs during the appointment process while others

spoke of the Personnel Administrative Measures which deals with the allocation of duties to educators, including principals.

> *I can quote the PAM which provides guidelines on the duties and responsibilities of SMT members. I am also familiar with policies such a the Employment of Educators Act, 1998 which provides certain guidelines on the appointment of educators as well as SASA, 1996 which provides guidelines to SGB's with regard to the appointment of educators in schools* (Principal A).

The above evidence points to the fact that teachers aspiring to be principals are aware of policies and legislation dealing with the appointment of principals which cannot be said to hold true for most SGB members who, apparently, lack the knowledge and understanding of legislation dealing with appointments. According to Mshiyeni (2006), most SGB members, especially the representative parents, have a low level of education. This lack of education in SGB members often results in an inability to access information which is valuable in the appointment process and misinterpretation of information.

Challenges faced by teachers aspiring to be principals on their pathway to principalship

The principals showed that they had encountered various challenges in their quest for principalship. Some of the challenges include, amongst others, a lack of confidence caused by previous failures; low self-esteem, resulting from insecurities about the appointment process; nepotism, where SGBs recommended their preferred candidates regardless of performance; SGBs lack of knowledge and understanding of policies guiding appointment; interference by the Department of Education on the outcome of appointments; illiteracy of members of SGBs; inconsistency of SGBs in making recommendations; bias related to SGBs' recommendations; and SGBs' practise of discrimination.

A lack of confidence, particularly, was found to be a challenge that teachers aspiring to be principals faced on their pathway to principalship. One principal suggested that a lack of confidence was brought about by the fear of failure. This principal had previously applied for principal positions without success and the failure resulted in lack of confidence which threatened to deter the principal from applying for principal posts in the future. The literature contains evidence in the works of researchers, such as Mugweni, Mufanechiya and Dhlomo

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(2011), Mathipa and Tsoka (2000) and Coleman (2004), that a lack of confidence can result in a person avoiding situations where failure was experienced; they suggest that teachers who aspire to be principals may lack self-confidence in themselves which prevents them from successfully achieving principalship. According to one principal,

> *This created a feeling of not being good enough, and I told myself never to apply again* (Principal A).

Low self-esteem was also found to be a challenge that deterred teachers aspiring to be principals from achieving principalship. Some principals cited the fear of not getting shortlisted as the result of many failed applications. This feeling of not being good enough or competent enough caused the principals to fear applying for principal's posts as applying would bring about the feeling of uselessness. A person who has a feeling of low self-esteem normally avoids situations where this feeling may be highlighted. According to Sperandio and Kagoda (2010), teachers aspiring to be principals do not succeed due to a lack of support which can bring feelings of low self-esteem. One participant said:

> *I was the acting principal who might not even be shortlisted* (Principal C)

Nepotism also emerged as a challenge that teachers aspiring to be principals faced during their attempt to reach the position of principal. Nepotism occurs when SGBs or even the Department of Education have a preference for candidates who are known to, and favoured by, them. One principal commented that the reason he nearly lost out on being appointed as a principal was due to nepotism. He maintained that the SGB was influenced by the circuit manager who recommended a female candidate who obtained position three due to the fact that, as a member of SADTU, she had a good working relationship with the circuit manager. The principal cited that example as nepotism at its best:

> *I performed very well in the interviews and the interview committee gave me position one, but the circuit manager influenced the SGB to recommend a female candidate who obtained position three* (Principal C).

Another principal said:

> *The challenge arose in the recommendation stage as I have already indicated* (Principal E).

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Moorosi (2010) suggests that nepotism is a challenge that is faced by teachers aspiring to be principals in the acquisition phase. The issue of nepotism is supported Mshiyeni (2006) who believes that SGBs practice nepotism during the appointment process by scoring inconsistently; giving high scores to earmarked candidates; not considering the competency of all candidates; and being easily influenced when taking decisions concerning recommendations.

A lack of knowledge in members of SGBs and their understanding of the policies guiding appointments was found to be a challenge by teachers aspiring to be principals in the appointment process. One principal commented that during the appointment process, the SGB failed to shortlist according to current policies. Instead of shortlisting three females and two males, as presently dictated by policy on gender equity and appointment, the SGB shortlisted three males and two females. Another principal commented that

> *The problem lies with the SGB who are not competent enough to carry-out the process successfully* (Principal A).

This situation cannot be seen as an oversight; it is a clear indication of a lack of knowledge and understanding of policies on gender equity and appointment and it may be attributed to low levels of education and inadequate training received by certain members of SGBs during the appointment process (Mshiyeni, 2006). The researcher believes that such occurrences may not only have been caused by ignorance, but may also be attributed to lack of relevant education. One principal suggested that as some of the members of the interviewing committees were not, and had never been, teachers but, rather, had worked in other government departments, they were nor familiar with the guidelines for the appointment of principals.

> *I think that the reason for deviation from the generally accepted dimensions might have been caused by misunderstanding* (Principal A).

Interference from the Department of Education concerning the outcome of appointment seems to be a challenge that teachers aspiring to be principals face when applying for a principalship. One principal indicated that he had encountered the challenge even before the posts for principals

were advertised. The principal was acting principal and had acted for more than twelve months, while the letter that he received stated that he had acted for a shorter period.

> *This was done on purpose because I have already acted in that position for a longer period than the letter acknowledged. The rule in the South African education system is that a person must have acted for 12 months to qualify for automatic shortlisting* (Principal C).

The principal was, however, shortlisted due to his educational qualifications. After the interviews he was telephoned by the circuit manager to inform him that he had not been recommended. The candidate was lucky because the influence of the circuit manager did not extend to the head of department who duly recommended candidates according to position.

> *It seemed that no one cared to influence the recommendations of the HOD because he recommended me since I obtained position one* (Principal C).

The principal further explained that later he had discovered through a member of the SGB that it was the circuit manager who had influenced the SGB to not recommend him. It seemed that the circuit manager was interested in appointing a female candidate with whom he had a good working relationship:

> *The story came out later through one of the SGM members who confided in me and said that the SGB was influenced but the circuit manager to not recommend me but to recommend the lady who obtained position three* (Principal C).

Another principal had a similar experience during the appointment process. The principal performed well and was awarded position one during the interviews. The problem arose during the recommendation stage when the SGB recommended someone else who they had earmarked for the position. The principal indicated that the person recommended by the SGB was acting principal in another school and seemed to have had a good relation with the SGB. Fortunately for the principal, the head of department reversed the recommendation of the SGB and recommended the candidate who obtained position one. This situation is intolerable and cannot be allowed to continue. According to Sikhosana (2004), the parent representatives on the school

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governing body are being abused by principals and education officials who bully them with favouritism.

> *I got position one in the interview, but the SGB did not recommend me because they had someone whom I was told was earmarked for the post* (Principal E).

Illiteracy amongst members of SGBs was also considered to be a challenge to teachers aspiring to be principals. Some principals lamented that although the appointment process is fair, in itself, challenges arise when it comes to SGBs. They feel that some people who serve on SGBs are not competent due to their lack of education. When such people are part of the appointment committee, they have problems articulating appointment policies and they face difficulty when formulating shortlisting criteria and interviewing questions. This finding is supported by Mshiyeni (2006) who suggests that illiteracy impacts negatively on the role that parents have to play as members of the SGB and as part of the appointment committee. The researcher further believes that illiteracy in members of SGBs may result in improperly handling of the appointment process.

> *Some SGB members who form part of the shortlisting and interview panels are illiterate and have a problem in formulating sound interview questions which may result in candidates being unable to provide relevant answers* (Principal A).

Illiteracy amongst members of SGBs may negatively affect the appointment process. The whole process may be flawed when people who are undeserving are appointed instead of those who are competent. This can result in frustrations and scare applicants from applying for senior positions because of the incompetency of SGBs. The fact that some members of SGBs are illiterate may have undesired consequences during the appointment process, especially during the interviews. One principal complained that he was unable to comprehend some interview questions which were not clear concerning what was being asked. This inability to formulate sound, straightforward questions might be a result of illiteracy and may create a feeling of frustration in candidates, resulting in them not being appointed and scaring them away from trying again. Principals made the following comments:

> *My comment points to the fact that shortlisting and interviewing panels at times seem to ignore guidelines to be followed in appointments* (Principal B).

Now that I recall, some of the interview questions seemed not to align themselves with dimensions. This partly caused a lot of frustrations on me (Principal A).

This finding reinforces Mshiyeni (2006) argument that illiteracy in SGBs has its disadvantages during the appointment process. This study has indicated that illiteracy makes it difficult for parents to understand government policies even when they are communicated to them; it prevents adults from contributing to social, economic and political life of the new democratic South Africa in an effective and meaningful way; it makes it difficult to empower a person who is illiterate and it impacts negatively on the role of parents in the decision-making process.

Some principals referred to SGB inconsistency in their recommendations as a challenge that hinders teachers who apply for positions as principals and they expressed their concern about SGBs powers to make recommendations. SGBs seem to be susceptible to the influence of outside sources when it comes to recommending candidates for appointment. One principal complained about the particular susceptibility of SGBs to the influence of the Department of Education, citing the example of the interference of the circuit manager who influenced the outcome of an appointment made by the SGB. Another principal was upset about the decisions of SGBs that recommended candidates without taking their performance into consideration. This inconsistency seems to be becoming rife amongst SGBs and could result in frustrations for candidates who take their time to prepare for the appointment process only to be unfairly treated at the expense of others. Principals had the following to say:

I understand that this situation often results when SGB's and panels want to put their own people in these positions (Principal B).

The SGB decided to recommend someone whom they believed would produce result for the school even though that person did not perform well during the interviews (Principal E).

Bias in making recommendations on the part of SGBs was also regarded as a challenge for teachers aspiring to be principals. One principal was of the opinion that SGBs act in a biased manner when they recommend candidates that they prefer even though these people failed to impress the interviewing committee during the interview process. This usually happens when the

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SGBs have their own particular favourite who they want to appoint to the position of principal. SGBs go ahead and implement their decisions even if the preferred candidate has not performed according to expectation. This action by SGBs usually creates a feeling of disappointment in candidates concerning the fairness of the whole appointment process. Moorosi (2010) believes that the criteria used for selection usually favours people who are known to, or have connections with, members of the selection panels. This belief is supported by what one principal said:

> *The SGB decided to recommend someone whom they believed would produce result for the school even though that person did not perform well during the interviews* (Principal E).

Another principal also raised a concern about bias in SGBs that have a preference for candidates who are known to them. The principal maintained that she was bypassed during the recommendation stage when the SGB decided to recommend a candidate who was earmarked by the community to occupy the position of a principal in the school. The principal was saved by the recommendation of the head of department who recommended her for appointment. The principal indicated that she felt very angry and frustrated after what the SGB did in terms of their recommendations.

The finding supports that of Ngceba (2002) concerning nepotism in the Eastern Cape. The study found that SGBs practice bias and nepotism during the appointment process. The study further indicates that candidates sometimes go to interviews when they have already been assured of their success in obtaining the post, but they go as a formality. This practice degrades the value of interviews and results in people losing interest in applying for principal posts.

Discrimination also emerged as a challenge for teachers in the quest to achieve principalship. One principal expressed a concern about SGBs that practice discrimination against male candidates. He referred to an instance where he performed well during the interviews and obtained position one. However, a problem arose at the recommendation stage when members of the SGB were influenced by the circuit manager and they took the decision to recommend a female candidate who had obtained position three. The principal felt that he was discriminated

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against because the person the SGB wanted to recommend was a female and had not done as well as he had in the interviews. He said:

> *I sometimes think that the circuit manager did this to discriminate me just because I am a man* (Principal C).

He believes that there were no grounds for the SGB to recommend a female who did not perform well and that, therefore, he had been discriminated against. Another principal's comments supported those of Principal C:

> *At this stage, SGB's recommends candidates who do not deserve on the grounds that are sometimes discriminatory or outright nepotism* (Principal D).

Mshiyeni (2006) and Ngcobo (1996) maintain that discrimination is rife within SGBs. They further suggest that SGBs discriminate against candidates in terms of colour, language and gender. Such discrimination contravenes the non-discriminatory provisions of the country's legislation (Mshiyeni, 2006).

4.5.4   Theme 4: Teachers' Motivation for Applying to be School Principal.

All the principals seem to be intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to apply for principal posts.

Intrinsic self-motivation

All the principals seem to have been intrinsically motivated to apply for principal positions. Intrinsic motivation can be ascribed to behaviour that is caused by the internal desire and regulation of the individual performing the behaviour (Link, 2008). The principals in this study referred to intrinsic motivators, such as self-confidence in leadership and management competency; interest in working as a principal; qualifications; leadership experience; and a love of working with people. These intrinsic traits can also be aligned with Maslow (1954) esteem needs in the hierarchy of needs. Intrinsic and esteem needs, such as self-confidence; interest in the job; and competency, qualifications, and experience, seem to play a role in motivating teachers aspiring to be principals to apply for principal positions.

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Some of the principals were motivated by self-confidence which was based on their abilities and competencies in leadership and their management skills. According to Griffin (1992), confidence in one's abilities is regarded as an esteem need in terms of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1954). These principals had acquired skills and competencies in leadership and management through education and experience while as departmental head or deputy principal they had worked as members of the SMT. The knowledge that they were competent in leadership and management skills gave the principals the courage and belief that they could compete successfully for principal positions. According to Deci and Ryan (2008), individuals take decision to behave in a particular way because of the self-satisfaction that comes with the accomplishment of that behaviour which is, then, internalised and becomes part of the everyday behaviour of the individual to such an extent that the individual will always exhibit the behaviour with confidence. As two of the principals commented:

> *I studied management which made me believe that the knowledge I gained while studying would assist me to compete with the best for the principalship post* (Principal A).

> *My knowledge that gained while being delegated in the past made me strong to the point that I no longer feel threatened by a high or big position* (Principal C).

One principal indicated a belief in his abilities as a motivating factor that encouraged him to apply for the post of principal. Teachers aspiring to be principals are motivated by their knowledge, competency and capabilities. Griffin (1992) feels that self-esteem results from the knowledge of competency and capabilities which is reflected in the following statement by a principal:

> *I believed in my abilities that were evident when I was a deputy principal and I believed that I could do it as a principal* (Principal B).

One principal was motivated by the drive to fulfil a vision and love of the principal's job which meets the need to belong and love in terms of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow (1954). The principal indicated an interest and a thrill that came from working as a principal with its certain responsibilities, such as working with people and stake-holders who have an interest in education. According to Martin and Joomis (2007), working as a principal brings new

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relationships and associations with various stake-holders which satisfy the need for belonging and love. One principal admitted:

> *All my life as an educator, I used to dream as a principal* (Principal C).

It seems that teachers admire the work of a principal which becomes a motivator when it comes to applying for principal posts. Because of their love for the job of a principal, teachers aspiring to be principals develop a strong interest for the job and apply and persevere until they succeed (Hill, 2011).

The love of working with people also emerged as a motivator for teachers aspiring to be principals to apply for principal positions. One principal expressed the desire to work with, and assist, the community where there are needs that required to be met. This finding satisfies the need for belonging and love as the principals work on a job where they believe they belong (Nyameh, 2013). Another principal shared the following sentiment:

> *I was motivated by my love for working with people. I always feel that when I work with people, I am able to do something good* (Principal D).

Higher qualifications also emerged as a motivator for teachers applying for principal's posts. Some principals mentioned qualifications as a factor that motivated them to apply for their posts. Most of the principals had a B.Ed (Honours) in management which they believed would make them more competent when compared with other candidates.   The principals were motivated because they were also aware that an education qualification, especially in management, was one of the requirements used by committees during the shortlisting process. Principal D said:

> *I have a B.Ed. (Honours) in educational management and one of the requirements for appointment into a management position is a qualification in management* (Principal D).

 In support, Principal C maintained:

> *I knew that my qualifications would be able to compete successfully for any position in management* (Principal C).

This finding supports the ELRC (2003) which states that the minimum requirement for appointment to a principal's position is an education qualification. Teachers aspiring to be principals who are in possession of a higher education qualification, such as a B.Ed. (Honours) feel motivated to apply because of the knowledge that their qualification makes them competent and it is one of the requirements for appointment. Again, the finding is supported by Maslow's esteem needs in the hierarchy of needs as, according to Maslow, higher qualifications provide individuals with a sense of achievement which produces a feeling of confidence and becomes a motivator in applying for a principalship.

Experience also emerged as a motivator for teachers aspiring to be principals when they apply for principal's posts. Some principals gave their experience as the number of years they had spent as teachers. One principal confirmed that experience in terms of the number of years' teaching is a requirement used by committees during the shortlisting process and that having worked for many years as a teacher is an advantage. The principal believes that the number of years spent in teaching corresponds to the amount of experience gained in leadership and management:

> *I have 28 years' experience as a teacher and have gained a lot of experience on leadership and management* (Principal C).

Another principal cited experience gained while working as a member of the SMT where she gained a great deal of knowledge concerning leadership and management. She had spent more than six years working as a departmental head (HOD) before she was promoted to a principal's position. It seems that spending more years in management provides principals with the opportunity to gain experience in leadership and management which also motivates them to apply for principal's posts with confidence. This finding is in line with those of Patuawa (2006) and Moorosi (2010) who identify experience as a contributing factor to achieving principalship. In this case, teachers apply for principal positions knowing that their experience affords them a greater chance of success. As one principal said:

> *Firstly, I was motivated by the fact that I had experience with regard to management. During my time as an SMT member, I gained a lot of knowledge and skills in management* (Principal E).

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Extrinsic motivation

All the principals appear to have also been extrinsically motivated to apply for principal's posts. Extrinsic motivation can be ascribed to behaviour that is performed to avoid risk or to seek reward (Deci& Ryan, 2005). The principals mentioned extrinsic motivators, such as economic advantages; higher social status and better interpersonal relationships. These extrinsic motivators align with some of the needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Motivators, such as economic advantage and higher social status align with Maslow's physiological need while better interpersonal relationships are aspects of belonging and love in the hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1954). These extrinsic motivators and needs seem to play a role when teachers apply for principalship.

Economic advantage emerged as one of the reasons why teachers apply for the post of principal. All the principals admitted that they applied for a principal's post in order to receive a better salary and to improve their level of earnings. This yearning to earn more seemed to have facilitated the development of a strong feeling of self-determination in these individuals to the point that they persisted in applying for principalship until they succeeded. Comments made by the principals included the following:

> *I also wanted to improve my life by getting a better salary* (Principal B).
>
> *I applied so that I could earn a better salary than the one I earned as an educator* (Principal C).
>
> *Money also crossed my mind when I took the decision to apply for the post of a principal* (Principal E).

It seems that the principals' main reason for applying to be appointed as a principal was to earn more than they were earning as a departmental head and deputy principal. They all believed that earning more would assist to improve their lives greatly. Available research confirms that many teachers aspiring to be principals develop a determination to continue along the path to principalship for reasons, such as better earning power (Su, Gamage & Mininberg, 2003). This finding supports the physiological needs of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. According to Martin and Joomis (2007), physiological needs have to do with survival and earning enough money would, obviously, allow principals to live a life with enough food and comfortable houses. In

other words, earning enough would assist in satisfying the physiological needs of the principals (Martin & Joomis, 2007).

Social status also emerged as an extrinsic motivator for teachers aspiring to be principals. One principal indicated that he applied for his post in order to enhance his status in the community. It seems that the position of principal comes with some perks which include being regarded as belonging to a higher level of society in the community. Another principal cited her reason for applying for a principalship as being to enhance her status and to be recognised in the community. Coincidentally, the two principals who gave this reason to enhancing one's status in the community were both females. It seems that female teachers see themselves as lowly regarded members in the community and, hence, they feel a need to enhance their status and to be regarded more highly as members of the community. One principal confirmed this by saying:

> *...to work with people at a greater level and to enhance my status* (Principal B).

In support, Principal A said:

> *I have seen people who were regarded lowly by the community but who, when appointed as principals, have enhanced their status and were looked upon as best advisors by the community* (Principal A).

It seems that the principals were motivated to apply for their positions in order to enhance their status. Enhancing one's status aligns with Maslow's esteem needs in the hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1954). According to the principals, achieving a position of status seems to be of importance and to satisfy this need principals were motivated to apply for principalship which would assist them to obtain status and recognition.

The need to have sound interpersonal relationships with community and stakeholders within the community seems to have been another motivator for teachers aspiring to be principals. According to some of the principals, this enhancement of interpersonal relationship was based on certain attributes, such as the ability to communicate; a positive attitude when working with educators and other stakeholders; being a good organiser; being a good listener; and being approachable by all people without regard of their status. It seems that the principals believed that being in a principal's position could provide endless opportunities to interact and work with people in a positive manner. The principals, apparently, chose to apply for principalship in order

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to achieve what, as teachers, they could not achieve, i.e., getting closer to people for the benefit of the community. This is confirmed by what one principal said:

> *I like to work with people on a daily basis which gives me great pleasure* (Principal E).

The desire by the principals to have sound interpersonal relationships with various stake-holders involved with the school satisfies the need for belonging and love (Maslow, 1954). Teachers aspiring to be principals are motivated by the knowledge that they would be working with people that will give them satisfaction.

The principals seem to be more influenced by intrinsic motivators than extrinsic motivators. They cited more intrinsic motivators, including confidence in their abilities; interest in the job; love of the job; love of working with people; knowledge and qualifications; and experience. It appears that the principals were more motivated to apply for principalship because of the intrinsic motivators and in order to indulge their inner satisfaction and happiness of working as principals rather than extrinsic motivators, such as higher earnings. This finding is in line with the self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (2008) that states that intrinsic motivation aims at satisfying behaviour that satisfies inner desires and assists to regulate individual behaviour and to instil self-motivation in individuals.

4.6   CONCLUSION

This chapter has revealed that the experiences of principals suggest inadequate formal preparation programmes for principal positions. It seems that there is a lot to be done by the Department of Education with regard to the implementation of the proposed preparation programmes for principals (Van der Westhuizen & Van Vuuren, 2007). The chapter also revealed factors that contribute to successful pathways to principalship, such as qualification in management; individual's trait; interpersonal relationships and the knowledge and experiences of being in leadership positions. The chapter identified formal and informal pathways to principalship and the challenges experienced in the recruitment process. Finally, the chapter revealed intrinsic and extrinsic factors which motivate teachers aspiring to be principals to apply for principalship. The next chapter gives summary of the research results; draws conclusions; makes recommendations as well as suggestions for further studies on the topic.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of principals on their career pathways to principalship. For this purpose, the researcher interviewed principals who had been in a principal's position for three years or less. The rationale for the study was to understand the experiences of teachers who have progressed to principal positions and to contribute to the knowledge of pathways to principalship in a South African context. Chapter 1 gave an overview of the study, including the research topic; research questions; background; statement of the research problem; purpose of the study; literature review; research methodology; significance of the study; and limitation of the study. Chapter 2 related the study to a review of the relevant literature on experiences of principals concerning their career pathways. Chapter 3 discussed the research methodology used in the study. It included methods of collecting data; data analysis strategies to enhance the credibility of the study; and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 provided the findings from the study and this chapter, Chapter 5, concludes the study by providing a summary of the research results together with a conclusion and recommendations.

5.2   SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study identified factors that contribute to appointments to the position of principal. What follows is a summary of the research findings as revealed in the collected data.

5.2.1   Factors that Contribute to Appointment to the Position of Principal

 The participating principals cited a number of factors, such as qualifications, individual traits, interpersonal relationships and experience, as having influenced decisions made in their appointment to principalship. They considered qualifications, in the form of a degree or honours degree in educational management, as a pre-requisite for appointment to a principal's position. Another pre-requisite revealed in this study is the leadership experience of the aspiring candidates to principalship. The number of years spent teaching and number of years' experience as a member of the SMT were seen as leadership skill development years.

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The principals also referred to individual traits as a reason for their successful appointment as principals. Individual traits, such as being hard-working; having good communication skills; being a visionary and having the ability to share this vision with others; and self-confidence, were influencing aspects of their personalities. The principals maintained that having the ability to showcase their individual traits during the appointment process had an impact on the decision made by the selection panel.

Interpersonal relationships also played a role in enabling a positive outcome in their selection process. The principals mentioned their interpersonal relationships with the community as being most important for recognition of leadership skills in being appointed to a principalship. They also cited other attributes that assisted them to achieve good interpersonal relationships, such as being approachable; being a good organiser; being a good communicator and a good listener; and having the ability to attract the attention of others.

5.2.2   Pathways to Principalship

The study showed that teachers aspiring to be principals reached principalship through formal and informal pathways. The ones who reached principalship formally do so by moving through all the levels or ranks in the management continuum. Principals in small schools reach principalship faster than those in large schools. The size of the school influences the rate as small schools consist only of teachers, a departmental head and a principal while large schools are made up of teachers, departmental heads, deputy principals and principals. To this effect, teachers in small schools take a shorter route than teachers in large schools.

Principals who reach principalship informally do so by skipping certain positions or levels in the management continuum. The evidence in the data showed that in order to achieve principalship some teachers level hop from being a teacher to deputy principal and, then, to principal. These principals skip one promotion level in moving to a principalship.

5.2.3   Experiences of Principals with Regard to the Appointment Process

The findings of this study indicated that teachers aspiring to be principals are aware of the requirements used by selection committees for appointment to principal positions. The participant principals pointed to the advertising gazette as the main source of information for

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application guidelines which includes education qualifications; registration with SACE; adherence to application guidelines; competency; knowledge of leadership and management skills; and presentation during interviews, including being fluent in English.

The principals were cognisant of the criteria used by interviewing committees during interviews. The criteria used are: the candidates' ability to express themselves fluently in English; the ability to reveal their knowledge of leadership and management skills, such as financial management, conflict management, human resource management, curriculum management; and having inability to work with, and for, the community.

The findings also revealed that teachers aspiring to be principals should have knowledge of policies and legislations dealing with the appointment of principals. The principals referred to legislation, such as the Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998, the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 and the Personnel Administrative Act which deals with the appointment of principals in schools. They listed and discussed challenges and inhibiting factors that they faced on their career pathway to the principalship which included lack of confidence which was brought about by fear of failure; low self-esteem resulting from insecurities about the appointment process; nepotism, where SGBs preferred their own candidates; a lack of knowledge and understanding of policies guiding appointment by SGBs as a result of a lack of, or a low level of education; interference by SGBs and the Department of Education in collusion with SGBs to influence the outcome of appointment process; illiteracy in members of SGBs which could result in their inability to formulate clear interview questions; inconsistency in SGBs in their recommendations, where they fail to recommend according to performance; and discrimination, where SGBs favour female candidates over male candidates or *vice versa*.

5.2.4 Factors that Motivate Teachers to Apply for a Principal's Position.

The study identified intrinsic and extrinsic factors which motivate teachers aspiring to be principals to apply for principalship. The principals mentioned intrinsic motivators, such as self-confidence in their leadership and management competency; their interest in working as principals; qualifications; experience in leadership and management; and their love of working with people. Extrinsically, the principals were motivated by factors, such as economic advantages; high social status and better interpersonal relationships.

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5.3   CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study revealed that teachers aspiring to be principals are aware of policies and legislation governing the appointment of principals, such as the Employment of Educator Act, 76 of 1998, the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 and the Personnel Administrative Act.   The factors that contribute to the appointment of principals include qualification as a teacher (REQV 13 qualification) and qualification in educational management; experience in terms of number of years in teaching and years' experience in management; individual traits; and interpersonal relationships. Despite their knowledge of the legislation on appointment and the factors that enable successful appointment, there are several challenges that teachers experience along the pathway to principalship, such as lack of confidence, nepotism, low-self-esteem, lack of knowledge and understanding of policies guiding appointment, interference by the Department of Education on the outcomes of appointment, illiteracy by SGBs, inconsistency by SGBs, bias during the recommendation process and discrimination. Some of these challenges could discourage some aspiring teachers from becoming school principals in their further career development. The principals in the study were intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to continue with their pursuit in being appointed to a principal's position by factors, such as self-confidence, qualifications, experience and an interest in the job. The extrinsic motivating factors given were: economic ones, such as higher income; higher social status; and better interpersonal relationships.

5.4   RECOMMENDATIONS

A study of the experiences of the participant principals on their career pathway to principalship has prompted the following recommendations:

- As the study has revealed a lack of preparation programmes for principals that results in unstructured and varying standards in the appointment process and in accepting different levels of qualifications which disadvantage some while serving as an advantage to others, it is recommended that the proposed ACE in leadership and management qualification should be implemented to improve and standardize the qualification needs for principalship and make the pathway a more structured one.

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- As the study revealed that candidates have varying educational levels in their appointment as school principals some candidates had higher qualifications than others, it is recommended that the Department of Education should set the standard qualification requirement for appointment to the position of principal at a Master's degree level with specialisation in educational management.

- As the study revealed a lack of knowledge and understanding of policies on the part of SGBs concerning appointments which has resulted in the appointment process being badly handled, to improve the appointment process it is recommended that the Department of Education should provide training for members of SGBs during the appointment process in order to reduce many of the problems caused by their lack of understanding of the appointment process and policies dealing with appointment.

- As illiteracy, which causes a lack of knowledge and understanding of policies on appointment in SGBs was revealed in the study as a challenge to teachers aspiring to be principals, in order to improve the situation it is recommended that the Department of Education should shift the responsibility of managing the appointment process to teachers who are well educated and have the ability to read, write and understand the process. It must, however, be acknowledged that members of SGBs are burdened with the responsibility of carrying out the appointment process single-handedly a responsibility that they cannot cope with because of their lack of understanding and knowledge.

- It is also recommended that the Department of Education should review policies governing appointment in order to eradicate loopholes that some SGBs and department officials exploit to practice nepotism, bias and discrimination during the appointment process.

5.5   DELIMITATIONS

This study was limited to the experiences of participant principals regarding their career pathways. It included only principals working within the Man'ombe circuit of the Mopani District in Limpopo Province. It included principals who had three years' or less experience, who were appointed from June 2010. Members of governing bodies and representatives of the department of education and the unions were not included in the study. Candidates who had

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experienced the appointment process but were not appointed were not part of the study and a further study should be undertaken to explore the inhibitors to the successful appointment to principal positions in the schools.

5.6   LIMITATIONS

The study used qualitative methods of research and focused on the use of a phenomenological research design. The study used semi-structured interviews to collect data on the experiences of principals with regard to the career pathways. A small sample of principals was used and, therefore, the findings of this study are not representative of all the principals in the province. No other stake-holders were involved in the study besides principals of schools in the Man'ombe circuit with experience of three years or less. The findings are based on self-reports of the principals experiences with limited data to cross-check the findings apart from comparing what the different principals said.

5.7   FUTURE RESEARCH

The research on the experiences of principal with regard to their career pathways suggests that more research can be done in this area. Some suggestions of areas for further research and exploration are:

- A study concerning the experiences of beginning principals during their first year as principals.

- A study on the perceptions of principals about the role of School Governing Bodies in the appointment process.

- A study on how deputy principals view leadership and how they prepare themselves for principalship.

- A study on the barriers to appointment to principalship.

5.7   CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study concentrated on a small number of principals in connection with their experiences on their career pathways and, therefore, the findings cannot be generalised beyond the context of the

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study. Nonetheless, the study shows the different pathways taken by teachers to reach principalship and the challenges they experienced during their career development. It highlights what motivates teachers to aspire to be principals despite challenges. It further draws recommendations from the findings of the study that informs the Department of Education of the areas that need improvement in the future appointment of school principals.

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ANNEXURE A: PERMISSION LETTER FROM LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Enquiries: Dr. Makola MC, Tel No: 015 290 9448. E-mail: MakolaMC@edu.limpopo.gov.za

P. O. BOX 1029

GIYANI

0826

Nkuna M.E.

RE: Request for permission to Conduct Research

1. The above bears reference.

2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct a research has been approved- **TOPIC: "EXPERIENCES OF PRINCIPALS IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE REGARDING THEIR CAREER PATHWAYS".**

3. The following conditions should be considered

   3.1   The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.

   3.2   Arrangements should be made with both the Circuit Offices and the schools concerned.

   3.3   The conduct of research should not anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.

   3.4   The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the forth term.

   3.5   During the study, the research ethics should be practiced, in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).

   3.6   Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.

4. Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend conducting your research as an evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.
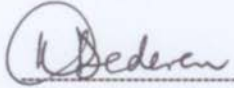
Page 1 of 2

Cnr. 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X9489, POLOKWANE, 0700
Tel: 015 290 7600, Fax: 015 297 6920/4220/4494

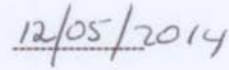**The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!**

5. The department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

Best wishes.

Dederen

Dederen K.O

Acting Head of Department

12/05/2014

Date

ANNEXURE B: PERMISSION LETTER FROM MANÓMBE CIRCUIT MANAGER

MOPANI DISTRICT – MAN'OMBE CIRCUIT

Enquiries: Mr. Maringa S.S
Tel: 015 812 0637

Date: 27 May 2014

TO: NKUNA M.E
P.O. BOX 1029
GIYANI
0826

CONSENT TO INTERVIEW THE CIRCUIT MANAGER: YOURSELF.

1. The above matter bears reference.

2. The Circuit manager wishes to inform you that your request to interview circuit manager and principals in Man'ombe circuit has been granted.

3. When conducting interviews with principals, the following conditions must be adhered to:

   3.1 No person may be forced to participate in the study
   3.2 No disruption of the normal teaching and learning programme in schools.

4. This letter may serve as proof of permission to conduct research when visiting principals in schools.

5. Your co-operation in this regard will be highly appreciated.

CIRCUIT MANAGER

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MOPANI DISTRICT, Man'ombe Circuit, Private Bag X 9654 GIYANI, 0826

Tel 015 812 0637 Fax No. 015 812 4421 or 015 812 1689

The heartland of Southern Africa – development is about people

ANNEXURE C: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT (PRINCIPALS)

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

Department of Education Management and Policy

University of Pretoria

Researcher: Nkuna M.E.

P. O. Box 1029, Giyani

0826

14 May 2014

Dear Sir / Madam

REQUEST AND CONSENT TO INTERVIEW THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Sir / Madam

This letter is a request for permission to conduct research with you as a participant. This research forms part of my Master's Degree in the Department of Education Management and Policy at the University of Pretoria. The research will request information about newly appointed principals within the last three years (from June 2010). The researcher also wishes to request permission to interview ten (10) school principals within the Man'ombe circuit. The title of the research is: **Experiences of principals in Limpopo province regarding their career pathways.**

The aim of this study is to explore different pathways that teachers aspiring to be principals follow to principalship and how they have experienced it. It focuses on the factors that contribute to appointment to principal position; formal and informal pathways towards

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principalship; the appointment process and what motivates teacher to apply for principal position.

The knowledge and information obtained from this study will be relevant and valuable to teachers aspiring to be principals in terms of what motivate teachers to apply for principalship and the challenges and success stories of such application, policy makers with regard to the appointment process and procedures and all the relevant stakeholders involved in the appointment of principals.

As participants and being school principals, they are in a unique position of providing the most useful information about the topic being researched. Their participation will be in form of interviews for duration of 45 minutes and the interviews will be tape recorded. The dates and times of the interviews will be mutually negotiated. Participation in this study is voluntary and their right to withdraw at any time will be explained. Confidentiality and anonymity regarding information shared is guaranteed. Interviews will be done after teaching time to avoid disruption during contact time.

Yours sincerely

Nkuna ME

.... Date: 14-05-2014

Agree/disagree to participate in the research

    If agree please sign the section below

I .... (Print your name) have read and understood the purpose of the research and agree to participate. I understand the nature of the research and give my consent for the researcher to interview and tape record my responses. I understand that my identity and that of my school will be kept anonymous and confidential. I understand that my participation is voluntary and have the right to terminate it if I feel uncomfortable during the research. I am also not obliged to reveal information that I feel uncomfortable in revealing.

Participant's name ....

Participant's signature ....
Participant's contact number ....

ANNEXURE D: APPLICATION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE

Universiteit van Pretoria

Pretoria   0002   Republiek   van   SuidAfrika
http://www.up.ac.za

Department Education
Management Law and Policy

P. O. Box 1029
Giyani
0826
11 April 2014

Head of Department Education
Private Bag X9489
POLOKWANE
0700
Dear Sir

APPLICATION AND CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE, MANÓMBE CIRCUIT.

I wish to apply for permission to conduct research in the above-mentioned circuit. I am a Masters student at the University of Pretoria specializing in Educational Management and Leadership. The research is about "**Experiences of principals in Limpopo province regarding their career pathways**". The researcher also requests for permission to interview the **circuit manager** to collect information about newly promoted principals within the last three years (from June 2010). The researcher further requests your permission to conduct interviews with 10 principals from primary and high schools from Man'ombe circuit for data collection.

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The aim of this study is to explore different pathways that teachers aspiring to be principals follow to principalship and how they have experienced it. It focuses on the factors that contribute to appointment to principal position; formal and informal pathways towards principalship; the appointment process and what motivates teacher to apply for principal position.

The knowledge and information obtained from this study will be relevant and valuable to teachers aspiring to be principals in terms of what motivate teachers to apply for principalship and the challenges and success stories of such application, policy makers with regard to the appointment process and procedures and all the relevant stakeholders involved in the appointment of principals.

The circuit manager is required to provide information about newly appointed principals from June 2010. As school principal, they are in a unique position of providing the most useful information about the topic being researched. Their participation will be in form of interviews for duration of 45 minutes and the interviews will be tape recorded. Semi - structured questions will be used to collect data about the experiences of principal on their career pathway to the principalship, using participants from Man'ombe circuit. The dates and times of the interviews will be mutually negotiated. Participation in this study is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity regarding information shared is guaranteed. Interviews will be done after teaching time to avoid disruption during contact time.

Hoping for your favourable consideration on this matter

Yours Faithfully

Mr Nkuna M.E. *EHa*

Contact No: 078 421 3340 / 073 298 0158

E-Mail: nkunam01@gmail.com

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ANNEXURE E: LETTER OF REQUEST AND CONSENT TO INTERVIEW THE CIRCUIT MANAGER

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

Department of Education Management and Policy

University of Pretoria

Researcher: Nkuna M.E.

P. O. Box 1029, Giyani

0826

11 April   2014

The circuit manager

Man'ombe circuit

Giyani

0826

Dear Sir / Madam

REQUEST AND CONSENT TO INTERVIEW THE CIRCUIT MANAGER

This letter is a request for permission to conduct research with you as a participant. This research forms part of my Master's Degree in the Department of Education Management and Policy at the University of Pretoria. The title of the research is: **Experiences of principals in Limpopo province regarding their career pathways.**

The aim of this study is to explore different pathways that teachers aspiring to be principals follow to principalship and how they have experienced it. It focuses on the factors that contribute to appointment to principal position; formal and informal pathways towards

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principalship; the appointment process and what motivates teacher to apply for principal position.
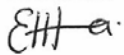
The knowledge and information obtained from this study will be relevant and valuable to teachers aspiring to be principals in terms of what motivate teachers to apply for principalship and the challenges and success stories of such application, policy makers with regard to the appointment process and procedures and all the relevant stakeholders involved in the appointment of principals.

You are invited to participate in this study because you are in a position to provide valuable information about newly promoted school principals who were promoted after June 2010. This information will assist the researcher to conduct sampling for participants.

The participants in this study will be school principals, being in a unique position of providing the most useful information about the topic being researched. The participation of the principals will be in form of interviews for duration of 45 minutes and the interviews will be tape recorded. The dates and times of the interviews will be mutually negotiated. Participation in this study is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity regarding information shared is guaranteed. Interviews will be done after teaching time to avoid disruption during contact time.

Yours sincerely

Nkuna ME.

Agree/disagree to participate in the research

If agree please sign the section below

I ……………………………………………………………………….. (Print your name) have read and understood the purpose of the research and agree to participate. I understand the nature of the research and give my consent for the researcher to interview and tape record my responses. I understand that my identity and that of my school will be kept anonymous and confidential. I understand that my participation is voluntary and have the right to terminate it if I feel uncomfortable during the research. I am also not obliged to reveal information that I feel uncomfortable in revealing.

Participant's name ……………………………………………………………………

Participant's signature ……………………………………………………………

Participant's contact number ……………………………………………………

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ANNEXURE F: ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	CLEARANCE NUMBER :	EM 14/02/09
DEGREE AND PROJECT	MEd Experiences of principals in the Limpopo province regarding their career pathways	
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Eliah Mzamani Nkuna	
DEPARTMENT	Educational Management and Policy Studies	
DATE CONSIDERED	5 August 2014	
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	APPROVED	

Please note:

For Masters applications, ethical clearance is valid for 2 years
For PhD applications, ethical clearance is valid for 3 years.

CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE	Prof Liesel Ebersöhn
DATE	5 August 2014
CC	Jeannie Beukes Liesel Ebersöhn Dr TA Ogina

This ethical clearance certificate is issued subject to the following condition:

1. It remains the students' responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries.

ANNEXURE G: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

INTERVIEW QUESTION: EXPERIENCES OF PRINCIPALS IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE REGARDING THEIR CAREER PATHWAYS

Initial question	Interview questions			
Biographical questions	1. What are some of the factors that contribute to appointment to principal position?	2 & 3. What are the formal and informal pathways to principalship?	4. What are the experiences of principals with regard to the appointment process to the principalship?	5. What motivates aspiring principals to apply for principalship position?
Tell me about yourself (years of teaching experience, qualifications, post levels occupied	• What qualifications did you have before you were appointed as a principal? • What are some of the training / courses you attended before you were appointed? • What are some of the factors that contributed to your appointment?	• Which levels or ranks in management have you occupied before reaching the principal position? • What do you think was expected of you during the process of appointment to principal position? • Were you aware of the criteria used and policies dealing with appointment?	• Please, tell me what happened in the process of appointing you as a principal • What was your experience during the appointment process? • What is your comment about the procedure followed during appointment of principals? • What challenges did you encounter during the process?	• What motivated you to apply for principalship?

ANNEXURE H: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

INTERVIEWS WITH PRINCIPALS

TOPIC: EXPERIENCES OF PRINCIPALS IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE REGARDING THEIR CAREER PATHWAYS

PRINCIPAL A

1. What are some of the factors that contribute to appointment to principal position?

    (a) What qualifications did you have before you were appointed as a principal?

    I had a SPTD, FDE in management, B.Ed (honors) in management law and policy, an ABET certificate and a diploma in computer literacy.

    (b) What are some of the training/ courses did you attend before you were appointed as a principal?

    I attended one day courses in the form of workshops. The workshop that I attended was about time management. It focused on how SMT must manage time. I attended another workshop on policies, which focused on providing knowledge about policies governing educators, so that as educators, we would be able to workshop educators about these policies. I have not attended workshops or training aimed at principalship, but I believe that the workshops I attended , especially about time management and policies helped me a lot when I became a principal. I have also never received any training or workshops since I was appointed as a principal. What I have encountered as a principal, I use my background knowledge gained while I was a member of the SMT. I got appointed as a principal straight from being a Departmental head. As an HOD we attended training (induction workshops) which was aimed at preparing us to manage our departments.

    As I said earlier, I did not receive any training for principalship. My belief as a principal is that there is no need for the Department of Education to train one for principalship. I myself applied for principalship and was shortlisted and called for interviews which I won successfully. The lack of training obviously has contributed to lack of information on my part, especially when it comes to handling everyday issues such as conflicts and dealing with issues such as discipline in both educators and learners.

(c) What are some of the factors that contributed to your appointment?

I believe that I am a hard worker. I remember when I had to go for interviews; I made sure that I prepared myself thoroughly. Applicants undergo interviews in order to be appointed as a principal. Interviews are based on dimensions, which one has to understand in order to convince the interview committee of one's abilities. I believe that my way of expressing myself during the interviews might have played a role in making the committee consider me as the best candidate. I don't think there was any favouritism during the interviews; the committee might have seen the qualities of a good leader in me. As I said earlier, I am a hard worker, a visionary which I clearly indicated to the committee during the interview, I also have the ability to communicate my vision with the people I work with. I am a good speaker who is able to draw the attention of other people. I also listen attentively when other people speak so that I always am in a good position to respond. I have knowledge of financial management as well as people management which I gained when doing my Honors degree. I believe that the interview committee might have recognized these good qualities in me.

I also believe that my qualifications contributed towards my appointment as a principal. During the process of shortlisting, a qualification is one of the requirements for appointment as a principal that is used by shortlisting committees. In my case, I was informed after I was appointed by one of the SGB members that they shortlisted candidates with a B.Ed (honors) for the principalship posts.

When I was applying for principalship posts, I applied to many schools, some of which were very far from my area. I applied to almost any school without regard for distance. I was desperate to get a post since some of my friends who were my classmate at college were already principals.

When I applied for principalship, the issue of the size of the school was foremost in my mind. It would have been a waste to apply for a post in a small school which is at a distance. That would cost me in accommodation and transport. Distance would also present pressure on my family since I would be forced to find a place to board and only see my family over weekends. I believe that applying in a small school would have been a disadvantage to me when considering the issue of salary. Schools are categorised according to their size, such as P1, P2, P3, P4 and P5. The size of the school also determines the salary of the principal. Having to manage a small school would have disadvantaged me salary wise. I am appointed in a P4 school. A P4 is a big school and I am happy because I am earning a good salary. I only applied to P2 schools which were nearer my area, but small schools which were far away from where I lived were of no

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interest to me. I reasoned that working in a P2 school where I would not spend on transport or accommodation was not going to be a problem since it would not cost me financially, but in the case of P3, P4 and P5 schools, I applied even though they were far away from where I live because I knew that the distance would be compensated by the better salary when I got appointed. To me big schools mean more money and little schools means less money.

2. What are the formal and informal pathways to principalship?

(a) Which levels or ranks in management have you occupied before reaching the principal position?

Before I became a principal, I started as a CS1 educator. I worked for ten years before I got a promotion to a Departmental head or HOD. I worked as an HOD for five years and got a promotion to the principal position at the sixth year.

(b) What do you think was expected of you during the process of appointment to the principal position?

I believe that the shortlisting committees were considering issues of arranging documents in order as decreed in the gazette. I say this because news sometimes travel that other people's application were discarded due to improperly arranged documents as well as uncertified documents. Some people have a belief that the way a person arranges his or her documents indicates his or her orderliness. Again, I think that shortlisting committees also looked for qualifications. This I believe would assist them to select candidates who are better qualified for the position. I also think that during this process, the committee finds the chance to discard applications with irrelevant qualifications. I also think that the committee also looked for experience, which may include the number of teaching years and number of years in management. In the school that I got appointed to, the SGB was also looking specifically for a man. The person who was acting at that time was a woman and staff members were ill-disciplined. I was reliable informed by one SGB member that the school was dysfunctional and there was no team work in almost all school activities.

(c) Were you aware of the criteria used and policies dealing with appointment?

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I was aware of the criteria dealing with shortlisting process. Firstly the gazette in which the posts were advertised contains information about criteria which shortlisting committees can use to formulate criteria. The guidelines includes aspects such as a teacher training certificate or diploma, number of teaching years, experience and subject specialization. According to the gazette, a person qualifies to apply for a principalship posts if he or she is a qualified educator and has spent 7 years as a teacher. Having experience in management is also part of the requirement used by shortlisting committees. Let me also indicate that shortlisting committees sometimes diverge from agreed upon criteria to formulate criteria that suit their purpose. I believe that shorting committees use experience in management. If I recollect well, almost all the candidates selected for the post of principal had more than five years' experience in management. I was also aware that the shortlisting committee looked for a better qualified person. Almost all the candidates for the post had a B.Ed (honors) degree except one candidate who had a diploma. I think that the reason for selecting this candidate with only a diploma against other candidate holding B.Ed degrees was that the SGB was interested in him since he was from the village in which the school is situated and worked at the school. Maybe, the SGB wanted to give him the position of principal. I also believe that in any shortlisting and interview panels, there are issues or criteria that are only known by the panel, and even hidden agendas. I believe that to qualify for appointment as a principal, one must have a qualification in management and that candidates with the highest qualification must get priority over others. When I talk about a qualification in management, I am referring to a Diploma; Degree; Honors degree, Master's Degree and a Doctoral degree. I think that shortlisting committees consider candidates with the highest qualifications in management. For example, a candidate with an honors degree will stand a better chance in getting shortlisted against a candidate with a diploma. I was aware of policies dealing with appointment. I can quote the PAM which provides guidelines on the duties and responsibilities of SMT members. I am also familiar with policies such as the Employment of Educators Act, 1998 which provides certain guidelines on the appointment of educators as well as the SASA, 1996 which provides guidelines to SGB with regard to the appointment of educators in schools.

3. What are the experiences of principals with regard to the appointment process to the principalship?

(a) Please, tell me what happened in the process of appointing you as a principal?

When I went for interviews, I was shortlisted with four other candidates. Amongst the five candidates, three were males and two were females. If you look at it, it is now obvious that the SGB and shortlisting committee did not follow policies on gender equity which might

mean that the committee was not knowledgeable about policies on appointment. The interview committee consisted of five male panelists. There was a departmental representative who came from the Department Of Education since the post being contested was for a principal. There were also two people who represented unions (SADTU and PEU). If you look at it, the interview committee had a disregard for gender policies because I believe that in this democracy, gender must always be in the fore front. During the interview, the Interview Committee asked standardised questions, which I think was formulated that day before the arrival of the candidates. In Limpopo, we all know that interviews are based on dimensions within which interviews are based. Now that I recall it, some of the interview questions seemed not to align themselves with the dimensions. This partly caused a lot of frustrations on myself and had to think smartly when answering them using my knowledge gained as a member of the SMT for many years. I think that the reason for the deviation from the generally accepted dimensions might have been caused by misunderstanding. I recall that some of the Interview committee members were people who worked in other government departments and had never been educators.

(b) What was your experience during the appointment process?

During the interview nothing special occurred. It was a normal interview like any other interviews that I attended before. One incident that I recall was that there was a committee member who seemed to be very serious or let us say moody. He asked questions in a very inaudible voice and I had to ask him to repeat again which was very frustrating for me. The other members seemed friendly enough and even smiled when they asked questions. One other thing that I recall was that amongst the candidates, there was an educator who was working at the school for which we were attending the interviews. This educator lived at the village in which the school is situated. It was rumored before we started with the interviews that the SGB intended appointing him as the son of the soil and for his knowledge of the local politics. Fortunately, I had prepared myself well that I might have convinced the interview committee that I was the best for the job.

(c) What is your comment about the procedure followed during the appointment of principals?

I think that the procedure for appointing principals is fair and without prejudice on itself. The problem arises where the SGB and even community want to influence the outcomes of the appointment process. One finds that the SGB's usually have someone whom they consider as the best candidate. The SGB would do everything on their power to see that the

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person is appointed. Sometimes the community also can influence the outcome of the appointment process where people of influence may decide that a position of principal should be occupied by someone they prefer, especially someone from the local area. This distorts the good intentions of the appointment process. The appointment process in itself is fair and would assists in appointing deserving people, but the problem lies with shortlisting and interviewing panels who are usually not competent enough to carry-out the process successfully. Some SGB members who form part of the shortlisting and interviewing panels are illiterate and have a problem in formulating sound interview questions which may result in candidates being unable to provide relevant answers. At times, shortlisting and interviewing panels may be biased due to a preference for a particular candidate, thereby discriminating others who are more capable.

(d) What challenges did you encounter during the process?

I encountered a challenge, which I believe would have prevented me from applying for the principal post. I had previously applied for the principalship positions in different schools, but I had never been selected for interviews. This created a feeling of being not good enough, and I told myself that I would never apply again. Fortunately, I met a former classmate who was then a principal, and he advised me to rewrite and beef up my curriculum vitae, adding essential information that he believed was what shortlisting committees looked for in a CV, such as management potential, community involvement and participation in professional bodies. After this, I got shortlisted and also got appointed as a principal.

4. What motivates teachers aspiring to be principals to apply for principalship positions?

(a) What motivated you to apply for principalship?

I was motivated, especially by the fact that I believe in my abilities and knowing myself as a hard worker. I studied management which made me believe that the knowledge I gained while studying would assist me to compete with the best for principalship post. I also applied in order to improve my earning level and for the status of being called a principal. I have seen people who were regarded lowly by the community but who, when appointed as principals have enhanced their status and were looked upon as best advisors by the community.

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ANNEXURE I: DATA ANALYSIS

Questions and sub	Responses	Segments	comments	Themes/Sub
1. What are some of the factors that contribute to appointment to principal position?				
a. What qualifications did you have before you were appointed as a principal?	PA- I had a SPTD, FDE in management, B.Ed (honors) in management law and policy, an ABET certificate and a diploma in computer literacy.		SPTD, FDE, B.Ed (honors)	Qualification before appointment – All the principals except one had SPTD as the lowest qualification. All of them had formal qualification in Education Management at different levels such as certificate, diploma and Hons degree. All of them had diploma in office computer literacy.
	PBI- had an SPTD; ACE in management; B.Ed. (Honors) in management, law and policy and a Diploma in computer.		SPTD; ACE Diploma in computer.	
	PC-The highest qualification that I had was a B Tech in		B Tech in leadership	

	leadership and management. Besides having been trained as an educator, I was trained as an Assessor and a Moderator.			
	PD-Before I was appointed as a principal, I had standard 10 which is now called grade 12, SPTD (Senior Primary Teachers Diploma), a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Diploma in education management. I also had a Diploma in Office Computing.		SPTD Bachelor of Arts degree, Diploma in education management Diploma in Office Computing.	
	PE-Before I was appointed as a principal, I had a teaching diploma in which I specialized in junior primary (JPTD). I also had a BA. Degree and an Honors degree specializing in educational management. I got promoted while I was studying for a Diploma in office computer which I completed after I was appointed.		JPTD BA. Degree Honors degree specializing in educational management

Diploma in office computer | |
| | | | | |
| b. What are some of the training /courses did you attend before you | PA-I attended one day courses in the form of workshops. The workshop that I | One day courses in the form of workshops. | One day courses-Time management | 1.Courses that played a part towards principalship |

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were appointed as a principal?	attended was about time management. It focused on how SMT must manage time. I attended another workshop on policies, which focused on providing knowledge about policies governing educators, so that as educators, we would be able to workshop educators about these policies.	The workshop that I attended was about time management. workshop on policies, which focused on providing knowledge about policies governing educators	Policies	.One day courses .Induction workshops NB: all the participants indicated some benefits from attending these courses which may have contributed to their success
	PB- I attended a short course for a week on financial management in 2008. This short course was conducted by an outside organisation and sponsored by the Department of Education. It dealt with teaching educators who were Finance Officers in schools about managing school finances. The course helped me a lot to achieve the principalship. In the interviews, one of the dimensions required knowledge of finances and the knowledge I gained through that course came to use. I think I might have won this post due to the way I	a short course for a week on financial management Dealt with teaching educators who were Finance Officers in schools about managing school finances. a course on project management aimed at teaching us	One week course- Financial management Course on project management	2. Benefits of attending course Leadership and management knowledge and skills. The courses or workshops assisted in increasing leadership and management skills and knowledge 3. Learning in the job Principals gained knowledge of leadership and management through experience

	expressed myself about the knowledge of finances. ==I also attended a course on project management in 2009==. You must understand that attendance to such courses depends on chance and opportunity. I was lucky to be selected to attend this course because I was then a Project Manager for the school where I used to work. ==The course was aimed at teaching us about management of projects in schools.== The course also came handy when I started to work as a principal. In a school, there are many projects that need to be undertaken. As a principal, I used my knowledge of project management to plan projects and take decision about delegation, resources and timeframes.	==about management of projects in schools.==		obtained while working as SMT members 4.Training by unions Principals gained knowledge that assisted them to achieve principalship through being work shopped by unions. They were work shopped on how to answer questions during interviews for principalship.

ANNEXURE J: LETTER FROM THE LANGUAGE EDITOR

DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

15 August 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that I have language edited and proof-read the dissertation by Mzamani Eliah Nkuna entitled,

EXPERIENCES OF PRINCIPALS IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE REGARDING THEIR CAREER PATHWAYS.

The language editing/proof-reading process included the checking of spelling, punctuation, syntax and expression. An attempt was made to simplify complex sentences and, where necessary, combine short sentences to clarify meaning. Attention was given to the use of various language elements, such as prepositions, consistency in language usage and formatting as well as tenses and capital letters.

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