



MENTORING OF NOVICE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS BY EXPERIENCED
PRINCIPALS IN THE KHOMAS REGION IN NAMIBIA

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULLFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTERS IN EDUCATION (LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND
POLICY STUDIES)

OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

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NOVEMBER 2016

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ABSTRACT

Namibian schools are faced with many and serious challenges and skilful leadership of school principals is essential as it is a major contributing factor to school improvement and effectiveness. However, it should be ensured that school principals are well trained and receive continuous professional development (Bush & Oduro, 2006). This may for example be through mentoring novice school principals. Although novice principals in Namibia receive induction from school inspectors, unfortunately the inspectors tend to focus merely on policy implementation (Mushaandja, 2006) and little on helping beginning principals become acquainted with their new leadership roles. It is against this background that the researcher aimed to find out if there is a need for novice principals in the Khomas region to be mentored by experienced principals.

The study employed a mixed method research design involving questionnaires and interviews as instruments. The study population consisted of 111 participants (10 novice and 94 experienced school principals and 3 school inspectors), from the Khomas region. A sample of 33 participants (3 school inspectors, 10 novice principals and 20 experienced principals) were selected using systematic and purposive sampling techniques.

The results revealed many leadership needs that novice principals face. The major ones were: difficulty in understanding educational policies and acts; challenges in attending to all tasks and demands of principalship; difficulty in managing staff and lack of time for mentoring. This study has shown that support and assistance of novice principals, especially during their critical first years of principalship is essential. Thus the researcher recommends in developing a comprehensive and at least one year long mentoring programme for novice principals, so that they get to know the nature of the duties that they face. Also, the Ministry of Education (MoE), universities and regional offices of education should share the responsibility for the quality of mentoring programmes. They should jointly develop training materials and provide support to mentors and mentees.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

EMIS - Education Management Information System

ETSIP	-	Education and Training Sector Improvement Program
IEL	-	Institute for Educational Leadership
NIED	-	National Institute for Educational Development
NPC	-	National Planning Commission
MoE	-	Ministry of Education
SACMEQ	-	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SATS	-	Standardized Achievement Tests
UNAM	-	University of Namibia

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my gratitude to our Almighty Father for having accompanied me towards the materialization of this thesis.

Thanks will also go to my research supervisors: Dr J. Mushaandja and Dr D. Wolfaardt for their untiring effort and great assistance in guiding me through the course of this research.

My greatest appreciation also goes to my dearest husband and children for their patience and endurance during the period of my studies.

I would also like to sincerely thank all the school principals and teachers at the various schools where I undertook my research. I thank them for allowing me to interview them, for their time and great co-operation.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my
loving husband, João-Walter Perestrelo

and our beautiful children:

Alegria Joãozinho Perestrelo

Antonio João Perestrelo

Amora Ndeuya Perestrelo

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This work was completed by the following author at the UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA in the year 2016. It is an original work and contains ideas of the author and has not been submitted to another University for a degree award. All the sources the author has used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged through complete references.

Signature of author/student

Date

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Figure 1: Ages and the number of years respondents served in their positions

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Orientation of the study

Over the years Namibia has demonstrated a commitment towards education. This commitment is clearly evident in many ways including the implementation of Universal Primary Education for Grades 0 to 7 in 2013. The introduction thereof resulted in a 25% increase in pre-primary enrolments and a growth of 3% in the primary level enrolments in 2014 (Namwandi, 2014). In his own words, Dr. Namwandi, Minister of Education, confirms that:

The introduction of universal primary education not only ensured compliance with Article 20 of our Constitution, but is also in line with UNESCO Education for All. It is our view that this introduction has resulted in a 3% increase in learner enrolment. This was a timely intervention. The Ministry is most grateful for the support accorded to it by the nation (Namwandi, 2014, p.6).

Another commitment towards education was shown by the relatively large amount of budget allocated to education on a yearly basis through the government's annual budget. In 2013, over twenty three percent (23.6%) of the national budget, amounting to N\$37, 7 billion, was devoted to education (MoE, 2012). Despite the substantial progress towards a better education as shown in the above examples,

schools in Namibia are still faced with serious problems. These range, amongst others, from high failure rates, poor school infrastructure to learners' indiscipline and teachers' lack of work ethics (Makuwa, 2005).

High failure rates could be seen upon comparing for example the Grade 12 pass rates of 2012 and 2013. Approximately only 25% of the Namibian Grade 12 learners in 2012 and 2013 successfully passed and qualified to enrol at tertiary institutions in Namibia (MoE, 2012, 2013). In other words, the remaining 75% of learners exited the education system unsuccessfully. Many of these learners end up jobless or had no choice but to occupy low-paying jobs. Those who had funds available enrolled at institutions such as Namibia Centre for Open Learning (NAMCOL) to improve their marks. This high learner failure rate is a devastating reality that with no doubt contributes to the already high unemployment rate, which currently stands at over 50% (Namibia Planning Commission, NPC, 2011).

A further challenge was revealed by the results obtained from the Standardized Achievement Tests (SATS), which were carried out in 2009 and 2013 in Namibian primary schools. The SATS are used to assess the performance of Grades 5 and 7 learners in English, Mathematics and Natural Sciences. The results indicated that in 2009 and 2013 the overall national performance was at 46% and the learner performance in Mathematics remained at 43% (MoE, 2014). Dr Namwandi warns that "This stagnation is a matter of great concern as failure to achieve basic

competencies in Grade 5 and 7 is bound to affect good performance at Grades 10 and 12 levels” (MoE, 2014, p.7).

Ninnes (2011) mentioned further challenges in the education sector. He stated that there are major gaps in school infrastructure, especially regarding school sanitation and teacher housing. More than 20% of the schools do not have latrines and 60% do not have teacher accommodation. Additional challenges that continue to occur in Namibian schools are bullying, hostility towards minority groups, sexual harassment and physical abuse (Ninnes, 2011). Bullying and corporal punishment are very common in Namibian schools.

Educational challenges of this magnitude make it difficult to strive towards the creation of a knowledge-based economy, as foreseen in Vision 2030 (MoE, 2007). Needless to mention that without strong leaders, schools have little chance of resolving any of these challenges. It is argued in various research studies (Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1994; Hallinger, 2003; Coles & Southworth, 2005) that skilful leadership of school principals is a major contributing factor to school improvement and effectiveness. In other words, the quality of the school principal’s leadership makes a difference to the school’s performance. If schools want to provide the best education to their learners, they need to have effective educational leaders.

According to Orr & Orphanos (2007) there is a great public demand for more effective schools and this has placed great pressure on the crucial role of school leaders. It is therefore required that educational leaders should possess a complex set of knowledge, skills and qualities (Orr & Orphanos, 2007). But, in order to have effective school principals, Bush & Oduro (2006) emphasise that it should be ensured that school principals are well trained and receive continuous professional development and support, especially in areas of leadership and management.

Governments should realize that their main assets are their employees and success depends on the development of highly skilled employees. In other words, on the one hand schools require trained and committed teachers who on the other hand need the leadership of effective school principals. MoE (2007) echoed the same message by stating that “Capacity is strongly related to productivity: high capacity in the MoE will directly increase its productivity and its ability to lead the sector and achieve more ...” (p.81).

However, as Bush & Oduro (2006) point out, school principals in Africa receive little or no induction or appropriate pre-service preparation for their challenging roles of leading schools. This shows that African governments seem not to recognise the major role school principals play in making sure that schools are run effectively. Needless to say, in order for schools to be successful and effective, African governments should strive to find the best ways to prepare and develop highly

qualified school principals. One of these ways may be through mentoring of novice school principals in order to acquaint them to their new leadership roles during their first years of principalship.

The MoE puts in effort in developing school principals in Namibia. The pre-service preparation of school principals is done by the University of Namibia (UNAM). The Department of Educational Foundation and Management at UNAM offers a variety of modules and courses that aim at equipping aspiring principals with the necessary management skills and knowledge (UNAM, 2013). Upon completion, aspiring principals obtain a Bachelor in Education. Also on offer are postgraduate studies in Educational Management and Leadership such as the one-year long Advanced Diploma, the two-year long Master's Degree and the PhD (UNAM, 2013). These are all specialised postgraduate courses that are specifically designed to prepare educational leaders and managers.

In addition, MoE assigns school inspectors to offer school principals leadership workshops that deal, among others, with topics such as managing the school curriculum, monitoring, planning and time management. These workshops last between 4 and 5 weeks (MoE, 2014). Furthermore, novice principals in Namibia also receive induction from school inspectors, but unfortunately the inspectors tend to focus merely on policy implementation (Mushaandja, 2006) and little on helping novice principals become acquainted with their new leadership roles and

responsibilities. Mentoring, on the other hand, provides three forms of assistance, namely instructional support by keeping the newcomers' attention focused on learning issues and offer models of successful practice, administrative and managerial support, and emotional support by listening carefully and being present at stressful moments (Mushaandja, 2006).

Despite the effort that MoE puts in to prepare and train school principals in Namibia, sadly, when experienced principals retire or change profession, they exit the field of education and take along all their years' experience and accumulated skills, leaving a vacuum of leadership in the schools they were leading. The absence of good leadership can be detrimental to a school, because as mentioned earlier, the school's overall performance depends on the principal's leadership skills (Hallinger, 2003). Without strong leadership the success of schools is put at risk and efforts to achieve good learner results may not succeed. It is thus a challenge for novice principals to either maintain the status quo or bring about improvement in schools as they are inexperienced and lack the necessary leadership skills to run schools. It is challenging as these principals are new to the school environment and first need to be orientated and learn about how to manage schools, before they can bring about any improvement.

Leading a school can be quite demanding and such pressure on less-experienced principals may create an environment where they quickly become demotivated,

easily burn out and lose focus of their leadership roles and responsibilities. Mushaandja (2013) attests that “Challenges in schools do not discriminate; they face each and every principal equally and with the same magnitude” (p.58). This clearly confirms that novice principals experience similar school challenges as those faced by experienced principals. However, experienced principals are in a better position to tackle and deal with school dilemmas more effectively than inexperienced novice school principals.

It is therefore important that continuous in-service professional development programmes should be put in place to train and support novice principals. On-the-job professional development programmes such as mentoring are said to be significantly beneficial to novice principals as mentorship is a form of coaching that can greatly help novice principals to be orientated to their new roles of school leadership (Doherty, 1999).

Mushaandja (2013) and Doherty (1999) have found that mentoring is considered a critical component of effective leadership development programmes and recommended that it should form a valuable component of the principal induction process. Furthermore, principal mentoring is viewed to be very effective and a cost effective way to expand the capacity of school leaders (Doherty 1999). Undoubtedly, mentorship may help to reduce the stress and frustrations of novice principals. Generally, mentorship may also allow the novice principals to learn a great deal from

experienced principals and as a result advance their skills and effectiveness in leadership.

Mentoring may be beneficial to novice principals as university-based programmes are viewed to lack “coherence, rigour and standards and principals who complete them are ill-prepared for principalship” (Mushaandja, 2006, p. 52). The content covered in such programmes does not fully reflect the realities that await the principals in the real world. This means that principals do not find much in their pre-service preparation that would adequately equip them for their new leadership roles.

So novice principals are not only ill-equipped in their preparation, they also receive little support to help them deal with the challenges at schools, as effective in-service development programmes for novice principals such as mentoring seem not to exist either in the Khomas region nor in Namibia as a whole. It is thus important to consider and use on-the-job professional development programmes such as mentoring, in order to complement and fill the gaps that university-based programmes fail to address. Also in favour of mentoring is a study done in Washington D.C. in 2000 on School Leadership which attests that the majority of school principals mentioned that the factors that added the greatest value to their success are on-the-job experiences and programmes such as mentoring (Gray, Fry, Bottoms & O’Neill, 2007).

However, despite the many advantages of mentoring, as mentioned in the previous paragraphs, mentoring programmes have some shortcomings. Lashway as quoted by Mushaandja (2013) mentions that one shortcoming is that experienced principals (mentors) tend to mentor and advise novice principals in running schools as they themselves run them. In other words, preparing the novice principals to be an exact copy of experienced principals instead of mentoring them in such a way that they are prepared for their own situations with their ever-changing circumstances. Moreover, mentors also tend to be controlling and overprotective (Doherty, 1999). These statements are likely to be true in the Namibian context, as we are a people deeply rooted in our cultures and traditions and tend to blindly take advice from elderly experienced people without opposing and questioning it as this may be seen as a sign of disrespect.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In Namibia when a principal who successfully led and guided a school retires or resigns, many challenges may arise. Even though a new principal is appointed to replace the departing principal, it may not be an easy task for a novice principal to maintain the standard of the school or to bring about some improvement.

As mentioned earlier, school principals do not receive adequate know-how and skills in their pre-service preparation programmes that would efficiently equip and prepare them for the demands that they will face in schools. Even though beginning

principals in Namibia receive induction, school inspectors who train them tend to focus more on policy implementation and not helping novice principals become acquainted with their new roles. So, novice principals are not only ill-equipped in their preparation, they also receive little support to help them deal with the challenges at schools. Without the necessary support and guidance for novice principals, many are often left to 'sink or swim' on their own.

Mushaandja (2013, p. 46) confirms that "...newly appointed [Namibian] principals are stressed, exhausted and overwhelmed", as they do not have the necessary leadership skills. Even when novice principals have gone through pre-service programmes to prepare them for leadership positions, Doherty (1999) found that novice principals still face many challenges that make continuous in-service professional development crucial. They, for example, find it difficult to apply their textbook understanding of leadership into practice, implying that most novice principals do not fully understand their job until they are in these positions.

It is against this background that the researcher would like to find out if there is a need for novice principals in the Khomas region to be mentored by experienced principals. Through mentorship, useful skills and know-how from experienced principals can be greatly treasured and passed on to novice and inexperienced principals. Hansford and Ehrich (2006) confirm that mentoring is so crucial that countries such as the USA and Singapore require that all principals must complete mandated mentoring programs at the university before they are entitled to take up the

principal role. In contrast, this approach is not used in Namibia, as there seems to be no mentoring programmes provided to aspiring and novice school principals. Lack of mentoring may lead to novice principals being stressed, frustrated and overwhelmed by the various demands in their school (Mushaandja, 2013). This is especially so with novice principals as they may not be well-prepared at their universities for the actual circumstances at the schools. It is for these reasons that Hansford and Ehrich (2006) argue that due to the many factors including the increasing workload and stress associated with the principalship, this position is not viewed as an attractive career option.

1.3 Research questions

This study will be guided by the following research questions:

- 1.3.1 What are the leadership needs of novice school principals that can be addressed through mentoring?
- 1.3.2 How can mentoring address these needs?
- 1.3.3 What are the possible challenges of mentoring?
- 1.3.4 How can these challenges be addressed?

1.4 Significance of the study

The findings regarding the mentoring of novice school principals by experienced school principals in the Khomas region might be of significance to novice and inexperienced school principals, school inspectors, policy makers and the Namibian community at large.

These findings may be crucial for policy debates especially regarding how in-service and on-the-job professional development programmes for school principals should be designed and delivered to support the development of more effective principals. Moreover, the findings may greatly assist policy makers to accordingly develop policies and tailor appropriate professional development training efforts that are beneficial to both the novice and experienced principals. The findings may also inform school inspectors who are majorly responsible for the training of novice principals of how beneficial mentoring is and as a result the MoE together with the policy makers and school inspectors may consider formalizing and intensifying mentoring programmes of novice principals in Namibia.

Even though this study is done on a small scale, concentrating only on the Khomas region, the findings may still trigger the MoE to carry out this study on a larger scale. In this manner, it may be possible to get an in depth investigation into the mentoring of novice principals in Namibia and provide a broader understanding of the topic under study.

The findings of this study may reveal additional essential benefits that are not directly the main focus of this study. The findings may, for example, create or initiate more awareness for issues regarding novice school principals. The results may also help to establish the actual responsibilities of the Khomas regional office in supporting and mentoring novice school principals. Moreover, even though this study will only focus on the novice school principals in the Khomas region, the findings and suggestions from this study may benefit school leaders in the entire country where the situation is similar to that of the Khomas region. In other words, the recommendations that will be made in this study can be viewed as alternatives in addressing the challenges that novice school principals face during their critical first years of principalship.

Moreover, it is fruitful for especially the school inspectors and developers of school principals to be aware and learn more about the leadership needs of beginning school principals, so that they may be more able to prepare future principals effectively. The more they learn today about how to meet and address the challenges that face novice school leaders, the better they will prepare tomorrow's aspiring principals. Finally, the results of this study would contribute greatly to the research and to the limited existing knowledge and literature on the mentoring of novice principals in Namibia.

1.5 Limitations of the study

This study was done on a small scale as it only focused on novice school principals in the Khomas region. It may therefore be challenging at times when the findings are generalised to represent all 14 educational regions in Namibia. Caution is thus requested in this regard. This however reveals that further research on a larger scale is needed.

Another limitation was presented by the scarcity of relevant literature on the mentoring of novice principals by experienced principals in Namibia. Thus, the literature used in this study concentrated more on the international context and very little on the Namibian context.

1.6 Delimitations

This research will focus on all novice and experienced school principals in the Khomas region. The researcher chooses to focus only on the Khomas region which primarily consists of the capital city, Windhoek, because it presents a diverse school environment. Schools in the Khomas region enroll children from different ethnic groups, races and socio-economic backgrounds (Mushaandja, 2013). Because of this and also because Windhoek is the capital city, the researcher assumes that this makes the Khomas region more attractive and rewarding for school principals to work there.

1.7 Definition of terms

The following terms should be understood as defined in this section.

Mentoring is defined by Stokes (2010) as a relationship between an experienced and a less experienced person in which the mentor provides guidance, advice, support and feedback to the mentee.

A ***mentor*** is an individual with expertise (experienced principal) who can help develop the career of a mentee (novice principal). A mentor will oversee the career and development of the mentee through teaching, counselling, providing support and advice (Hansford and Ehrich, 2006).

Consequently, the term ***mentee*** is used in this study to refer to an individual who may be in the role of a “learner” (novice principal) in the mentoring relationship and is being guided and supported in enhancing his / her career by a mentor (experienced principal) (Hansford and Ehrich, 2006).

Novice principal refers to school principals who are in their first or second year of principalship (Bush and Oduro, 2006).

Consequently, the term ***experienced principal*** refers to school principals who served as principals for longer than 2 years. However, as long-term work experience in any profession is widely believed to be beneficial, for the purpose of this research, only experienced principals who have served at least five years will be considered.

1.8 Summary

The first chapter provided the introduction of the study, orientation of the study, research problem and the research questions. Furthermore, the rationale of the study (reasons for conducting the study), the significance of the study and the limitations that the researcher experienced while conducting the study were also presented in this chapter.

This chapter also focused, among other topics, on what mentoring is, the importance thereof and the benefits that novice principals would gain upon receiving mentoring from experienced principals.

The next chapter reviewed the literature relevant to the topic under investigation and seeks to shed more light on the concept around mentoring of novice school principals and the benefits thereof. By engaging views from various scholars the next chapter will assist in addressing the research questions of this study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presented the theoretical framework that informed this study and reviewed the various literature that informs about the mentoring of novice principals. Moreover, the chapter discussed the definition of mentoring, the mentoring process and the importance of mentoring.

The purpose of this study was to find out if there is a need for novice principals in the Khomas region to be mentored by experienced principals. Therefore it was necessary to identify the challenges experienced by novice principals and also to identify the challenges of mentoring and explore possible solutions to these challenges.

2.2. Theoretical framework

This research is informed by Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism. Vygotsky believes that learning is a collaborative activity which occurs within a social context (Davydov, 1995). He stresses that the interaction between individuals and their peers is a necessary part of their learning process. He states that cognitive processes appear first at the social level and are then internalized and transformed as individual ways of thinking (Davydov, 1995). This implies that in order for learning to occur, an inexperienced novice principal has to first make contact with the social environment

(such as peers) and after this contact, the novice principal learns and applies the new knowledge. This is in line with the finding by Mushaandja (2006) that professional development of principals is personal, yet it takes place more effectively when principals develop together with other people such as fellow principals, using strategies such as mentoring.

Vygotsky further argues that during the learning process, there comes a stage where the novice cannot complete tasks independently, but can do so with guidance of the experts. He calls this stage the 'Zone of Proximal Development' (Davydov, 1995) which refers to the zone between the ability of novice principals to solve their management problems with the help from experienced peers through e.g. mentoring and the ability to solve the problems alone. Davydov (1995) talks about 'scaffolding', a metaphor used by Bruner, a constructivist, to refer to the way an expert (such as a mentor) supports and guides a novice's (such as an inexperienced principal) progress.

Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism is deemed suitable for this study, as it highlights the importance of social interaction, collaboration and cooperation among peers to allow effective learning to take place. Thus, novice principals can learn more effectively when supported by peers such as experienced principals through for example mentoring. Mentoring can assist novice principals to overcome their

challenges and the effect of a mentor can encourage and support them to continue with new learning.

2.3. Origin and definition of mentoring

Mentoring is said to have originated in the world of business, but has changed over time and is now also found in many professions including education (Mullen, 2012). Mentoring is now a practice that is increasingly popular among educators.

The roots of mentoring come from Ancient Greek. The character ‘Mentor’ was first introduced in Homer’s classic poem, *The Odyssey* (Cox, Bachkirova & Clutterbuck, 2010, p. 341). Before the King Odysseus left for the war, he left behind his trusted friend, Mentor, to look after his son. King Odysseus gave Mentor the task of guiding his son and to teach him everything that was required to become a ruler. Thus, Mentor was required to serve as a coach, teacher, advisor, friend and father figure to Odysseus’ son; by encouraging and giving him advice and wisdom (Cox et al., 2010). As time passed, this concept changed into the term mentor that is used today.

According to Gray et al., (2007) and Doherty (1999) mentoring is about teaching, coaching, passing on skills and knowledge and it’s also about encouraging others to stretch beyond their boundaries of understanding. In a school setup mentoring takes place when experienced educators work closely with new educators, guiding them especially through their first year at school (Doherty, 1999; Stokes, 2010).

During mentoring, the mentor shares and provides experiences that stretch the novice's skills. The experienced mentor may put the novice in challenging and sometimes difficult situations in order to develop him or her (Gray et al., 2007). It is evident that mentoring brings together experienced and competent mentors (experienced principals) with inexperienced mentees (novice principals) as a way to help the novice to cope with their new roles as educational leaders.

Through mentoring, the experienced principal (mentor) and the novice principal (mentee) form a mentoring relationship which Varney, as quoted by Fletcher and Mullen (2012, p.7), defines as "a personal and long-term professional relationship that deepens over time, with a ripple effect". Young, Sheets and Knight (2005) sum up the mentoring relationship by stating that "...to mentor a beginning principal, is more about a partnership of learning and when learning is not the primary focus, the partnership fails" (p. 2).

Gray et al. (2007) also shed light onto the concept of mentoring and the mentoring relationship by stating that:

Mentoring is a partnership between two people built upon trust. It is a process in which the mentor offers on-going support and development opportunities to the mentee. Addressing issues and blockages identified by the mentee, the mentor offers guidance, counselling and support in the form of pragmatic and

objective assistance. Both share a common purpose of developing a strong two-way learning relationship (p. 5).

It is evident from the above mentioned that mentoring is not about experienced school principals telling novice and inexperienced principals what and how to do their work. It's more about experienced principals giving inexperienced principals new skills, advice, support, guidance and sharing their experiences. Mentoring may thus be beneficial in assisting novice school principals to become better and effective school leaders and it may also assist them to keep the school's status quo of good leadership alive. Mentoring programmes are considered effective components of the novice principal's induction process (Doherty, 1999; Mushaandja, 2013).

2.4. How mentoring is done

In order to create a strong and effective mentoring programme, there are certain issues that need to be considered. Most importantly, potential experienced principals (mentors) and novice principals (mentees) should be identified and matched. Effort should be made to match novice principals with mentors who can best support their developmental needs (Gray et al., 2007).

After that, the two parties meet to discuss and reach an agreement regarding the skills to be learned (Doherty, 1999). The experienced principal (mentor) should use these

first meetings with the novice principal (mentee) to explain issues such as the intention of the mentorship, expectations, time for the meetings, tasks to be completed and the possible benefits that can come from the mentorship (Doherty, 1999). The mentor should also use this opportunity to analyse the situation in which the novice principal works and together they work out a plan of how to best reach the agreed upon goals. Throughout mentoring, the focus of the mentor should be to reach the goals that are important to the novice principal (Gray et al., 2007). To do this, it is important that their mentorship relationship is built on trust. To guarantee this trust, both parties may go as far as agreeing on a set of rules and signing a mutual agreement (Henry, 2010).

The mentor and the mentee must assure each other that they will hold all information from their mentoring sessions confidential. Stokes (2010) affirms that “the mentoring relationship must be confidential and the mentor should offer a safe environment to the mentee within which they can discuss work-related issues and explore solutions to challenges” (p. 5). Doherty (1999) also confirms that the mentor gives the new principal another person they can trust to talk to about their leadership frustrations without any reservations, because of the confidential relationship that they share. Complete confidentiality will without doubt encourage a free and honest dialogue between the mentor and mentee.

It is also important that throughout mentoring process the experienced and the novice principals should reflect and review (Henry, 2010). Reflective practice involves thinking about and learning from one's own practice and also from the practice of others (Stokes, 2010). Through reflection the mentor and the mentee is given the opportunity to ask questions and share their challenges and successes. At this stage, the mentor (experienced principal) may make any adjustments that would enhance their mentorship relationship (Gray et al., 2007).

One of the most valuable tasks of a mentor is to give the novice principal unfiltered feedback (Doherty, 1999; Gray et al., 2007; Stokes, 2010). Receiving some feedback may allow the novice principal to be affirmed of the things that are going well and this can result in a greater self-confidence (Stokes, 2010). If there are weaknesses on the side of the mentee, the mentor can address these during their mentoring sessions and work towards improving them. The mentor should make time to for example, accompany the mentee to meetings and gatherings. He or she can then use the information from these visits, observations and conversations to give the mentee some feedback. Novice principals will greatly appreciate working with non-judgemental mentors. The fact that the mentor is not an evaluator greatly increases the likelihood for open dialogue and helps cultivate a meaningful learning environment (Henry, 2010).

According to Gray et al. (2007) a possible mentoring session could follow the following format. The mentee (novice principal) starts off by talking about the general happenings at his or her school during the previous week. The mentor (experienced principal) listens attentively and tries to identify significant issues to be discussed more in detail during their meeting. The mentor will pose questions and raise issues that are of concern throughout their meeting. Furthermore, the mentor will identify possible options for action that could be used to support and resolve the mentee's issues. The mentor should at all times seek to pass on knowledge, skills, inspire and support the novice principal in becoming a more effective leader (Doherty, 1999; Gray et al., 2007; Stokes, 2010).

Welsh (2004) states that there is no specific prescribed format and structure for mentoring sessions between the mentor and the mentee, but warn that it is important that the structure thereof is agreed upon by both the mentor and the mentee. Moreover, in order for the mentorship relationship to deepen on all possible levels, Stokes (2010) suggests that mentoring sessions take place in various forms and at diverse settings. It may at times be required that the experienced principal accompanies the novice principal to official meetings. The setting of these sessions may also alternately take place at the mentee's school, the mentor's school or even at a neutral location such as a café. It is important that all meetings, regardless of the venue, are formalised, purposeful and should be used as a vehicle for any issues that the mentee wishes to raise (Welsh, 2004; Stokes, 2010). Young et al. (2005) further

suggest that mentoring sessions should include some reading materials to encourage fresh and current perspectives on school management and leadership.

As mentioned earlier, the aim of mentoring novice principals is to provide them with skills, attitudes and behaviours so that they develop their leadership skills and become more reflective about their roles (Stokes, 2010). Throughout mentoring, novice principals are also provided with a sense of personal importance and significance and become more motivated (Doherty, 1999). It is vital that the aim of mentoring is always kept in the forefront.

2.5. Challenges faced by novice school principals

As preparation for their leadership positions at the various universities, aspiring principals go through formal training where they learn about various leadership and management theories. Nevertheless, Doherty (1999) and West (2002) reveal a challenge regarding this formal preparation. They mention that once novice principals are in their leadership positions, they have difficulties putting the theory they have learned into action. In other words, novice principals find it difficult to apply their textbook understanding of leadership into practice. This implies that most novice principals do not fully understand their job until they are in these positions.

Mushaandja (2006) and the report of the Institute for Educational Leadership (2000) also confirm the above statements by stating that traditional principal preparation programmes that are offered at tertiary institutions are generally disconnected from the daily realities and needs of schools. It is thus important that mentoring focuses on strategies that would ease the transition from theory to practice. Mentoring adds little value if it does not provide experiences that go beyond theory, books and course work to advance novice principals' understanding of how schools operate (Doherty, 1999).

Henry (2011) also agrees with the above by stating that principal education in Barbados is "... fundamentally inadequate to the successful preparation of new principals...", so far that "... new principals were overwhelmed when faced with increased levels of responsibility and were retiring prematurely" (p. 3). Such hurried and early retirements may without doubt prevent the adequate transfer of knowledge and skills to succeeding leaders and this again may lead to a further deterioration of leadership skills of future school leaders. The above mentioned also clearly shows that even though obtaining a formal degree in educational management and leadership from a college or university is a great achievement, it is not a guarantee that the novice principal will be successful in this leadership role.

Adding to the novice principals' challenges, Crow (2006) states that school principals' roles are very diverse and novice principals are thus confronted with

varied and complex challenges. Being a principal is like living inside a “popcorn popper” (Parkay and Hall, 1992, p. 268). This comparison was used to describe how principals are expected to be everywhere, bouncing from one end of the building to the other and from one problem to another. Parkay and Hall (1992, p. 1-2) further confirm that novice principals face great challenges by stating that:

The novice is confronted with a complex array of multifaceted challenges; from learning the ropes for the day-to-day operation of the school to enhancing the school culture so that it becomes more educative. The most difficult challenge the beginning principal faces, is the need to develop a professional identity – an image of the self as a proactive leader who can make a difference.

Spillane and Lee (2003, pp. 1-2) similarly confirm the complexity of the principal’s work by stating that:

It tends to be fragmented, fast-paced and varied and it involves long hours and a huge workload. On top of all this, still come the various demands from the staff, learners and parents. These conditions may without any doubt contribute to high levels of stress and burnout among principals.

The above mentioned paragraphs clearly reveal that the position of any school principal is not an easy walk in the park. It is very varied, complex and highly

demanding and can lead to high levels of stress. According to West (2002), Welsh (2004) and Smith (2007) mentoring can greatly help to reduce stress. These authors further state that mentoring can offer some relief of the frustrations, pressures and difficulties that come with the position of principalship.

Henry (2010) states additional challenges that novice principals face. She states that beginning principals have difficulty dealing with the legacy and leadership style of previous principals. Succeeding other principals is a great challenge to novice principals as they think about what type of leaders they have succeeded, what their achievements were, what projects they have left unfinished and where they have fallen short (Henry, 2010). It may possibly be a difficult task for a novice and inexperienced principal to manage and prioritize the previous principal's projects and to decide which of the projects and ideas to continue and when to bring in change.

To make matters even more difficult for the novice principal, staff and other members of the school community often compare the new principal to the previous one (Spillane and Lee, 2003). If the former principal was a hero, then the novice has big shoes to fit in and if he or she was a disappointing principal, then the novice principal will most probably be expected to create magic and save the school (Spillane and Lee, 2003; Gray et al., 2007). Regardless of what type of a principal the departing principal was, it is clear that either way, will present different challenges for the novice principal.

Also challenging is when the novice principal comes into a school where the staff, learners and other members of the school community have become accustomed to existing traditions and routines (Doherty, 1999; Gray et al., 2007). Often the staff may resist to support the changes that the new principal introduces merely because they may not want to break away from their routines and feel that their way of life is being challenged (Spillane and Lee, 2003).

Furthermore, Nir (2009) warns that most principals, both experienced and novice principals find it difficult to seek help from others as they find themselves in a hierarchical position where one is expected to have the expertise to deal with challenges independently. Because of this, principals tend to keep their problems to themselves since seeking for help from others may imply a lack of proficiency and powerlessness. An effective way of dealing with such issues is to allow more experienced peers to offer support through mentoring. The threat of exposing one's weaknesses may be minimal as mentoring is done in collaboration with equals while seeking help from subordinates and superiors may be met by harsh, judgmental and diminutive comments (Nir, 2009).

Another factor that generally affects all school principals, but may be more of a disadvantage especially to novice principals, is the geographical location of schools in Namibia. Namibia is a large country with a relatively small population of about 2.1 million people (NPC, 2011). Most people live in dispersed communities in rural

areas and this is where the majority of schools are also situated (Miranda, Amadhila, Dengeinge and Shikongo, 2011).

It is a given fact that inaccessible, far-off and isolated schools are seldom visited by colleagues from other schools, inspectors and other regional officials. In order to visit such schools, it may depend on various factors and good planning. Factors such as the condition of the roads, availability of government vehicles and budgets for travelling will have to be considered first (Miranda et al., 2011). All these factors may possibly make it more difficult to provide school principals in remote schools with the necessary and adequate support. This definitely poses a greater disadvantage to especially the novice school principals as they are more in need of the support from MoE and from their more experienced peers.

Clearly, principals and teachers in remote schools are also unable to share their ideas with others and to benefit from the experiences of others in the same profession. As a result of this, they are basically forced to deal with this isolation and to run their schools as best as they possibly can, without much assistance and support from their more experienced peers. Such a scenario may not have a major disadvantage to a school which is being led by an experienced and competent school principal. However, in the case where an isolated school is being led by a novice and inexperienced school principal, there may be a larger possibility for failure. Consequently, because of these great distances between the various schools, it should

come as no surprise that the results of national examinations in Namibia are often poor and so diverse (EMIS, 2012, 2013). The reason for that may be that each school is led independently from others and learners are most probably also prepared in different ways for their examinations.

Of course, there are locations where schools are situated close to each other, but this does not necessarily mean that such schools are in contact and are collaborating. It is common to find in Namibia that neighbouring schools have little contact as they serve learners from different socio-economic backgrounds, language groups or different school phases (Miranda et al., 2011). As an example, two schools can be closely situated to one another, but one may be a primary school while the other is a secondary school. Therefore, collaboration among such schools may be minimal and these school principals could possibly still experience isolation and loneliness in their jobs (Spillane and Lee, 2003), regardless of the close proximity.

Furthermore, before entering principalship, most novice principals were former teachers or heads of departments and becoming a principal is a major contrast to their previous administrative positions. Crow and Glascock (1995) state that entering the principal occupation marks a distinct and often abrupt change in perspective, expectations and work tasks for novice principals. In addition, Spillane and Lee (2003) also confirm that because of the complexity and demands of their leadership position, novice principals often experience a sense of professional isolation and

loneliness. Novice principals are often struck by how staff members are distant and are more cautious with them (Spillane and Lee, 2003).

In conclusion, it is evident from the above that being a principal is not an easy job and a mentor with whom novice and inexperienced principals can share their frustrations, anxieties and fears may be of great assistance to them. Parkay and Hall (1992, p. 71) support the mentoring of novice principal by stating that “even the most savvy, expert leaders are taxed by the challenges of the principalship and it is therefore reasonable to assume that many inexperienced principals will fail unless they receive support during the critical first year”.

2.6. Importance of mentoring

The paragraphs in Section 2.5 have indicated that novice school principals face many challenges in their first years of principalship. Thus, there is a great need for them to go through in-service and on-the-job professional development programmes such as mentoring to assist them in addressing their various school dilemmas. The reasons why novice and experienced school principals should both engage in mentoring programmes, either as mentors or mentees, are mentioned here below.

According to Gray et al., (2007) the mentoring of novice principals is necessary. Novice principals arrive at their first leadership positions, believing they are armed with all the information and skills necessary for dealing with the various demanding

school dilemmas. Once they are exposed to the realities of their positions, many novice principals may become frustrated and stressed and this may even result in them choosing to leave their positions (Henry, 2010). Therefore, the mentoring and guidance that can be provided by a successful and experienced principal as a mentor can greatly help the novice principal to avoid and to cope better with their frustrations.

Furthermore, mentoring can be used to familiarize and orientate novice principals to their new leadership roles. Experienced principals as mentors are expected to guide novice principals in understanding the schools' routines and expectations and the role as educational leaders (Stokes, 2010; Henry, 2010). Mentoring is an effective way of how newcomers to the profession are prepared for their leadership roles and responsibilities (Doherty, 1999; Henry, 2010; Stokes, 2010). In other words, experienced principals' function as caregivers is to nurture and befriend beginning principals and share their expertise and experiences with the novice principals. This support and assistance from the mentors can greatly improve the leadership of the novice principal and this may increase the retention rate of novice principals (Stokes, 2010).

In addition, mentoring programmes provide needed support for novice principals by offering helpful and practical resources during the very critical and hectic first year in a novice principal's career (West, 2002; Welsh, 2004; Stokes, 2010). Evidently,

mentoring programmes are an important strategy to enhance the personal and professional development of novice principals. Stokes (2010) confirms that the application of learned skills is more likely to occur if participants receive personal assistance with.

Furthermore, Spillane and Lee (2003) state that mentoring also helps new leaders overcome isolation and it allows the novice principal to become part of a wider network of colleagues while developing more skills and greater self-confidence. In support of mentoring, Gross (2009, p. 520) states that "...the transition into a school system will not occur by accident or through osmosis". It is therefore important for mentors of school principals to take on the responsibility of organising the transition and orientation of novice principals into their new schools. Exactly this should be the purpose for developing mentoring programmes, in addition to the emotional support and practical advice that the mentees receive through mentoring.

It is evident from the multifaceted tasks of a principal that principalship can be very stressful and the need for support especially among novice principals, is therefore very strong. As mentioned before, (Doherty, 1999; Spillane and Lee, 2003; Gray et al., 2007) mentoring is certainly a best practice that can both reduce the stress and frustrations of novice principals and also advance their skills and effectiveness. Among the various benefits that novice principals can receive from mentoring are

also reduced feelings of isolation, increased confidence and self-esteem and improved problem-solving capabilities (West, 2002; Stokes, 2010).

Moreover, according to Mbigi as quoted by Bush (2007) there is a growing recognition for African philosophies that also have much to offer in interpreting management practices and in understanding the behavior of school leaders. He further stated that the most frequently cited African philosophy is *Ubuntu* which means “collective personhood and collective morality”, literally translated it means: “I am because we are, you are because we are” (pp. 2-3). In other words the African tradition places a great emphasis on people and it has a great concern for people. Bush (2007) also confirmed that *Ubuntu* is rooted in the African society and it supports the ideal of interconnectedness among people. Concluding from this, it is clear that *Ubuntu* is also reflected in the concept of mentoring. Mentoring is also about helping people connect with one another and learn from one another in order to become more effective in what they do. Mentoring is thus crucial and necessary as it assists and supports educators to keep true to their heritage of *Ubuntu* and to further keep it alive.

The primary intended beneficiaries of mentoring are the mentees, but research reveals that mentoring can also have a positive impact on the professional and personal development of mentors. Mentoring is a way for experienced school principals to re-ignite their sense of purpose and expand their influence (Young et al.,

2005). This of course also gives mentors more confidence and self-esteem, just as mentees experience it. Besides, Gross (2009) mentions that regardless of whether it's a new principal needing support or it's an experienced principal who is looking for a way to give back to the profession, mentoring is one of those practices that can lead to school improvement and increased job satisfaction.

Mentors may derive great satisfaction and pride from taking on the role as a mentor through witnessing their mentees' progress and noticing evidence of their own impact on the mentees' professional development (Fletcher and Mullen, 2012). Mentoring creates the extraordinary opportunity to facilitate a mentee's personal and professional growth by sharing knowledge learned through years of experience.

Research also shows that through offering mentoring, mentors encounter new ideas and perspectives which can enhance the mentors' knowledge and skills such as communication skills and strengthen their leadership skills (West, 2002). The experience mentors gain by mentoring someone can also enable them to professionally grow in their careers. Apart from mentors learning and improving their skills, mentors can also improve their performance. One of their roles as mentors is to set good examples for the mentees and knowing that mentors are responsible for providing appropriate guidance to the mentees, motivates mentors to work harder in all they do.

We should also not forget that mentors and mentees are not the only beneficiaries of mentoring. By continuously striving towards training, guiding and supporting novice principals, novice principals may have less pressure and feel not so overwhelmed by the demands of principalship. In other words, by offering mentoring, mentors help to develop the schools and keep principals in their positions and all this can contribute to the success of the entire school. As mentioned in earlier chapter, skilful leadership of school principals is a major contributing factor to school improvement and effectiveness. The quality of the school principal's leadership makes a difference to the school's performance. If schools want to provide the best education to their learners, they need to have effective educational leaders.

2.7. Qualities of effective mentors and mentees

Gross (2009) states that there are certain specific qualities that good mentors share. Many people may most probably think that they possess the qualities of good mentors, but not everybody is destined to be a mentor. It is the task and responsibility of designers of mentoring programmes to seek ways to find evidence of these qualities in the performance of potential mentors (Gross, 2009). Equally important are also the qualities that a mentee needs to have in order for an effective mentoring relationship between a mentor and mentee can take place.

2.7.1 Mentors

Successful mentors share some common characteristics. One major and the most important characteristic is the willingness of the mentor to take on the additional

responsibilities of nurturing, supporting and providing feedback to a person new to the profession (West, 2002). Another characteristic is that mentors usually hold a higher position in the organization and possess more experience and knowledge of the profession than their mentees (Doherty, 1999). With regard to this study, mentors are experienced principals who have years of accumulated knowledge and skills in principalship.

Other attributes that are noticed in effective mentors are self-confidence, a participative leadership style and interest in the development of their peers. Doherty (1999) and Stokes (2010) also mention several important skills that effective mentors should possess: (a) exceptional performance as a principal; (b) understanding of human dynamics; (c) good communication; (d) enthusiasm; and (d) knowledge of the school curriculum, community and regional politics and practices.

Mentors play a significant role in the personal and professional lives of the mentees and should thus possess and use a variety of skills, behaviours and experiences that will enable the mentor and mentees to reach common goals (West, 2002). Knowledgeable and effective mentors will help novice principals to improve and develop the necessary skills, knowledge, values and behaviours needed to operate effectively as school leaders.

2.7.2 Mentees

Just as it is important to spend a lot of time and effort in finding good mentors, it is equally important to make sure that the mentees possess good qualities. This may be seen as unnecessary, since all novice principals (mentees) are automatically required to go through mentoring. But it is still important to make sure that all mentees are ready and willing to participate in mentoring programmes. Going through mentoring process just for the sake of meeting prescribed requirements as prescribed by superiors, is very superficial and would hardly produce constructive learning and meet the whole purpose of such programmes (Gross, 2009). It is therefore important that developers and designers of mentoring programmes probe potential mentees to find out how serious and committed they are in developing their careers and whether they value professional development programme such as mentoring.

Fletcher and Mullen (2012) suggest that successful mentoring depends on the readiness of the mentee to be mentored. A mentee should have characteristics such as openness, willingness to learn and change and preparedness to operate outside of their comfort zone. It is important that the mentees are for example open to critique and take it graciously. A mentee should accept the mentoring they receive and not be defensive towards change. Gross (2009, p. 522) attests to this by stating that mentees should have an “authentic confidence” that makes them comfortable enough to make mistakes and anxious to learn from them.

2.8. Preparation of mentors

As mentioned before, to find good mentors is a very time-consuming and challenging task, but that is just the first step. Mentoring programme designers and developers have to consider preparation of mentors in order for them to effectively work with the mentees (Young et al., 2005). Thus, there is a great need to carefully train potential mentors. Mentors should be provided the training and support necessary to develop novice principals' skills. Training activities specifically designed for the preparation of mentors enhance their ability to carry out their responsibilities effectively (Young et al., 2005; McKimm, Jollie & Hatter, 2007).

Mentors need among other skills, training in questioning strategies and active listening skills. Knowledge of effective questioning strategies will be useful to mentors as mentees may at times be reluctant to discuss their problems (Doherty, 1999; Stokes, 2010). Equally important is that mentors are able to listen attentively. Scott and Walker (1992) suggest listening with three ears - to what a person says, what a person does not say, and what a person wants to say but does not know how to say it.

Training sessions for mentors should also cover basic topics such as what it means to be a mentor, issues concerning the agreement or contract between the mentor and mentee, establishing rapport and trust and facilitating reflection (West, 2002). Young et al. (2005) warn though that training is equally as important as mentor

selection, but unfortunately only few mentors are offered training. Stokes (2010) suggest a possible training design for the mentors' training which includes preparation in five knowledge domains: (a) assessing the needs of the mentee; (b) developing the interpersonal capacities of mentors by increasing their knowledge of theories of adult development; (c) understanding administrative processes and school effectiveness; (d) utilising observation and feedback and (e) fostering a disposition toward inquiry and reflectivity.

Even though mentors have been selected to provide mentoring, they will certainly still need to learn more about the program's goals and expectations. They may also need to learn more about or refresh their skills on communication and problem solving. The training of mentors greatly contributes to the success of any mentoring programme as mentors are more likely to succeed if they participate in training sessions that prepare them for what lies ahead.

2.9. Mentoring challenges and possible solutions

Despite the various advantages of mentoring, there are also some shortcomings. Research has revealed that many mentoring programmes are offered by mentors who volunteer their services with little support, recognition or compensation (Doherty, 1999; Robertson, 2004). Mentors put work aside from their busy schedules and make time to regularly meet with their mentees. Robertson (2004) states that most of the

times mentors agree to mentor out of a sense of personal obligation to help, but goodwill has its limitations, even among the most dedicated mentors.

It is a fact that experienced principals are very hard pressed to find time to complete all their daily tasks and taking on one more task such as mentoring may be frightening. Thus, compensation and recognition would motivate mentors to get involved in mentoring. Welsh (2004) and Young et al. (2005) note that compensation of mentors may among others take the following forms: Stipends paid directly to mentors or financial support to attend training workshops and conferences. Other non-financial possible incentives that could be offered are for example release time to mentors to do research or visit their mentees at their schools, additional vacation days, increased involvement in decision-making, increased status and respect, recruitment into administrative and supervisory positions (Welsh, 2004).

Offering mentors training and support as mentioned above in section 2.8 may be seen as a type of compensation for the effort and time that mentors invest in mentoring. Apart from the mentees, mentors also gain a great deal through their involvement in mentoring. Mentors may learn a lot about matters regarding their positions as school principals and also learn to practice self-reflection (West, 2002). Through receiving training, mentors advance their skills and knowledge and this may positively help them to advance in their careers (McKimm, Jollie and Hatter 2007; Smith, 2007). Even though compensation is traditionally viewed as financial in nature, mentors

could be compensated through non-financial means as those stated in this Section (2.9).

Lack of compensation and recognition for the work that mentors do, mentoring may thus not be very meaningful and attractive especially to experienced principals who are already at the peak of their careers (Welsh, 2004; Smith, 2007). Moreover, without incentives, recognition and support the commitment of mentors to provide effective learning experiences for novice principals is likely to be little (Robertson, 2004). Various stakeholders in education need to understand the many benefits of mentoring and thus show their commitment by appropriately rewarding and recognising mentors. Thus, stakeholders should continue to experiment with a combination of incentive and compensation strategies in order to appropriately acknowledge the contributions and efforts of mentors (Welsh, 2004). Evidently, in order for mentoring programmes to be successful, they should include appropriate incentives to attract qualified and committed mentors.

Doherty (1999) states additional challenges of mentoring. She states that mentors of novice principals face a challenge regarding the lack of planning for mentoring programmes. Mentoring demands careful planning and the support of various educational stakeholders. There are decisions to be made that include planning, implementation and evaluation of mentoring programmes. Additional decisions to be made, deal with the training of potential mentors, selection of mentors and the

careful matching of mentors and mentees (Young et al., 2005; McKimm, Jollie & Hatter, 2007). Without careful planning, mentoring can bring little value to novice principals.

Brock & Grady (2002) warn that when planning mentoring programmes, it is important to note that mentees, in this case, the novice principals, are not all necessarily from the same personal, educational or career backgrounds. Mentees make up a diverse group consisting of individuals with different needs and shortcomings. Given the diversity of the mentees (novice principals), the content of mentoring programmes should match their specific needs and circumstances. It is clear that for mentoring programmes to be effective, they will have to offer individualization and diversity through meeting both personal and professional needs (Brock & Grady, 2002).

Hansford and Ehrich (2006) mention more shortcomings regarding mentoring. Mentors may get involved in mentoring, because of their own selfish or unknown motives and not for the reason of being helpful. They may for example want to mentor in order to increase their own status and prestige and thus focus less on the mentee (West, 2002; Welsh, 2004; Hansford and Ehrich, 2006). Apart from that, mentors can also be too protective and too controlling and because of this mentors may be too demanding (Stokes, 2010; Mushaandja, 2013). Thus, designers of mentoring programmes need to differentiate between a mentor's behaviour that is

productive and one that is too overwhelming and may suffocate the mentee (Welsh, 2004). Some mentors may see the world only from their perspective or may have too much attachment to a single style of leadership (West, 2002). They may even develop fixed routines and habits of how to tackle things and this can be detrimental to a mentee as they are not being exposed to a wider range of leadership styles or perspectives. In this case “Mentoring may encourage cloning or constrict innovation” (Gross, 2009 p. 521) and this can greatly limit the mentee’s growth and development.

The above challenge of mentors being selfish, too controlling and overprotective over their mentees could be resolved by thoroughly selecting the right mentors. As mentioned earlier, it is very important to spend sufficient time and energy when selecting mentors. Gray et al. (2007) and Hansford and Ehrich (2006) state that proper screening and selection of the mentors needs to be done focusing mainly on examining their suitability for mentoring. Efforts should be made to match novice principals with appropriate mentors who can best support their developmental needs (Hansford and Ehrich, 2006). Riley (2009) suggests that when matching mentors and mentees, it is important to try and match mentors and mentees with similar interests and learning styles. Moreover, designers of mentoring programmes have to make sure that mentors demonstrate willingness to take on the additional responsibilities of nurturing, supporting and providing feedback to a person new to the profession (West, 2002). Mentors should be knowledgeable, experienced, supportive, reliable, flexible, accessible and trustworthy and this is essential for successful mentoring (Hansford and Ehrich, 2006; Riley, 2009; Stokes, 2010).

2.10. Principalship and mentoring in South Africa

South African school principals are faced with many challenges that have an influence in the running of their schools (Msila, 2012). Even though some principals hold university qualifications in educational management, they didn't have much of an impact on school improvement (Bush, 2007 and Msila, 2012). It seems like it was more of a race to collect qualifications and certificates rather than focusing on improving the schools. Furthermore, the challenge faced by beginning principals in South Africa is learning through trial and error whilst on the job (Msila, 2012).

However, today's schools require principals who are be able to act in different situations and ensure that there is effective teaching and learning in their schools. Jugmohan (2010) as quoted by Msila (2012) argues that to help overcome school principals' overload, a structured mentoring programme can be of benefit. Throughout the world, mentoring is beginning to be regarded as one of the answers to continuous professional development.

Thus, South Africa introduced a programme to enhance the principals' practice in schools known as the Advanced Certificate in Education-School Management and Leadership (ACE-SML). From 2007 to 2009 this programme was piloted and it was found that it helped in improving the school principals' practice (Bush, Kiggundu and Moorosi, 2011). The ACE-SML is a practice-based part-time programme that aims to provide management and leadership support through various interactive

programmes and also equips school principals as they constantly learn about various themes in leadership and management (Bush et al., 2011). One of the important components in the ACE-SML programme is mentoring. Mentoring was widely applauded by candidates, lecturers and the mentors and regarded as the key component of the entire course (Bush et al., 2011). The need to mentor principals in South Africa was necessitated by the absence of the school principals' induction. Thus, one of the aims for the ACE-SML programme was to strengthen the professional role of school principals.

2.11. Summary

This chapter discussed the theoretical framework which informed this study and reviewed the various literature regarding the mentoring of novice principals. A limitation to this study was that there was hardly relevant literature on the mentoring of novice principals by experienced principals in Namibia. Thus, the literature that was reviewed concentrated more on the international context and very little on the Namibian context.

The literature confirmed that novice principals, despite their formal preparation at colleges and universities for principalship, still face many challenges. In order for them to be able to tackle these challenges, they need to be supported and guided by their experienced peers (experienced principals). The literature also suggested that through mentoring, novice principals have the opportunity to learn skills and know-

how that can assist them in becoming better educational leaders. This is confirmed by Doherty (1999) and Welsh (2004) who state that mentoring of novice school principals by experienced, caring and competent principals has the potential to be one of the most effective ways of preparing future leaders for schools. Finally, principalship and mentoring programmes in South Africa were also presented and discussed. Also here, the benefits and necessity of mentoring programmes were emphasized and supported.

The next chapter discusses the research methodology that was employed to collect and analyse the data.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to provide an understanding of the leadership needs that novice principals experience and how mentoring can address these needs. The study also sought to find out if there is a need for novice principals in the Khomas region to be mentored by experienced principals.

In this chapter the research design, methods of data collection and the analysis of the data that were employed in this study to explain the above stated research problem, were discussed.

3.2. Research design

Johnson and Christensen (2004, p. 275) define a research design as an “outline, plan or strategy that will be used to seek an answer to the research questions”. To seek answers regarding the mentoring of novice principals and their leadership needs, a mixed method research design was employed. Moreover, the nature of the research purpose and the research questions, as stated in the first chapter, called for a mixed method design. According to Gay, Mills & Airasian (2011, p. 481), the mixed method allowed the researcher “... to understand a phenomenon more fully than is possible using either quantitative or qualitative methods alone”. It would have

therefore been rather limiting and incomplete to have used only the qualitative or only the quantitative research approach.

A qualitative approach was appropriate to use, because little is known about the mentoring of the novice principals in Namibia and the intention of the researcher was to learn more about the need for it. This approach is commonly used to understand people's experiences and to express their perspectives. In other words, this approach examines human choice and behaviour as it occurs naturally without intervening in the natural flow of such a behaviour (Johnson and Christensen, 2012). A qualitative approach was therefore a great help to find out about the novice principals' leadership needs and how mentoring can address these needs and also to reveal the possible challenges that mentoring poses.

Furthermore, in order to find out about the reality regarding the leadership needs of novice principals in the Khomas region, it was appropriate to use the quantitative approach, as it relies on objectivity (Gay et al., 2011). Quantitative researchers try to stay neutral and report the way things really are. Meaning that, there was no manipulation of conditions, but to present the reality as it is regarding the leadership needs of the novice principals in the Khomas region (Best & Kahn, 2014). To sum it up, through the quantitative approach the researcher tried to study the mentoring of novice principals from a distance and as neutral and value-free as possible and with as little human bias wherever possible (Johnson and Christensen, 2012).

The use of various research approaches and instruments, enabled the researcher to triangulate and compare data obtained from various respondents. Through triangulation it was reassured that the data was not wrongly influenced by the researcher's bias. This allowed for greater accuracy and validity of the data (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Thus, the merging of two approaches enhances the belief that the results are valid and that they were not merely obtained by chance (Johnson and Christensen, 2012).

Through using the mixed method design, the researcher was able to use various data collection instruments (interviews and questionnaires) to obtain multiple viewpoints / perspectives regarding the mentoring of novice principals in the Khomas region (Johnson and Christensen, 2012). The researcher was thus able to produce a rich and more complete picture of the topic under study.

In addition, the mixed method research design allowed for the qualitative and the quantitative research approaches to complement each other (Matthews and Ross, 2010; Johnson and Christensen, 2012; Best and Kahn, 2014). The weaknesses of the one approach could for example be compensated for by the strengths of the other approach.

3.3 Population

The population for this study, from which the sample was selected, was taken from the Khomas region. The total research population was 111 participants, consisting of

10 novice and 94 experienced school principals and 3 school inspectors (MoE, 2013). Novice principals in this study referred to principals in their first or second year of principalship as defined by Bush and Oduro (2006) and the experienced principals referred to principals who have served at least five years and above as principals.

3.4 Sampling

Both random and non-random sampling techniques were used to draw the sample for this study. Random sampling techniques allowed every member of the population to have an equal chance of being selected and inclusion to the sample and it is thus merely a matter of chance (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2009). Two random sampling techniques known as stratified and systematic sampling were used in this study. It was appropriate to use stratified sampling as it allowed for the research population to be divided into two or more subgroups in order to give a more accurate representation of each subgroup (Best & Kahn, 2014). The subgroups in this study were novice principals, experienced principals and school inspectors.

Systematic sampling which involves selecting every K^{th} individual from a list of research population (Johnson and Christensen, 2012) was used to select the experienced principals. To obtain the 20 experienced principals that were required for the sample, the researcher compiled an alphabetically ordered list containing all

experienced principals (MoE, 2013), from which every 5th principal was randomly selected.

The non-random sampling technique that was used in this study is called purposive sampling. Purposive sampling focuses on key informants who by virtue of their professional role, expertise or experience have an in-depth knowledge (Matthews & Ross, 2010) regarding the leadership needs faced by novice principals which would in turn indicate if there is a need for novice principals in the Khomas region to be mentored by experienced principals. Such key informants who were selected purposively were novice principals and school inspectors. School inspectors are key informants on the topic under study by virtue of them being generally responsible for the in-service professional training and orientation programmes of novice school principals.

The total sample size for this study was 33 participants, consisting of 3 school inspectors, 10 novice principals and 20 experienced principals from the Khomas region. The sample size of 33 research participants was viewed to be sufficient as supported by Cohen et al., (2009, p.101) who state that "... a sample size of 30 is held by many to be the minimum number of cases if researchers plan to use some form of statistical analysis on their data". It was deemed appropriate to use a small number of research participants, 13 in total, for the qualitative approach as a

qualitative research sample, which generally comprises of a few but information-rich respondents who are studied in-depth (Gay et al., 2011).

3.5 Research instruments

The following instruments were used for data collection in this study: Questionnaires (Appendix C) and interviews (Appendices D & E). The researcher used questionnaires, because they are efficient to use as they require little time and expense and permit collection of data from a large sample (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Furthermore, questionnaires are found to be appropriate to use as the results thereof, especially those from close-ended questions, can usually be quickly and easily quantified and presented in easily readable formats such as tables and charts (Creswell, 1998). The qualitative results from the open-ended questions of the questionnaires were very useful in assisting to understand the participants' experiences and perspectives regarding the mentoring of the novice principals in the Khomas region (Johnson and Christensen, 2012).

Besides questionnaires, interview guides were also used as research instruments. It was appropriate to use interviews to gather data from key informants namely the novice principals and school inspectors, because the interviews allowed the participants to talk in-depth about the mentoring of novice principals and to reveal in-depth information regarding their leadership needs (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2005). Conducting interviews also permitted the researcher to be close to the

research participants and this allowed the researcher to find out more details about the participants' views, feelings, experiences and attitudes concerning the topic under investigation (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Moreover, interviews allowed the researcher to follow-up, probe for more information and seek for clarification of answers (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

As mentioned earlier, the reason for using the mixed method design, which requires the use of multiple research instruments such as interviews and questionnaires, was to enable the researcher to triangulate the results. Through triangulation, the researcher was able to confirm the data and this in return allowed for greater accuracy and validity of the findings (Matthews & Ross, 2010) and thus produced a rich and a more complete picture regarding the mentoring of novice principals in the Khomas region.

3.6 Pilot study

A pilot study had been conducted by the researcher before the actual research study was carried out. The reason for carrying out the pilot study was to ensure that the research instruments (interview guide and questionnaires) were appropriate and would in the end enable the collection of the desired data for this study. In other words, a pilot study established whether there were any ambiguities in the research instruments and it also helped to confirm the trustworthiness of these instruments (Gay et al., 2011). Leedy and Ormrod (2005 p. 110) confirm that “a pilot study is an excellent way to determine the feasibility of the study”.

The sample for the pilot study consisted of one experienced school principal and one novice principal who had left the profession after just one year as principal. The participants who took part in the pilot study were not part of the actual sample, but had similar characteristics to those who took part in the actual study.

3.7 Data collection procedures

Before the researcher could carry out the research at the various schools in the Khomas region, the researcher made appointments with all research respondents and presented them with the letter from the Khomas Directorate of Education (Appendix B) allowing the researcher permission to collect data. In addition, the researcher orally briefed them about the nature of the study, the benefits thereof, assured confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.

Next the researcher handed out the research questionnaires to the experienced school principals to complete them. To ensure a high return of the questionnaires, the researcher personally handed them. The researcher gave the participants one week to complete the questionnaires and collected them at a time that was agreed upon by both parties. The researcher made further appointments to set a time for the interviews. Individual interviews were carried out with the novice school principals and the 3 school inspectors.

The researcher interviewed each participant (novice school principals and school inspectors) once at a venue and time of their choice. During interviews, the researcher listened attentively, allowed the participants to talk without interruption and probed for clarification where necessary (Cohen et al., 2009). Each interview lasted between 20-30 minutes. Furthermore, all interviews were tape recorded and were eventually transcribed to text.

3.8 Data analysis

3.8.1 Qualitative data

The researcher used an inductive approach to qualitative data analysis. Qualitative data obtained from the interviews and the open-ended questions from the questionnaires were analysed using content analysis. Content analysis allowed the researcher to organise the data into categories, themes or patterns from which conclusions were drawn (Creswell, 1998; Johnson and Christensen, 2012).

Prior to commencing with the actual data analysis, all interviews were first transcribed to text and then the researcher followed the following steps in analysing the qualitative data that was obtained from the interviews and the open-ended questions from the questionnaires. Firstly, the researcher engaged in the repeated reading of the raw data in order to get an overall understanding of the responses from the participants. Secondly, the researcher identified broad themes by writing down short phrases, ideas or concepts that stood out while reading through the raw data. In other words, data was closely looked at and categorized to reveal possible patterns

and themes. Codes were used to help find these patterns. Thirdly, the researcher sifted the data in order to identify key verbatim quotes. Fourthly, the researcher took the verbatim quotes and re-arranged them under the themes that were developed. After studying these patterns, generalization and inferences were made that aided in revealing the leadership needs and the mentoring of novice principals in the Khomas region.

3.8.2 Quantitative data

Quantitative data obtained through the closed-ended questions of the questionnaires was analysed using descriptive statistics which allowed the data to be displayed in forms of tables, charts and graphs. Since the quantitative approach focused primarily on the numbers, it was thus applied to the sections of this study that provided numerical data such as the demographics and characteristics of the research participants. Information regarding the ages, educational qualifications and number of years participants served as school principals or school inspectors was provided.

In order to identify numerical data, the researcher repeatedly read through all the raw data that was collected through the closed-ended questions of the questionnaires. The identified numerical data was counted and recorded as percentages and eventually displayed in forms of tables, charts and graphs. Creswell (1998, p. 128) calls the tables, charts and graphs “organizational schemes” as they allow the researcher to summarize and give meaning to the data by presenting it in a format that makes it more understandable to the readers.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Gay et al. (2011) state that for the protection of all research participants from potential harm, there are ethical and moral issues which must be addressed prior to carrying out any research. To ensure that ethical issues were considered in this research, permission to carry out the study was requested from the Regional Director of Education, the Permanent Secretary of Education of the Khomas region, as well from the school principals who included in the study. An ethical clearance certificate was also requested from the School of Postgraduate Studies at UNAM.

Moreover, prior to the commencement of the interviews and the distribution of the questionnaires, all research participants were briefed and informed about the purpose of the study. Furthermore, participants were assured that information obtained from them will be kept confidential and used only for the purposes of research. Various measures were also taken to ensure that no harm will be done to the participants. Such measures are for example that all research findings were confidentially presented in such a manner that no identifiable information is disclosed to the public. This was done by ensuring participants anonymity of their identities in any reporting of the data that they provided. In addition, all participants were requested to complete an informed written consent before participating in the study (Gay et al., 2011). Participants were also allowed the freedom to decide whether to partake in this study and they were also given the right to voluntarily withdraw from taking part in the study at any time.

3.10 Summary

This chapter discussed the research design and methods employed to obtain the information necessary for the topic under study. Due to the nature of the research questions, and the kind of data that was required, it was necessary for the study to employ a mixed method design.

The sample for this study was comprised of 33 participants from the Khomas region (3 school inspectors, 10 novice principals and 20 experienced principals). The sample was drawn by using both random (stratified and systematic) and non-random (purposive) sampling techniques.

Questionnaires (Appendix C) and interviews (Appendix D & E) were the research instruments that were used to collect data for this study. The researcher used an inductive approach to qualitative data analysis and quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as tables, charts and graphs.

The following chapter presented and discussed the findings that emerged from the data analysis.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presented, analysed and discussed the data that was collected and the findings that emerged from the data analysis. The data was analysed using an inductive analysis whereby categories and patterns emerged from the qualitative data and quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as tables, charts and graphs.

The research questions seek to find out if there is a need for novice school principals in the Khomas region to be mentored by experienced school principals. The results in this chapter were presented under headings that were derived from the research questions (in Section 1.3).

4.2 Respondents' biographical information

4.2.1 Ages, qualifications and years of experience

Demographics and characteristics of the respondents are presented in Figure 1. The respondents varied regarding their ages, professional qualifications and number of years that they served as school principals or school inspectors. The ages of the majority of the novice principals were between 36 and 40 years and the years they

served as principals were as expected between 1-2 years. Slightly over 25% of the novice principals were between 41 and 50 years while only a few were younger than 40.

The majority of the experienced principals were aged between 51 and 59 years and about 30% of them were aged between 41 and 50 years. About 5% of the experienced principals were recorded to be above 60 years. The majority of the experienced principals served as principals for a period of 10-18 years. The school inspectors' ages and the number of years that they served as inspectors were almost similar to those of experienced principals. Their ages ranged between 41 and 59 with the majority falling in the 51 – 59 years category. School inspectors served in their positions for an average of 12 years.

It was interesting to note that all three school inspectors were previous school principals and served as school principals for an average of 8 years and have gathered a significant number of experiences as school principals. There were many young school principals in the principal profession, but then again, the majority of the experienced principals were between 51 – 59 years and some experienced principals were above 60 years of age and this cause for great concern. The findings revealed that even though there may currently be a scarcity of younger principals to fill vacant posts, especially of those principals who are nearing retirement.

Figure 1: Ages and the number of years respondents served in their positions

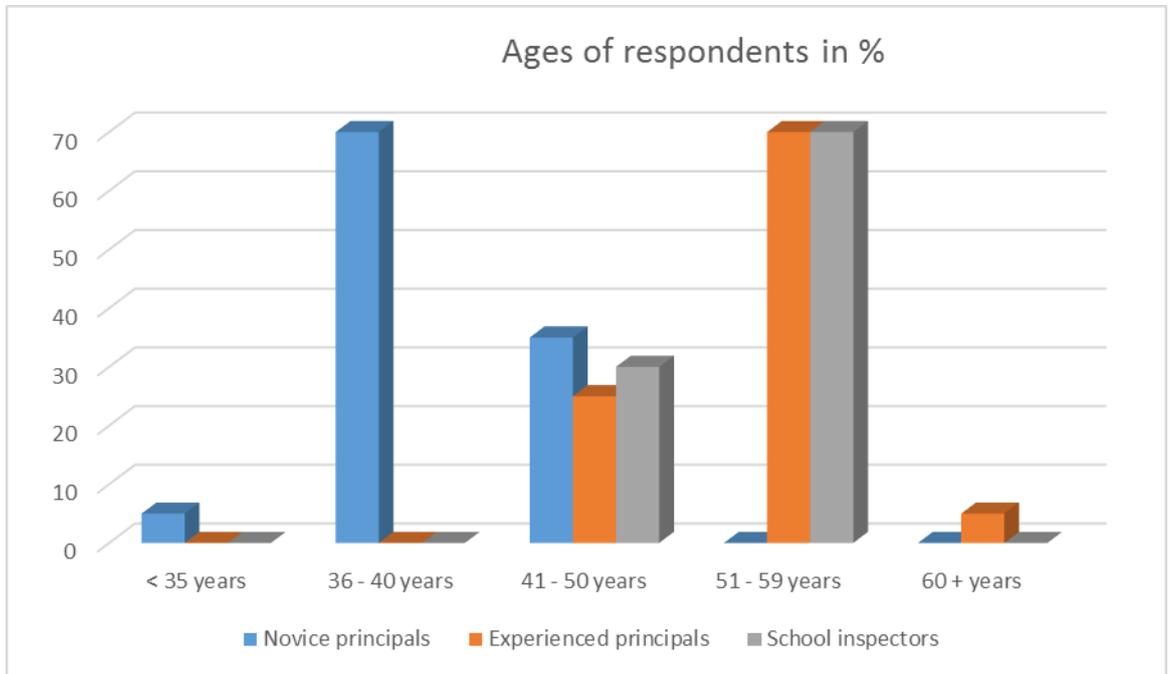


Figure 2: Professional qualifications of respondents

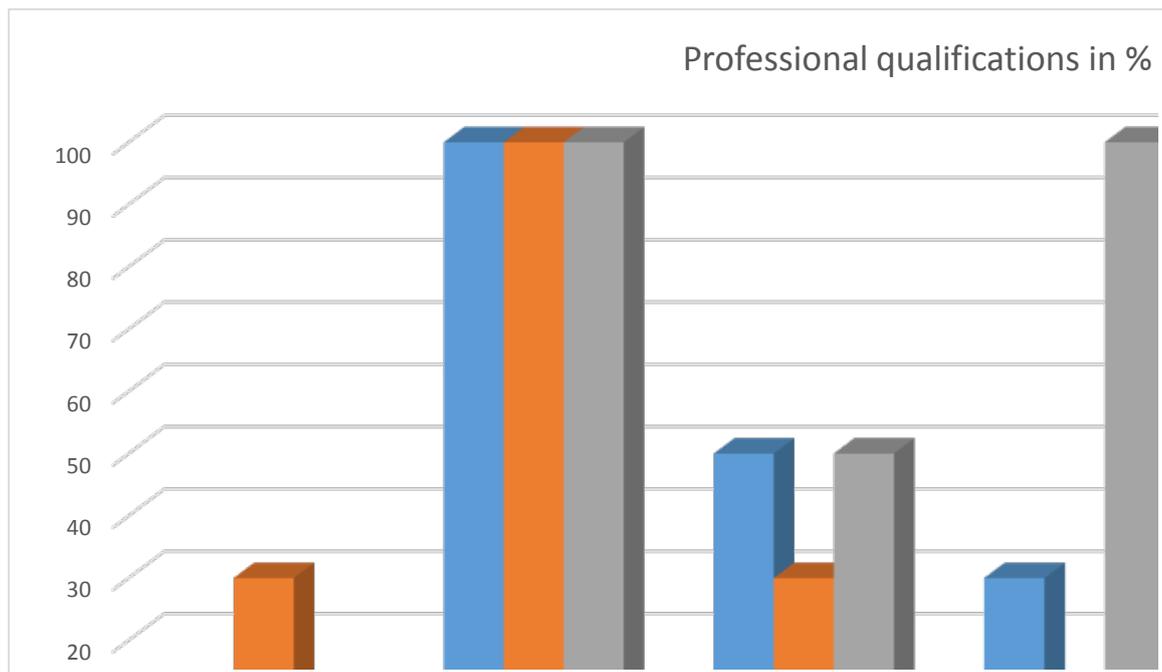


Figure 2 here above indicates the professional qualifications of all the research participants. All novice principals were holders of undergraduate degrees in education and about 40% of them also completed additional diplomas in education. None of the novice principals had a Doctorate degree. Furthermore, the majority of experienced principals had an undergraduate degree in education, while the rest, amounting to about 25%, had various diplomas in education. These respondents were much older (above 55 years of age) and had entered the profession shortly before or just after Namibia's independence. Only 20% of the experienced principals had a Master's degree and none of them had a Doctorate degree. Moreover, all school inspectors were also in possession of an undergraduate degree in education and two out of three school inspectors had a Master's degree under their belt. Surprisingly, just as with the novice and experienced principals, none of the school inspectors were reported to be in possession of a Doctorate degree in education and this called for attention as to why school principals and school inspectors were reluctant to further their studies and improve their educational abilities.

4.3 Leadership needs of novice school principals

The following paragraphs addressed the first research question which seeks information regarding the leadership needs of novice school principals. When it came to stating their leadership needs, novice school principals were in agreement and echoed similar responses. The major leadership needs that emerged among novice principals were: lacking knowledge of how to lead and meet expectations, difficulty in understanding different educational policies and Acts, difficulty in

managing and leading staff, challenges in juggling between the various leadership tasks and demands, shortage of time to complete tasks, loneliness in principalship and difficulty in dealing with general discipline of especially unruly learners. The above leadership needs of novice principals are discussed in more detail below.

Almost all novice principals indicated that their main leadership need was juggling between the seemingly non-ending tasks and demands of principalship. Novice principals mentioned that they were constantly overloaded and the load hardly seemed to reduce, but instead continued to increase. This load consisted largely of administrative responsibilities. Some novice principals added that the load of work was so huge to the point that they had difficulties prioritizing and choosing which tasks were more important than others.

In the same light, the majority of the novice principals also indicated that a major leadership need that they faced and which hugely affected all they did, was that they lacked time in their busy schedules to properly run their schools. They complained of lacking time to, for example, do proper monitoring, carry out class observations or engage in innovative school projects.

A large number of novice principals further reported that one of their major concerns during their first weeks and months at their new schools was that they felt completely lost and directionless. They had little idea of what they were doing, how they were doing it and what they ought to be doing. One of the novice principal confirmed the

above by adding that “there was no clear mandate of how to do this job [principalship] and there were no bylaws to guide us as novice school principals”.

Another novice principals expressed herself in these few words:

Being a new principal is really tough. You feel lost, clueless, stressed. You never really know how you should run things and whether you are running them well. You are basically just hanging in the air under a dark cloud that never seems to be clearing.

Many novice principals, amounting to about 60%, also noted that they struggled with managing and leading their diverse staff members. Some of the respondents understandably agreed though that this struggle was to be expected as they are confronted with many different employees with different personalities, backgrounds, beliefs and aspirations and on top of all that, each of these employees had his or her own way of dealing with things. In addition, approximately one third of the novice principals indicated that they felt lonely in their profession. They felt as if they single-handedly had to run the entire school without any support and guidance from anyone.

When experienced principals and school inspectors were asked to comment on the leadership needs of novice school principals, they too confirmed and echoed more or less the same leadership needs as mentioned by the novice principals. The major

leadership needs of novice school principals that experienced principals and school inspectors mentioned were as follows: difficulty in leading and managing schools, difficulty in managing the staff, struggling to juggle between administrative tasks, time management, difficulty in dealing with discipline and absenteeism.

Apart from the leadership needs that were mentioned above by novice principals, experienced principals added additional ones which they believed were challenging to novice principals. Experienced principals indicated that many novice principals often struggled with how to deal with discipline and absenteeism of both learners and teachers. Experienced principals also reported that novice principals struggled with dealing with teachers' incompetence.

Moreover, school inspectors added that most novice principals struggled tremendously to understand and interpret the different education laws and policies. School inspectors complained that many novice principals constantly bombarded them with queries regarding the various education policies and acts. Queries from novice principals to inspectors also included the procedural processes of how to, for example, deal with misconduct and disciplinary issues of learners and teachers. Furthermore, school inspectors also mentioned that many novice principals seemed to lack confidence and were thus afraid to make decisions.

One of the school inspectors further indicated that there was a constant staff turnover at some schools in the Khomas region and that novice principals showed major

difficulty in how to deal with staff turnover and struggled to fill the posts internally, at least temporarily, until a decision was made to fill the posts on a permanent basis.

The above findings regarding the leadership needs of novice principals were in support with the views mentioned in the literature review. Crow (2006) affirms that the roles of novice school principals are overwhelming by stating that their roles are very diverse and also that novice principals are confronted with varied and complex challenges. Parkay and Hall (1992, p. 268) further confirmed these findings by uttering that being a principal is like living inside a “popcorn popper”. With this comparison, the authors wanted to portray how principals are expected to be everywhere and perform many varied tasks. Spillane and Lee (2003) echoed the same message by asserting that the principal’s work is very fragmented, fast-paced and varied and it involves long hours and a huge workload.

4.4 Causes of novice principals’ leadership needs

The purpose of this question was to gain more understanding of what causes leadership needs of novice principals. This information was useful in addressing the second research question which sought information about how mentoring can address novice principals’ leadership needs. The majority of all sub-samples (novice principals, experienced principals and school inspectors) mentioned that the causes of novice principals’ leadership needs were largely due to lack of experience as school principals. One experienced principal commented though, that it was to be

expected that novice principals face many hurdles as they found themselves in a new environment to which they first needed to adequately adapt.

In addition, school inspectors mentioned that most novice principals served as Heads of Departments (HODs) before appointed as principals. However they argued that many HODs were not exposed to leadership and management roles of principalship. In most cases HODs dealt more with administrative tasks and as a result they lacked exposure to the leadership and management role of principalship. When they eventually became principals, they were without any doubt doomed to struggle, especially at the start of their principalship.

Inadequate induction and leadership training programmes were indicated by a few experienced principals to be the causes of many of the novice principals' leadership needs. Experienced principals further elaborated that as a result of the inadequate induction, novice principals were generally uninformed and not properly prepared for the demands of principalship. In agreement with these remarks are Bush & Oduro (2006) who stated that school principals in Africa receive little or no induction or appropriate pre-service preparation for their challenging roles of leading schools. But despite all the above, there was some hope for the better when one experienced principal revealed that leadership training programmes for principals had been on the rise and that things looked more positive than during his time as a novice principal a decade ago.

4.5 Addressing leadership needs of novice school principals

In order to address the second research question which seeks information about how mentoring could address the leadership needs of novice school principal, the researcher was of the opinion that it was essential to first find out how novice principals generally addressed their leadership needs.

A substantial number of novice principals indicated that when in the midst of crises, they usually approach the school inspectors or other experts from MoE for assistance. Novice school principals felt that they should contact school inspectors as these are their superiors and need to be informed about all the happenings at schools. Some novice principals also stated that school inspectors were in a better position to help them find solutions to their leadership needs.

A large number of novice principals, amounting to about 50%, indicated that they approached staff members, especially HODs, or their school management for assistance. These respondents argued that they felt more comfortable and at ease approaching staff members and school management as these were directly involved with their specific schools and knew about the challenges that the schools faced as opposed to consulting external stakeholders such as school inspectors who were not aware of the events unfolding at the schools.

Only a few novice principals mentioned that they would ask fellow novice or experienced school principals for help. Upon the researcher probing and asking why novice principals were reluctant to seek help from experienced principals, many argued that they were still new in the industry and were not very comfortable approaching experienced principals with their leadership needs which may seem petty and unimportant to more experienced principals. Apart from that, novice principals also indicated that meetings for novice principals were mostly offered separately from those of experienced principals and this contributed to the limited contact between the two groups. A few novice principals who were in contact with fellow novice principals added that in many cases it was not always productive to approach fellow novice principals for help as these were also confronted with the same challenges and were all searching for answers which none of them necessarily had.

One novice principals explained why it was at times difficult to approach other principals for assistance by stating that:

Assisting another person is not something that comes naturally to all people. Some people don't want to willingly share their treasured know-how that they have accumulated over many years. Yes, it's a wrong mentality to have, but I have come across a number of those who practice this.

In an attempt to address their leadership needs, some novice principals admitted that they purely learned through trial and error. One novice principal was quick to explain though that the trial and error method would understandably only be applied to minor challenges and not to huge ones, because the consequences thereof may be irreversible or have a negative impact on the school.

Furthermore, many novice principals also indicated that they did a lot of reading and more than often searched for answers on the Internet. A few of the novice principals also testified that at times they would ask their spouses or friends for assistance and advice. One of the novice principals mentioned though that asking help from their spouses and friends was more for emotional support rather than for their technical advice.

On the same point, most experienced principals indicated that novice principals should seek guidance by contacting fellow school principals, especially those at neighbouring schools. Experienced principals testified that they learned and gained a lot by being in contact with other school principals and this helped them immensely in meeting many of their leadership needs.

Other experienced principals were also of the opinion that novice principals should first approach experienced principals and then only approach school inspectors. This seemed as an obvious choice for experienced principals as they argued that they had been in the profession for some time and were thus the ones most equipped to help

novice principals meet their leadership needs. Another experienced principal highlighted this point by stating that as school principals they should depend on one another and come to each other's aid in times of need.

To emphasize the above-mentioned point, another experienced principal stated that:

Novice principals should seek every opportunity to have a strong and long-lasting bond with fellow principals. Such strong connections would generally enable effortless communication and make it easier for novice principals to approach experienced principals for assistance and guidance.

Despite the above, another experienced principal added that it was not always easy, especially at the beginning of the principalship, to approach other principals particularly the experienced principals. As a result of that, the respondent was more in contact with novice principals, but admitted that this contact was not always favourable and fruitful. The respondent elaborated by stating that:

As novice principals, we were just a bunch of clueless people. We were inexperienced and lacked a lot of information and it was thus not always worthwhile contacting each other for help. During my time as a novice principal [10 years ago], we hugely lacked the contact and collaboration with experienced principals as we were always among ourselves at meetings and trainings workshops.

Experienced principals provided further reasons why they believed it was advisable for novice principals to approach experienced principals in order to meet their leadership needs. Many experienced principals stated that they were more involved and aware of the issues at the schools than those in superior positions such as school inspectors and other senior education officials from the regional education office.

Contrastingly though, one third of the experienced principals also reported that novice principals should, when experiencing leadership needs, first consult staff members and the school board. These respondents were of the opinion that staff members and the school board were the best informed and the most involved in matters happening at their specific schools. However, some experienced principals also warned that taking matters to the school board level may take long to be resolved as school board does not hold meetings frequently. These respondents were thus of the opinion that if the issue at hand was not major, they usually preferred to solve it first with the help of staff members or fellow experienced principals instead of taking it to the school board level.

Some of the experienced principals, although only a hand-full, mentioned that with time novice principals would get to know their staff members better and find out which strengths and weaknesses their staff has. They remarked that novice principals would eventually solve some of their leadership needs by simply delegating various tasks to staff members who have the necessary expertise and are capable of completing the tasks successfully. Moreover, about one third of the experienced

principals also indicated that novice principals could overcome certain leadership hurdles simply by learning how to prioritise and manage their time effectively.

In addition, most school inspectors and experienced principals confidently pointed out that leadership training, attending workshops and conferences greatly helped in meeting leadership needs as training allowed one to constantly refresh one's skills and knowledge. School inspectors explained that they and other experts from MoE conducted various training workshops that dealt with many issues related to principalship such as general school management and leadership, time management, office management, financial management and strategic planning.

Furthermore, school inspectors added that novice principals met many of their challenges through the support and assistance offered by school inspectors. School inspectors supported novice principals by addressing challenges they noticed when they visited schools or challenges that novice principals brought to their attention. School inspectors were quick to add though that they did not always have sufficient time to visit all the schools, but would usually make time available, especially at critical times when a certain school principal was a novice or was going through a major crisis. In addition, one of the school inspectors also added that novice principals could contact their fellow cluster principals especially the cluster heads, for assistance in order to meet some of their leadership needs.

On the same topic, all school inspectors were of the opinion that when in need, novice principals should opt to consult fellow school principals - regardless of whether they are novice or experienced principals. School inspectors were convinced that there were many principals who were experienced and had a lot of expertise. Thus, novice school principals should use the ample opportunities and platforms available to them to meet, share and exchange vital information.

Even though, school inspectors would have liked school principals to be more in contact with fellow school principals, they admitted that the reality was quite different. Most of the novice principals preferred firstly to consult school inspectors and refer every leadership need to them. Inspectors got the impression that school principals believed that as their superiors, inspectors should have all the answers and are the only ones best equipped to attend to their every need concerning principalship. One of the inspectors assured that they were working hard at changing this perception and instilling a spirit of camaraderie, collaboration and mutual support among school principals.

The above findings (in Section 4.4.) indicated that many experienced principals and school inspectors were of the opinion that in order for novice principals to meet their leadership needs, they should be more in contact with fellow principals. Unfortunately this did not portray the reality as novice principals revealed that they were not very much in contact with fellow principals especially experienced principals. This situation needs to be addressed as literature clearly suggests that the

best individuals to seek help and advice from are those in the same profession (Crow, 2006). This emphasized again how important it is for those responsible for the orientation and induction programmes of school principals to ensure that principals know each other, are connected and do exchange information through programmes for example such as mentoring.

Spillane & Lee (2003) are also of the opinion that beginning principals should be in contact with experienced principals. These authors mentioned that there are many matters in principalship that could be resolved involving fellow school principals and/or staff members in decision making and planning. Crow (2006) also indicated that collaboration is essential and also added that it is important that school principals build a team around them. Their job as school principal should be to find out and take advantage of the expertise, skills and abilities that the people (e.g. staff members, management and fellow principals) around them have. He further said that leaders in all walks of life and all kinds of organizations, including schools, need to depend on each other and to encourage the development of leadership. As mentioned earlier in Section 2.6 and emphasized here again, the notion of collaboration among school principals supports the African philosophy of *Ubuntu* which focuses on interconnectedness among people (Bush, 2007).

Furthermore, the findings have also revealed that novice principals rely more on the support and assistance of school inspectors and not much on fellow school principals.

It is most probably more convenient and easier for novice principals to approach school inspectors for help, because inspectors are the ones who are officially obliged to help and guide them. However, school inspectors may not necessarily be in the position to offer them the best assistance and support. Mushaandja (2006) states that novice principals in Namibia receive induction from school inspectors, but warned that the inspectors did little in helping beginning principals become acquainted with their new leadership roles and responsibilities, as their training tended to focus merely on policy implementation. On a positive note, the finding also revealed that the inspectors stated that they are working on ways of how to bring novice and experienced principals more into contact, as the literature and the findings have both shown that it is beneficial for school principals to be in contact and to collaborate.

4.6 Mentoring of novice school principals

Regardless of whether respondents had experienced mentoring on a formal or an informal basis, the researcher deemed it important to find out from all respondents how much they knew about mentoring. The research participants, amounting to about 90%, clearly indicated that they had not mentored any novice principals during their teaching or leadership careers. A few experienced principals and school inspectors stated though that they have informally mentored other principals or had informally received mentoring. They admitted though that in most cases their mentees and/or mentors were close friends or relatives who were already serving as school principals. These respondents clearly mentioned that this type of mentoring was very informal. The mentoring relationship was so informal that on many occasions the

mentor and mentee simply met at family gatherings and discussed some leadership challenges that they were experiencing.

4.6.1 How mentoring could address leadership needs of novice school principals

This section partly addressed the second research question which sought information about how mentoring could address the leadership needs of novice school principals. The findings reported that all research participants viewed mentoring positively. Participants were all in favor of mentoring and equally agreed that mentoring was the right approach in addressing the leadership needs of novice school principals.

Moreover, the respondents reported many and diverse principals' leadership needs that could be addressed through mentoring. The leadership needs that respondents suggested were as follows: behaviour of school principals, role and expectations of principals, various administrative tasks, staff management, financial management and the general running of the school. Many of the respondents have not pin-pointed specific leadership needs that could be addressed through mentoring, but generally mentioned how mentoring could broadly address various leadership and management aspects of principalship.

Following are some of the reasons that respondents provided as to why mentoring was the best approach for addressing the above mentioned leadership needs and how it could address these needs. Generally, mentoring was regarded to be a very

practical learning approach and was thus viewed to be able to greatly help novice principals understand the tasks and responsibilities of principalship. One novice principal agreed with the above by stating that “mentoring is a practical approach as one learns by doing, seeing and feeling – learning through using many of ones’ senses is the best learning”.

Novice school principals further mentioned the practicability and hands-on approach of mentoring would allow them a realistic peek into what duties and tasks school principals are confronted with and how they were expected to carry them out. The respondents found that mentoring would immensely help them to understand and cope with their new leadership roles as school principals.

Moreover, experienced principals and school inspectors also agreed that mentoring was an appropriate approach in addressing leadership needs of novice principals. Experienced principals reasoned that mentoring would enable the novice principals to learn a lot and quickly as they would learn through observing and shadowing the actions and behaviours of other school principals. The respondents further remarked that through mentoring, mentors would share their own experiences with their mentees and also show them how to carry out certain actions. The mentees may then learn from the mentors.

One experienced principal expressed his support for mentoring by indicating that “mentors have walked the road, have done it [principalship], seen it and know it better. No mentor would want a novice to fail. They would advise them correctly”. While another experienced principal added that “mentoring is the right approach, because it inspires principals by helping them recognize the previously unseen possibilities that lay embedded in their existing circumstances”.

Experienced principals continued to reveal further ways of how mentoring could address leadership needs of novice principals. They reported that through mentoring novice principals are provided with much needed skills, support and guidance. They further remarked that mentoring accord novice principals a great opportunity to become better and effective school leaders. One experienced principal even confessed that he would have been a much better principal and would have avoided many hurdles, had there been formalised mentoring programmes at the time when he was a novice principal.

School inspectors were also of the opinion that leadership needs of novice principals could be addressed through mentoring programmes. The respondents mentioned that mentoring would allow experienced principals to pass on their acquired and perfected knowledge and skills about principalship to beginning and inexperienced principals. They further commented that mentoring would allow novice principals’ existing skills to be stretched and enriched and this would equip novice principals more and enable them to tackle various leadership needs effortlessly.

Moreover, another school inspector affirmed that he came across many novice principals who became so frustrated by the demands of principalship that they became demotivated. The respondent reported that through the practicability of mentoring, novice school principals may become more motivated to perform their duties as mentoring is very hands-on and seeks self-involvement.

The respondents' views mentioned in section 4.5 were in agreement with the literature that was reviewed in Chapter 2. The literature clearly states that mentoring was important in today's organizations and schools were no exception. Mentoring is a crucial part of effective leadership development programmes and it should form a valuable component of the principal induction process (Doherty, 1999 and Mushaandja, 2013). Furthermore, Doherty (1999) also mentioned that mentoring is an on-the-job professional development programme which is significantly advantageous to novice principals as it is a form of coaching that can seriously help novice principals to be orientated to their new roles of school leadership.

4.7 Challenges of mentoring

In this section information was sought which addressed the third research question which dealt with the challenges of mentoring. On the one hand respondents, especially those who had mentored others previously or had been mentored, were asked whether they had experienced any challenges during the mentoring process. On the other hand respondents who had no experience of mentoring either as mentors

or mentees were asked if they foresaw any challenges that could hinder the mentoring of novice principals by experienced principals. The views from the various respondents were diverse and at times participants showed conflicting views. Even though all respondents (novice principals, experienced principals and school inspectors) were in favour of mentoring as stated in the previous paragraphs (in Section 4.5.1.), they still reported that mentoring posed a number of challenges.

The majority of the respondents stated that the major challenge for both the mentees and mentors would be finding sufficient time in their busy schedules to attend or conduct mentoring programmes. A further concern which was expressed by some novice principals was that experienced principals, who in this case would act as their mentors, may be much older, outdated and old-fashioned as far as their principles, beliefs and the manner in which they lead and managed their schools were concerned. Novice principals preferred mentors with an open mind towards modern and fresh management and leadership styles.

Another concern that was expressed by about 60% of the experienced principals was the issue of compensating mentors for the time they would invest in conducting mentoring programmes. They argued that mentoring was not a once-off activity that one could do just once and ticked-off from the to-do-list. They mentioned that mentoring was an activity which was on-going and required a lot of time and nerves and thus called for some form of compensation or recognition. Other experienced principals, although only a few (30%) did not mention this point.

An additional challenge that many of experienced principals brought forward was regarding the training of mentors. Respondents mentioned that in order for experienced principals to be successful mentors, mentor training was very necessary as it would provide mentors with needed skills and know-how. One of the respondents, a 58 year old experienced principal with 19 years of experience as principal, warned that:

It does not mean that if we are experienced principals, we necessarily know how to conduct mentoring programmes. I may know of what I would like to tell and help the novice principals with, but I may not know how to be an effective mentor.

About 50% of the experienced principals raised a concern regarding the willingness and commitment of novice principals towards mentoring. They mentioned that many novice principals portrayed the picture of “*we know it all*” and depended too much on their textbook knowledge without knowing that the challenges in the school environment do not all necessarily just require answers from the textbook, but also from long-term practical experience.

Experienced principals further warned that the purpose of mentoring should be clearly and sufficiently explained to novice principals. Otherwise mentoring may be understood as some type of control tactic that superiors would like to enforce.

According to the experienced principals, this misunderstanding may result in a lack of commitment and willingness from novice principals towards mentoring.

In addition, experienced principals also indicated that many novice principals gave the impression that experienced principals were outdated and old-fashioned when it comes for example to their management and leadership styles. The researcher related well to this concern raised by the novice principals. This study confirmed that the majority of the experienced principals ranged between 51 – 59 years old; indicating a rather old, but experienced work force. One must keep in mind that these experienced principals were prepared and went through an education system 20 - 25 years ago, which may have been very different from the one novice principals experienced in recent years. Thus, the point regarding the management styles of the mentor and mentee, especially when there is a huge gap between them, should be well considered when introducing mentoring programmes.

Furthermore, school inspectors brought forward some of the following challenges which were differed from those raised by the novice and experienced principals. Inspectors were more concerned about who was going to plan, organize and train mentors. The school inspectors mentioned that they were overwhelmed by their current tasks and responsibilities and revealed that they foresaw no time in their schedules to take over the task of planning and organizing mentoring programmes.

Apart from that, school inspectors were not only concerned about the organization and coordination of mentoring programmes, but also about who would carry out the actual mentoring as they were very hard-pressed for time. One of the school inspectors put it in perspective by mentioning that the current ratio of inspector to schools stood at 25:1 (one school inspector in the Khomas region was responsible for 25 schools or more). Another school inspector added that there were schools that they didn't even manage to visit for 2-3 years due to a shortage of school inspectors and a lack of time. The respondent emphasized that besides their many regional duties, they were also expected to attend to national duties in the various regions of the country.

4.7.1 Addressing mentoring challenges

This section addressed the fourth research question which asked about what suggestions respondents had in addressing the challenges regarding mentoring. Respondents had various and interesting suggestions to offer. Four out of eight novice principals addressed the challenge regarding the principals' busy schedules and the lack of time to partake in mentoring by indicating that they were willing to sacrifice their time during weekends or holidays in order to receive mentoring. To back up this statement, one of the novice principals argued that mentoring programmes are not only beneficial and enriching to school principals, but also to the learners, teachers and the entire school and that it was thus worth it to sacrifice some of their free-time for the success of their schools.

Many of the experienced principals who raised the issue of compensation of mentors stated that in the case where the government may be unable to financially compensate mentors for conducting mentoring, they would suggest that schools come forth and collect these funds through fundraising activities. One of the experienced principals stated that the gains that came from the novice principal being mentored was primarily for the school, so the schools should therefore be in the forefront in tackling this challenge.

However, a few other experienced principals commented that government should tackle this challenge. They stated that the government should budget and fork out financial compensation for mentors just as it provides finances for other educational responsibilities such as hiring examination markers. They argued that having competent and well-prepared school principals was also to the benefit and success of the country as a whole and not just to the benefit of the schools alone.

Experienced principals together with school inspectors suggested that in addressing the issue of lack of time for mentoring and compensation of mentors, the government should look into engaging retired school principals. An experienced principal who was about to retire, testified that he had nothing else to do upon retirement apart from resting and attending to grandchildren. With this he tried to bring across that retired school principals have a lot of time which should be put to good use. School inspectors further recommended the use of retired principals by arguing that retired principals have gained a lot of experience in leading and managing schools and could

definitely be of great help to novice principals. Nevertheless, another school inspector warned that one should also keep in mind that retired principals have exited principalship due to their old age and in some cases due to health reasons. So one has to be careful in selecting which retired principals were physically and mentally fit to engage in mentoring programmes.

4.8 Additional views regarding novice principals being mentored by experienced principals

The information provided in the following paragraphs were not sought to address any specific research question, but generally gave the respondents a chance to share additional views that they may have forgotten to mention in previous sections regarding novice principals being mentored by experienced principals. Unfortunately, many of the research participants did not attend to this question and preferred to leave it blank. The few who responded to this question had the following to say.

Some of the novice principals were of the opinion that experienced principals were the best candidates to be mentors of novice principals. The supporting arguments were that experienced principals literally went through the same experiences as novice principals. Moreover, experienced principals overcame the same hurdles and had over time learned the ‘ins-and-outs’ pertaining to the issues and challenges that novice principals are currently experiencing.

A further novice principal, who was also in favour of experienced principals being mentors of novice principals, stated that he preferred that the preparation, mentoring and induction of novice principals was done by experienced principals as school inspectors were distant from the day-to-day happenings of the schools. Another novice principal further argued that mentoring should be done by experienced principals, because there is currently a shortage of school inspectors to attend to the needs and demands of school principals.

A further comment was from a novice principal who mentioned that mentoring programmes were being applied with much success in many countries world-wide including neighbouring South Africa. The respondent was of the opinion that this was evidence and testimony that mentoring programmes are viewed to be useful and valuable and should therefore also be seriously considered to be offered in Namibia.

There was one experienced principal who also agreed that experienced principals would be suitable mentors of novice principals. The reason for this was that experienced principals were in a position to prevent novice principals from falling into the same pitfalls as they once did as novice principals. Contrastingly, another experienced principal warned that not all school principals who have been in the profession for many years should automatically be considered to be mentors. The respondent added that mentors should be carefully selected among principals who are experienced, committed, respected and were successful in their leadership positions.

One of the school inspectors also agreed that experienced principals would be suitable as mentors of novice principals as they are greatly aware of the challenges that novice principals face. The respondent argued that experienced principals were suitable as they went through similar experiences and still face these on a daily basis. Nevertheless, respondents still emphasized that experienced principals should receive training on how to mentor, organize and successfully conduct mentoring programmes. A further school inspector warned that mentoring programmes required a lot of planning, organization and coordination. Apart from that, the respondent further stated that mentoring programmes called for great experience and expertise which neither school inspectors nor experienced principals may necessarily possess without prior training.

The literature presented further arguments that were not in favour of school inspectors to be mentors of novice principals. These were expressed by Naiker, Chikoko and Mthiyane (2014). These authors found that in cases where school inspectors acted as mentors, there was some tension between the mentors and mentees and the relationship seemed problematic. The school inspectors seemed to carry a lot of baggage that had a negative impact on the mentor and mentee relationship. This finding also supported this research's findings which suggest that mentoring should be carried out by experienced school principals and not by school inspectors.

Furthermore, the researcher can relate very well to these arguments due to the fact that school inspectors are the superiors of novice principals and besides, school inspectors are involved in many decision making processes that may positively or negatively affect the various schools. Seen from this point of view, there may well be tension between the mentor and mentee which could then also affect their mentoring relationship. Besides, in order for mentoring to be effective, it draws from a mentor and mentee relationship which should be a very good and reliable one. Hall as quoted by Naiker, et al. (2014) states that "... trust is key to sound mentor-mentee relationships and failure to establish a trusting relationship between mentor and mentee can result in the breakdown of the relationship" (p. 428).

4.9 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher presented the data gathered from the interviews and questionnaires. The findings and the discussion of these findings were also presented.

The major leadership needs of novice principals that were found were:

- Lack of knowledge of how to act and meet expectations.
- Difficulty in understanding different educational policies and acts.
- Difficulty in managing and leading staff.
- Challenges in juggling the various principal tasks and demands.
- Lack of time.
- Loneliness in principalship.
- Difficulty in dealing with discipline of unruly learners.

The major mentoring challenges that were found in this study were:

- Lack of time for mentors and mentees to commit towards mentoring programmes.
- Older, outdated and old-fashioned mentors as far as their principles, beliefs and leadership styles are concerned.
- Compensation or recognition and the need for the training of mentors.
- Willingness and commitment of novice principals towards mentoring.
- Lack of qualified personnel for planning, organisation of mentoring programmes.

The study found the following ways for addressing mentoring challenges:

- Attending mentoring programmes during weekends or holidays.
- School fund - raising activities to raise funds in order to compensate mentors.
- Engaging retired school principals as mentors.

The next chapter is the final chapter of this study and it presented the summary and conclusion of the findings of this study. In this chapter the researcher also presented the recommendations which the researcher believed are important to consider prior to introducing and implementing possible mentoring programmes in Namibia.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presented the summary of the major conclusions derived from the findings of this study. Furthermore, the chapter gave recommendations for improvement based on the findings of the study and finally, it proposed research problems for further study.

5.1. Summary of the study

The summary was presented according to research questions that guided the study. The study set out to find out what leadership needs novice school principals have, that could be addressed through mentoring. It also sought ways of how mentoring could address the leadership needs of novice principals. In addition, the challenges of mentoring and the possible solutions to these challenges were sought.

The purpose of this study to find out if there is a need for novice principals in the Khomas region to be mentored by experienced principals. The findings are significant in that they may inform and novice and experienced school principals, school inspectors, policy makers and the Namibian community at large about the leadership needs of novice principals and about the concept of mentoring of novice principal by experienced principals.

The theoretical framework that guided this study, was Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism which emphasizes that learning is a collaborative activity. Vygotsky stresses that learning takes place within a social context and that the interaction between individuals and their peers is a necessary part of their learning process.

The review of literature showed that even though novice principals go through formal leadership and management training at tertiary institutions, once they are in their leadership positions, they have difficulties putting the theory they have learned into action. Furthermore traditional principal preparation programmes at tertiary institutions were said to be generally disconnected from the daily realities and needs of schools. Thus mentoring is essential in order to ease this transition from theory to practice.

Literature further showed that school principals' roles including those of novice principals are very diverse, complex and highly demanding and can lead to high levels of stress. Mentoring is said to be able to greatly help reduce stress and offer some relief of the frustrations, pressures and difficulties that come with principalship.

Due to the hierarchical position school principals have, they are expected to have the expertise to deal with challenges independently and thus find it difficult to seek help

from others. Literature showed that in such instances, it is crucial to offer mentoring as it allows more experienced peers to offer support to inexperienced ones.

There are various benefits that novice principals can receive from mentoring which among others are reduced feelings of isolation, increased confidence and self-esteem and improved problem-solving capabilities. Mentoring can be used to familiarize and orientate novice principals to their new leadership roles.

Even though mentoring is an essential professional development programmes in assisting novice principals in addressing their leadership needs, mentoring also posed some challenges. These ranged from lack of proper planning for mentoring programmes, mentors receiving little support, recognition or compensation and mentors who are too protective, controlling and demanding. Literature showed that it is important that mentors be offered compensation and recognition in order to stay motivated and involved in mentoring programmes. Mentors should also be offered training and support regarding mentoring in order to advance their skills and knowledge. Careful planning of mentoring programmes and thorough screening and selection of the r mentors are very essential.

5.2. Conclusions

The study found that there are numerous leadership needs that novice principals face during their critical first year of principalship. Therefore novice principals need in-service and on-the-job professional training such as mentoring that enable them to face these leadership needs.

5.2.1. Leadership needs of novice school principals that can be addressed through mentoring and how mentoring can address these needs

The purpose of the first and second research questions was to find out what needs novice principals have and how these needs can be addressed through mentoring. Novice principals were found to have numerous and comparable leadership needs. The majority of the novice principals found it difficult to deal with the huge load of tasks and demands that principalship brings with it. The respondents indicated that the principals' tasks were very demanding and overwhelming and at times resulting in the principals having to omit some other important tasks such as class visits.

The second major leadership need that was found is that novice principals lacked time to accomplish all necessary tasks. The shortage of time could be attributed to the principals' large administrative load. Thirdly, novice principals experienced difficulties in managing and leading their staff. A great number of novice principals

were reported to also largely lack the know-how of what was expected of them and how they should act as school principals.

Upon close analysis of the above mentioned leadership needs of novice principals, they could be grouped into two major categories, namely, administrative and human resources related challenges. These are the two areas in which the majority of novice principals were indicated to have the most difficulties. Focus of professional development programmes should also be channelled more in these areas, in order to accord novice principals the necessary know-how and skills to effectively run their schools.

5.2.2. Possible challenges of mentoring and how these needs can be addressed

As one of the major parts of this study addressed mentoring, it was deemed necessary to find out from the respondents if there are or if they foresee any challenges regarding mentoring and how they suggest these challenges could be tackled. This was the purpose of the third and fourth research questions.

The major challenges of mentoring that were reported by the respondents ranged from mentors and mentees lacking time for mentoring programmes, to compensation and training of mentors and also questioned the general commitment of novice principals towards mentoring. In addition, novice principals feared being paired with mentors who are older and having outdated leadership styles, whilst school

inspectors reported a lack of qualified personnel required for the entire planning and organization of mentoring programmes.

The above mentioned challenges dealt with very basic organizational issues such as who will plan and carry out mentoring programmes and how the mentors will be selected and awarded in the end for their efforts and time that they will invest in mentoring. The respondents aired challenges which were very reasonable and realistic. The challenges started with issues that deal with the basics of organization and consecutively went through issues pertaining to the set-up and the actual carrying out of mentoring programmes. These challenges bring to the fore that even though mentoring is a valuable and great advantage to especially novice principals, it is also a very sensitive matter that requires careful selection of the mentors, effective planning and organization.

Moreover, respondents offered solid and concrete suggestions of how to deal with the above mentioned challenges of mentoring. In addressing the lack of time required for mentoring, respondents suggested that some aspects of the mentoring programmes should be offered during weekends or holidays, so they could fully focus and attend to them. In addition, they indicated that mentors could be compensated through activities that should be initiated by the schools, seen that upon completing mentoring, schools would be the main beneficiaries thereof and would reap the fruits of a principal who has been mentored to effectively run a school. Such school initiatives involve organizing and carrying-out various fundraising activities.

Lastly, in tackling the challenge of the shortage of personnel to mentor and organize mentoring programmes, the engagement of retired school principals was proposed.

Finally, the literature review in this study as well as the findings have shown numerous times that mentoring programmes for school principals are being offered in many countries world-wide, because mentoring is viewed to be valuable in accompanying especially novice principals during their first critical years of principalship. The findings have also clearly shown that novice principals in Namibia face many and huge challenges that may have an impact on the running of their schools. Furthermore, the findings have indicated that many of the challenges that novice principals have encountered could be tackled and solved through mentoring. In other words, it may be worthwhile for mentoring programmes to be seriously considered for Namibian school principals. The introduction thereof may be a degree easier, seen that the findings have revealed that there is a willingness from both novice and experienced principals to partake in mentoring programmes.

Besides, the concept of mentoring it's not such a foreign and abstract idea for Namibia as mentoring programmes for teachers already exist. So one could borrow ideas from this programme and adapt them in such a way that they fit the needs of novice principals. In other words, there is no need to completely reinvent the wheel in setting-up such programmes. In addition, we could consult and learn from

neighbouring countries such as South Africa, where mentoring programmes are already in existence for many years.

5.3. Recommendations for improvement

As mentioned in previous chapters, the purpose of this study was to find out if there is a need for novice school principals in the Khomas region to be mentored by experienced school principals. The findings of this study clearly state that the challenges for novice principals are extensive and therefore suggest that the need for support among novice school principals is strong and direly needed. This study has shown and recommends that support and assistance of novice principals during their critical first years is necessary and such support would be productive and effective through mentoring programmes.

One of the major problems regarding mentoring is that principals lack the time in the busy schedule to dedicate to mentoring programmes. Principalship is known to be tough, time pressed and driven by non-ending administrative tasks, let alone the various demands from students, teachers and the whole school community. The researcher thus suggests that in order for principals who are mentors to have time to attend to their mentees, authorities should consider reducing the principals' teaching load. Currently the average teaching time of school principals stands at 20 hours a week (EMIS, 2013), which is quite a lot.

The findings of this study also revealed that there is no platform where both the novice and experienced principals can share and exchange information and insights regarding principalship. The researcher suggests that such a platform should be provided as it allows principals to keep up to date with current events on matters concerning principalship. Such a platform does not necessarily have to be on a face-to-face basis. It could be in form of blogs, email groups, lectures and newsletters that report on issues regarding principalship. All these ideas may greatly help expose particularly novice principals to principalship and serve as a learning ground for them.

Moreover, as the results have shown, experienced principals represented a fairly older workforce and this may have an effect on their type of management and leadership styles, which novice principals feared may be outdated and not modern. Therefore, careful consideration needs to be given to the selection of mentors and the matching of mentor (experienced principals) and mentees (novice principals).

The researcher further suggests that MoE, universities and regional offices of education should share the responsibility for the quality of mentoring programmes. They should jointly develop training materials and provide support to mentors. Educational stakeholders need to significantly invest in quality mentoring to ensure that aspiring and novice principals have every possible chance to be effective leaders at their first schools.

The experienced principals also indicated that compensation for mentors was a concern to them. The researcher therefore suggests that educational stakeholders such as MoE, schools and school communities should seriously explore ways to address this issue. Robertson (2004) clearly confirms in the literature review that without incentives, recognition and support the commitment of mentors to provide effective learning experiences for novice principals is likely to be little.

5.4. Recommendations for further research

Due to the limited literature on the mentoring of novice school principals in Namibia, the researcher suggests further research in this area. Furthermore, this research only focused on school principals in the Khomas region and the researcher thus suggests that a similar research should be done in other regions to find out what views other schools principals have regarding mentoring.

Moreover, further research can also explore the possibility of retired principals mentoring novice principals. Retired principals surely have a lot of time on their hands and may want to occupy themselves. Apart from that, retired principals have been in the profession for long and gained a lot of experience and mentoring may provide them the opportunity to pass on the knowledge and give back to the community.

5.5. Summary

Difficulty in understanding different educational policies and acts, difficulty in managing and leading staff, juggling overwhelming tasks and demands of principalship, lack time to accomplish tasks and lack of knowledge of how to act and meet expectations were the major leadership needs that novice principals faced. Other challenges were also loneliness in principalship and difficulty in dealing with discipline of unruly learners.

In order for novice principals to lead their schools effectively, this study suggested that novice school principals be strongly supported and assistance during their first year of principalship through mentoring programmes. As principalship is already time pressed and driven by non-ending tasks and demands, the study suggest that authorities reducing the principals' teaching load in order for them to have time to dedicate to mentoring. Other suggestions are careful selection of mentors and the matching of mentors and mentees, collaboration of other stakeholders in education to provide support to mentors and jointly develop training materials for mentoring, creation of a platform in form of blogs, email groups, lectures and newsletters where all principals share and exchange information and insights regarding principalship and the study also urged educational stakeholders to seriously explore ways to compensate mentors.

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APPENDIX A

Request for Permission to collect data in schools in the Khomas Region

The Khomas Regional Director

Ministry of Education

Private Bag 13186

Windhoek

November 2014

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH AT
VARIOUS SCHOOLS IN THE KHOMAS REGION AND AT THE
KHOMAS REGIONAL OFFICE.**

I'm studying for a Master's Degree in Leadership, Management and Policy Studies at the University of Namibia. An important requirement of this program is the research project. I'm required to undertake research in the field of education. I have chosen the following topic for my research: **MENTORING OF NOVICE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS BY EXPERIENCED PRINCIPALS IN THE KHOMAS REGION**. I would like to carry out this research in various schools in the Khomas region and with school inspectors at the Khomas regional office.

For the findings of this nature to be useful, honest views of concerned principals are important. The researcher hopes that the results of the study will provide some

insights regarding the challenges novice principals experience during their early years of principalship and explore the possibility of novice principals being mentored by experience principals to minimise the occurring of some of these challenges.

I therefore kindly request permission to collect the necessary data using interviews and questionnaires from schools in the Khomas region. I will choose schools that are being led by school principals with vast experience and those that have recently received novice principals. In addition, I would also like to interview the school inspectors at the Khomas regional office.

The findings of this research may greatly assist developers of school principals to accordingly develop policies and tailor appropriate professional development training efforts that are beneficial to both the novice and experienced principals. I shall send a copy of my completed research to the schools that participated in the research, to the Ministry of Education and another copy will be kept at the library of the University of Namibia for public use.

Thanking you in advance for your anticipated favourable response.

Yours faithfully,

Julia Perestrelo

(Student no 9824359, University of Namibia)

APPENDIX B

Letter of permission from the Directorate of Education, Khomas Region, to conduct research at the schools



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

**KHOMAS REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION**

Tel: [09 264 61] 293 4410
Fax: [09 264 61] 231 367/248 251
Enquiries: Ms H.Imene

Private Bag 13236
WINDHOEK
20 November 2014

Ms Julia Paulina Perestrelo
Email: joaojules@yahoo.com
Fax: 061- 221256
Cell: 0812332330

Dear Ms J.P. Perestrelo

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN KHOMAS REGION SCHOOLS
AND THE KHOMAS REGIONAL OFFICE**

Your letter dated 10 November 2014 is hereby acknowledged.

Your request to conduct a research at thirty schools of your choice in Khomas Region and in Khomas Regional Office, Directorate of Education about "Mentoring of novice school Principals by experienced Principals" is approved with the following conditions:

- ❖ The Principal of different schools to be visited must be contacted before the visit and agreement should be reached between you and the principal.
- ❖ The school programme should not be interrupted.
- ❖ School should not be forced to take part in the programme.
- ❖ Inspectors, teachers and learners who will take part in this exercise will do so voluntarily.

Wish you all the best.

Yours sincerely


MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
Private Bag 13236, WINDHOEK
Gerard N. Vries
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
2014
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - PCA
KHOMAS REGION

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRES FOR EXPERIENCED SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain information regarding the mentoring of novice (beginning) school principals in the Khomas region. Please be assured that this information will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. You are encouraged to try and answer these questions to the best of your knowledge and understanding.

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. What is your highest professional qualification? _____
2. Years of experience as a school principal? _____
3. Teaching experience in years? _____
4. In which age group do you fall? under 35 36-40 41-50 51-59
 60+

B. LEADERSHIP NEEDS OF NOVICE (BEGINNING) SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

5. What major leadership needs (challenges) do novice (beginning) principals encounter during their first years of principalship?

What are the causes of these leadership needs (challenges)?

ADDRESSING LEADERSHIP NEEDS (CHALLENGES)

6. How do novice (beginning) principals meet their leadership needs (challenges)?

7. Who do novice (beginning) principals consult for help in order to meet their leadership needs (challenges)?

8. What type of help or support do novice (beginning) principals receive that could help them meet their needs (challenges)?

How does the support that novice (beginning) principals receive help them meet their needs (challenges)?

9. Who are novice (beginning) principals most likely to ask for help when they encounter leadership needs (challenges)? Please rank your answer starting with your first choice as No. 1!

- School inspectors Experienced principals Other, specify

10. What is the reason why novice (beginning) principals would choose (Ranking in No. 11) as their first, second or last choice?

1st choice: _____

2nd choice: _____

3rd choice: _____

11. What type of leadership needs (challenges) would novice principals approach school inspectors with? Please give reasons for your answer.

12. What type of leadership needs (challenges) would novice principals approach experienced principals with? Please give reasons for your answer.

C. MENTORING OF NOVICE (BEGINNING) PRINCIPALS

13. Which of the leadership needs (challenges) of novice (beginning) principals listed in question 5 could be addressed through coaching (mentoring)?

14. How could coaching (mentoring) address these challenges?

15. Why do you say coaching (mentoring) is the right approach in addressing these leadership needs (challenges)?

16. Could coaching (mentoring) be valuable in helping novice (beginning) principals deal with their leadership challenges? **Yes** **No,** Please give reasons for your answer?

D. CHALLENGES OF MENTORING

17. Have you ever coached (mentored) novice (beginning) principals in your teaching career? Yes No **If yes, continue with questions 20 and 21, skip question 22**

If no, skip questions 20 and 21, with question 22.

18. What challenges did you face during coaching (mentoring)?

19. What were the causes of these challenges?

20. What challenges do you foresee that could hinder the coaching (mentoring) of novice (beginning) principals?

E. ADDRESSING MENTORING CHALLENGES

21. What would you suggest would be the best way to address the mentoring challenges (listed in question 20 or 22)?

22. Who can help in addressing these mentoring challenges?

F. CLOSING AND THANKS

23. What other views do you have regarding novice (beginning) principals being mentored (coached) by experienced principals?

Thank you for your time and participation!

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE: NOVICE (BEGINNING) SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Interview instructions:

The purpose of this interview is to obtain information regarding the mentoring of novice (beginning) school principals in the Khomas region. Please be assured that this information will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. You are encouraged to try and answer these questions to the best of your knowledge and understanding. Please feel free to ask for clarifications where you do not understand what is being asked during this interview.

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. What is your highest professional qualification?
2. Years of experience as a school principal?
3. Teaching experience in years?
4. In which age group do you fall? under 35 36-40 41-50 51-59
60+

B. LEADERSHIP NEEDS OF NOVICE (BEGINNING) SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

5. What were your major leadership needs (challenges) when you were appointed as a new principal of this school?

6. How were these needs (challenges) addressed?
7. Which of these needs (challenges) have still not been addressed?
8. What are the reasons why these needs (challenges) have not been addressed?
9. What further leadership needs (challenges) do you experience as a novice (beginning) principal?
10. What are the causes of these leadership needs (challenges)?

C. ADDRESSING LEADERSHIP NEEDS (CHALLENGES)

11. What do you do to meet the leadership needs (challenges) listed above in questions 5 and 9?
12. Who do you consult for help in order to meet your leadership needs (challenges)?
13. How do they help you to meet these needs (challenges)?
14. What do you think about the support you receive from (answer from question 12)?
15. Who are you most likely to ask for help when you encounter leadership needs (challenges)? Please rank your answer starting with your first choice as number 1!

School inspectors Experienced principals Other, please specify!

Probes and alternative questions:

16. What is your reason for choosing as your first, second or last choice?

17. What type of leadership needs (challenges) do you approach inspectors with?

Please give reasons for your answer.

18. What type of leadership challenges do you approach experienced principals with?

Please give reasons for your answer.

D. MENTORING OF NOVICE (BEGINNING) PRINCIPALS

19. Have you ever been coached in your teaching or leadership career? Yes No

20. Briefly explain how it was done?

21. Which of your leadership needs (challenges) (listed in questions 5 and 9) could be addressed through coaching (mentoring)?

22. How could coaching (mentoring) address these needs (challenges)?

23. Why do you say coaching (mentoring) is the right approach in addressing these leadership needs (challenges)?

24. Could coaching (mentoring) be valuable in helping novice (beginning) principals deal with their leadership needs (challenges)? Yes No, Please give reasons for your answer?

E. CHALLENGES OF MENTORING

- If you have **been coached (mentored)** in your teaching or leadership career as mentioned in question 19, please **continue with questions 25 and 26, but skip question 27.**
- If you have **never been coached (mentored)** in your teaching or leadership career, please **skip questions 25 and 26 and continue with question 27.**

25. What challenges did you face during coaching (mentoring)?

26. What were the causes of these challenges?

27. What challenges do you foresee that could hinder the coaching (mentoring) of novice (beginning) principals by experienced principals?

F. ADDRESSING MENTORING CHALLENGES

28. What would you suggest would be the best way to address the mentoring challenges (listed in question 25 or 27)?

29. Who can help in addressing these mentoring challenges?

G. CLOSING AND THANKS

30. What other views do you have regarding novice (beginning) principals being coached (mentored) by experienced principals?

Thank you for your time and participation!

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW GUIDE: SCHOOL INSPECTORS

Interview instructions:

The purpose of this interview is to obtain information regarding the mentoring of novice (beginning) school principals in the Khomas region. Please be assured that this information will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. You are encouraged to try and answer these questions to the best of your knowledge and understanding. Please feel free to ask for clarifications where you do not understand what is being asked during this interview.

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. What is your highest professional qualification?
2. Number of years as inspector:
3. Previous occupation(s):
4. Number of school principals in your circuit :
5. In which age group do you fall? 35-40 41-50 51-59 60+

B. LEADERSHIP NEEDS OF NOVICE (BEGINNING) SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

6. What major leadership needs (challenges) are there when a new school principal is appointed in the Khomas region?
7. How are these needs (challenges) addressed?
8. Which of these needs (challenges) are difficult to address?
9. What are the reasons why some of these needs (challenges) are difficult to address?
10. What major leadership needs (challenges) do novice (beginning) principals encounter during their first years of principalship?
11. What are the causes of these leadership needs (challenges)?

C. ADDRESSING LEADERSHIP NEEDS (CHALLENGES)

12. How do novice (beginning) principals meet their leadership needs (challenges) listed in questions 6 and 10?
13. Who do they consult for help in order to meet their leadership needs (challenges)?
14. How does the support they receive help them meet their needs (challenges)?

15. Who are novice (beginning) principals most likely to ask for help when they encounter leadership needs (challenges)? Please rank your answer starting with your first choice as No. 1! School inspectors Experienced principals Other, please specify!

Probes and alternative questions:

16. What is the reason why novice (beginning) principals would choose as their first choice, second choice or last choice?
17. What type of leadership needs (challenges) do novice (beginning) principals approach inspectors with? Please give reasons for your answer.
18. What type of leadership needs (challenges) do novice (beginning) principals approach experienced principals with? Please give reasons for your answer.

D. MENTORING OF NOVICE (BEGINNING) PRINCIPALS

19. Which of the leadership needs (challenges) of novice (beginning) principals (listed in questions 6 and 10) could be addressed through coaching (mentoring)?
20. How could coaching (mentoring) address these needs (challenges)?
21. Why do you say coaching (mentoring) is the right approach in addressing these leadership needs (challenges)?

22. Could coaching (mentoring) be valuable in helping novice (beginning) principals deal with their leadership needs (challenges)? Yes No

Please give reasons for your answer?

E. CHALLENGES OF MENTORING

23. Have you ever coached (mentored) novice (beginning) principals in your leadership career? Yes No

- **If yes, please continue with questions 24 and 25, but skip question 26.**
- **If no, please skip questions 24 and 25 and continue with question 26.**

24. What challenges did you face during coaching (mentoring)?

25. What were the causes of these challenges?

26. What challenges do you foresee that could hinder the coaching (mentoring) of novice (beginning) principals by experienced principals?

F. ADDRESSING MENTORING CHALLENGES

27. What would you suggest would be the best way to address the coaching (mentoring) challenges (listed in question 24 or 26)?

28. Who can help in addressing these mentoring challenges?

G. CLOSING AND THANKS

29. What other views do you have regarding novice (beginning) principals being coached (mentored) by experienced principals?

Thank you for your time and participation!