

The challenges of novice principals in managing schools in Nquthu Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal

by

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I declare that **“The challenges of novice principals in managing schools in Nquthu Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal”** is my own work. All the sources which I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that I submitted this dissertation to plagiarism software.

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It is with deep appreciation that I write to the following individual:

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ABSTRACT

This is a qualitative research study which utilised the case study methodology to explore the challenges of novice principals in managing their schools in Nquthu Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal. The sampled participants consist of 10 novice principals assumed between 2019 and 2022. The literature acknowledges that there is no formal training for principalship in South Africa. In addition, orientation workshops are not adequately helping novice principals to be proficient in managing their schools.

The aim of the study was to explore the challenges face by novice principals in managing their schools. Simi-structured interviews and documental analysis were used to collect the data from the participants. The findings of this study revealed that there are multiple challenges faced by novice principals in managing their schools. The study showed that the minimum requirements, teaching experience and three-year teaching qualification are not enough to prepare candidates for principalships. The management challenges ranged from management of curriculum, finance, and human relations, among many.

In light of the noted challenges, the study recommends the reconsideration of recruitment and selection process policy, formal and structured developmental programmes for novice principals, mentorship, and extensive support from DoE.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACE	Advance Certificate in Education
CM	Circuit Manager
CMC	Circuit Management Centre
BEd	Bachelor's in education
BSc	Bachelor of Science
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DH	Departmental Head (school-based)
DOE	Department of Education
EEIs	Education employment Initiatives
HoD	Head of Department
Hons	Honours degree
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LTSM	Learning and Teaching support Material
PL	Post Level
PYEI	Presidential Youth Employment Initiative
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body

SMT	School Management Team
SPTD	Senior Primary Teachers Diploma
UNISA	University of South Africa
NPDE	National Diploma in Education
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education

Table of contents

Contents

DECLARATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	iv
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY.....	1
1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW	2
1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	4
1.5 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	5
1.5.1 Main question	5
1.5.2 Sub-research questions:	5
1.6 PURPOSE, AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	5
1.6.1 Aim of the study.....	5
1.6.2 Objectives of the study	5
1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	6
1.7.1 Research approach	6
1.7.2 Population and sampling	6
1.7.3 Instrumentation and data collection techniques.....	7
1.7.4 Data collection method.....	8
1.8 RELIABILITY, VALIDITY, CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS	8
1.9 RESEARCH ETHICS.....	8
1.10 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	9

1.11 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS.....	10
1.12 CONCLUSION	10
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	12
2.2 CONCEPT OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT	13
2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	14
2.3.1 Henri Fayol's Administrative Theory	14
2.3.2 How Henri Fayol's management theory contributes to this study?	16
2.4 SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT CRITERIA, PREPARATION AND INDUCTION OF PRINCIPALS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND OTHER COUNTRIES .	16
2.5 TRANSITION TO PRINCIPALSHIP	17
2.6 MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES FACED BY NOVICE PRINCIPALS	18
2.6.1 Managing of finance	21
2.6.2 Managing human resources	22
2.6.3 Administration (Managing curriculum)	22
2.6.4 Managing stakeholders	24
2.6.5 Legislative framework.....	24
2.6.6 Challenges brought by COVID-19 in school management	26
2.7 MANAGERIAL FUNCTIONS OF A SCHOOL PRINCIPAL	26
2.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF NOVICE PRINCIPALS	27
2.9 CONSEQUENCES FACED BY SCHOOLS AS RESULTS OF NOVICE PRINCIPALS' CHALLENGES.....	29
2.10 DEPARTMENTAL INITIATIVES IN THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF NOVICE PRINCIPALS.....	29
2.11 CONCLUSION.....	30
CHAPTER 3	32

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	32
3.1 INTRODUCTION	32
3.2 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM.....	32
3.3 THE RESEARCH APPROACH.....	33
3.4 THE RESEARCH DESIGN	34
3.5 CASE STUDY	35
3.6 POPULATION AND SAMPLING	35
3.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES	36
3.7.1 Document Analysis.....	36
3.7.2 Semi-Structured Interviews	36
3.8 DATA ANALYSIS	38
3.8.1 Data Analysis Process	38
3.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE FINDINGS.....	39
3.9.1 Credibility	40
3.9.2 Dependability.....	41
3.9.3 Transferability.....	41
3.9.4 Confirmability.....	41
3.10 ETHICALCONSIDERATIONS.....	42
3.10.1 Permission and Ethical Clearance.....	42
3.10.2 Informed Consent Form	42
3.10.3 Anonymity and Confidentiality	43
3.10.4 Protection from Harm	43
3.10.5 Voluntary Participation	43
3.11 MY ROLE AS THE RESEARCHER	43
3.12 CONCLUSION.....	44
CHAPTER FOUR	45

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS	45
4.1 INTRODUCTION	45
4.2 BIBLIOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF THE PARTICIPANTS	46
4.3 DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS	47
4.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS	48
4.5 THEMES EMERGING FROM THE DATA	49
4.5.1. Orientation.....	49
4.5.2 Effectiveness of the orientation	51
4.5.3 Challenges faced by novice principals in schools.....	51
4.4.4 How novice principals deal with challenges	59
4.4.5 Transition to principalship.....	61
4.4.6 Support from DoE.....	63
4.6 CONCLUSION	64
CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS	65
5.1 INTRODUCTION	65
5.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS	66
5.3 SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS	66
5.3.1 Main research question	67
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	74
5.5 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY.....	75
5.6 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY	76
5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES	76
5.8 CONCLUSION	76
REFERENCES	78
APPENDIX A: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPALS	91

APPENDIX B: BIBLIOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF THE PARTICIPANTS.....	92
APPENDIX C: DOCUMENT VERIFICATION TOOL.....	93
APPENDIX F	98
APPENDIX G.....	100
APPENDIX I: EDITING CERTIFICATE.....	105

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

As school leaders, principals are tasked with a variety of responsibilities to ensure that the school's goals and objectives are met successfully.. The newly appointed "novice" principals are no exception to this expectation. According to Sepuru and Mohlakwane (2020), this level of proficiency is expected even though there is no existing certificate for principalship; therefore, novice principals rely on their experience to execute the leadership and managerial duties of the Department of Education (DoE). The transition from teaching to management is relatively huge. It is, therefore, tempting to conclude that novice principals are susceptible to challenges brought by merely executing their core duties as the leaders and managers of the schools. This may be attributed to the fact that principals are not trained or do not receive adequate induction before assuming their duties. I am raising this from experience as a novice principal who has never undergone any training by DoE.

Maatouk (2020) believes that there are growing and changing demands of principals, and this exacerbates the ability of the novice principals to adapt to their core functions. This assertion is supported by the Journal of Career Development (2018), which asserts that in order for principals to successfully fulfil their roles, they must exhibit characteristics such as accountability, determination, self-confidence, emotional balance, sensitivity, long-range vision, intelligent failure management, optimism, concern for the school systems, and care. Achieving these expectations is nearly impossible for novice principals without adequate prior training.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

I have been appointed as a novice principal in 2020. I found it difficult to adapt to the increased responsibilities of leadership and management; consequently, I encountered too many obstacles. I have observed that the Department of Education has made little attempt to address the issues faced by inexperienced principals like myself. Hence, it

is in my best interest to explore the issues novice principals experience upon assuming their responsibilities and, if possible, to offer answers.

Second, DoE's incapacity or delay in addressing these obstacles has an adverse impact on pupil progress. This clearly emphasises the significance of investigating these issues.

Thirdly, no published research has been undertaken in Nquthu Circuit that explicitly addresses the difficulties experienced by a newly appointed principal, despite the fact that new principals are recruited every year. The findings that are there in relation to challenges faced by novice principals that are out there may not be valid as a contextual factor are also playing a role in any study. This then becomes a completely new study at the uMzinyathi District in the Nquthu Circuit.

I am of the view that novice principals will benefit from this study, as it will eventually form the body of new knowledge that could be accessed by the Department of Education, scholars and principals assuming duties. Having access to such information will enable them to foresee the challenges and be able to deal with them than being taken off guard.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Novice principals can be described as principals who are newly appointed to the principalship post as per stipulation in the "Personnel Administrative Measure" Or have relatively little principalship experience. At times, they are referred to as beginner principals.

The Employment of Educators Act (Act No. 76 of 1998) (Republic of South Africa, 1998), Personnel Administrative Measures ([PAM] DOE, Republic of South Africa, 2016), and Resolution 1 of 2008 of the Education Labour Relations Council (Education Labour Relations Council Limpopo Chamber, 2008) stipulate that, in order to qualify for appointment as a principal:

- A person must have at least a recognised three-year qualification (REQV13) that includes appropriate training as a teacher

- Seven years of teaching experience are required.

Other than the above requirement, there is neither a certificate nor a training course. Therefore, this translates to the idea that the Department of Education believes that through the accumulation of seven or more years of teaching experience with a three-year teaching diploma, the newly appointed principal will be able to effectively carry out all the core duties of the principal as per stipulation in Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM).

Within the same vein of teaching experience as a requirement, there are those who have no previous managerial experience at all. Those are the ones who were never appointed as deputy principals (DP) or departmental heads (DH) previously, and there are those who have previous managerial experience as deputy principals or departmental heads. However, this is not taken into consideration as it is not stipulated in HRM 13 of 2020.

Given the requirements of being appointed as a principal, it is noted that the responsibilities of the principals are complex and multifaceted (Sepuru & Mohlakwana, 2020). The Department of Education should be made aware of such complexities; this is drawn from what is called the 'core duties' of the principal. According to these core duties' enshrined in Personnel Administrative Measure Chapter A, clause 4.2 (e), the principal is expected to perform the following duties and more: (i) general/administration, (ii) teaching, (iii) extra co-curricular activities, (iv) interaction with stakeholders, (v) communication. In addition, Sepuru & Mohloakwana (2020) further detailed these duties as classroom management, curriculum management, financial management and implementation of policies.

These duties become complex and challenging as they require skills not imparted during the initial training of principals as educators. Again, the experience accumulated through teaching as educators do not prepare themselves for the challenges waiting for them as principals. These complex demands of being the leader and the manager of the school are intensified by being a novice in the position. Personally, as a novice principal who was appointed (in 2020) from being a departmental head for two years, I had a sense of unpreparedness to tackle the challenges and responsibilities that

come along with principalship. The once-off induction workshop I went through was also not enough to equip me to deal with the overwhelming responsibility of being a principal. It certainly did not cover all the aspects of being an effective leader and a manager at school. This went to a point where I required immediate support to comply with the deadline for the submissions. This support would come in a rushed manner from nearby schools or from that section of the department that requires submission. So literally, he would live day by day, seeking help in performing my responsibilities.

From the literature review, it is obvious that there is a discrepancy between the requirements of being a principal and the competency necessary to properly carry out the tasks of a principal. This discrepancy brought a number of challenges to those who were newly appointed or novice principals. The challenges range from the external to the internal environment (school). The community, negative teachers' attitude, ability to deal with curriculum, Teachers' unions, learners' behaviour, poor climate, low morale, inadequate human and physical resources, and absence of structured professional for school leaders (Pegram, 2020; Beam, Claxton & Smith, 2016; Pineda-BaezBernal-Luque, Sandoval-Estupinan & Quironga,2019).

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014: 470), the statement of the problem is the issue, controversy or concern that initiates the study. It consists of several sentences that show how the problem is formulated. This helps to clarify the ways in which the study adds to existing knowledge or informs current practices.

In the early stages of their careers as principals, novice or beginning principals confront a number of problems. These problems are very diverse. As I am one of the novice principals, I have experienced so many challenges, which I also believe other novice principals are facing. So, the main aim of this study is to understand these challenges and possibly mitigate them or explore their effects on the working environment. The issue of challenges of novice principals requires serious attention. This is because the proper operation of the school depends on the principal's abilities as a visionary leader and mission-driven management. Therefore, it goes without saying that whatever hinders the effective functioning of the school needs attention.

1.5 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.5.1 Main question

What are the challenges that Nquthu Circuit novice principals face in managing the schools?

1.5.2 Sub-research questions:

- How do novice principals develop their leadership and management skills?
- How do novice principals deal with management challenges in performing their professional roles and responsibilities?
- How do novice principals get orientated into their new roles as school managers?
- What are the consequences faced by the schools as a result of challenges faced by the novice principals?
- How does the Department of Education support novice principals in managing schools?

1.6 PURPOSE, AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.6.1 Aim of the study

To explore the challenges of novice principals in managing schools.

1.6.2 Objectives of the study

- To determine how novice principals develop their leadership and management skills.
- To determine how novice principals learn to deal with management challenges. In their professional role and responsibilities.
- To determine the consequences faced by the schools as a result of challenges faced by novice principals.

- To determine how the orientation of novice principals is carried out.
- To establish the role to be played by the Department of Education in mitigating challenges faced by novice principals in school management.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This is because the proper operation of the school depends on the principal's abilities as a visionary leader and mission-driven management. This is a qualitative research design study. Qualitative research design is descriptive, using words, not numbers. I preferred to follow this design because I was conducting interviews, observing and analysing documents, and collecting data from the participants.

1.7.1 Research approach

The study is qualitative because it collected textual data. When a researcher seeks to comprehend how people interpret the events they experience, qualitative methodologies are used (Botha, Kamper & van Niekerk, 2011:63).

This study used interviews, observations and documentary analysis so that I could understand the challenges faced by novice principals. I took notes while using these approaches to ensure data credibility.

1.7.2 Population and sampling

As it would have been difficult to study everyone, we utilised a method called "purposeful sampling" to pick our subjects (Punch, 2011:162). Since this study was qualitative, participants were chosen on the basis of their expertise, as suggested by Leedy & Ormrod (2013:152). In so doing, the participants were in a position to provide the best information about the study. In the case of this study, people who are experiencing challenges are the novice principals, hence, I have decided to sample novice principals.. The individuals who agreed to take part in the research project were chosen because they could provide the most useful information feasible with regard to the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:138).

Table 1:1 shows the sample category and number of participants

No	Category	No of participants
1	Principals with less than 3 years' experience as principal	10

Researcher's own compilation

1.7.3 Instrumentation and data collection techniques.

I visited the sampled schools of novice principals during working hours and took notes of what was happening in terms of the school's functionality. Through this observation, I was able to read the school climate and culture. I also attended some general meetings to get a hint of the educators' conduct and attitudes toward the meeting chaired by the principal.

When it comes to the participants, I conducted interviews and provided them with interview questions. Semi-structured interviews were incorporated, and I probed to acquire as much information as possible. The questions were appropriate since the principals were literate, and they related very well to this subject.

I used a group focus interview for the sampled principals. Focus group interviews involve a small group gathered to study or assess (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014: 363). The focus group interview enabled sampled participants to be as comfortable as possible and be in a social environment where they could learn and support each other as the study progressed. The focus group interview took place at school because meetings also took place there.

1.7.4 Data collection method

According to Mouton (2012), there are numerous approaches to data collection that are capable of yielding useful results. However, the method of data collecting that is chosen needs to provide the researcher with the ability to answer research questions using the data that is gathered. Interviews and content analysis of documents were the two approaches to data gathering that were utilised over the course of this research project.

1.7.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

According to Botha et al. (2011:65), the process of data analysis involves dividing the data into comprehensible and manageable categories, themes, patterns, trends, or linkages. This view is held by the authors. The interviews and transcripts were analysed using content analysis so that the findings of this study could be better understood. The information that was gathered during the interviews was recorded with the help of a recording device. The information that was gathered was also recorded in a detailed field note and analysed at a later time. The information was organised into categories according to its chronology, pattern, themes, and relationships.

1.8 RELIABILITY, VALIDITY, CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

For credibility and trustworthiness, I was obliged to ensure that the study was trustworthy and credible through my conduct in collecting the data and transcribing as it was without my personal interference. The study was based on objective findings, verified facts and was free from biasness. In so doing, the finding and the recommendations of the study were accepted as a body of knowledge that could be used by other scholars.

1.9 RESEARCH ETHICS

As Mouton (2012:238) is convinced that research ethics involves what is wrong and what is good in the conduct of research, this study ensured that its findings are ethically

and professionally acceptable. In as much as the interest of this study is to discover as much as possible, it was also conducted mindful of the participant's rights.

The information gathered in this study using other people's knowledge and findings were acknowledged and referenced as per UNISA regulations. In conducting this study, as it involves human interaction, the following were considered as outlined by Botha, Kamper and Van Niekerk (2011:59):

- Anonymity (keeping identity secret).
- Privacy (including the right to refuse to participate in your research).
- Confidentiality (keeping information confidential).
- Informed consent (being informed about the research aims, scope and dissemination, and having a choice in participating or not).

1.10 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Vithal and Jansen (2004:35) describe the limitation of the study as constraints imposed on the study. The constraints which may be imposed on this study are time, resources and credibility. As this is a qualitative study, the findings and conclusions of this study are applicable to the schools and participants selected. Thus generalisation of the findings could not be made. Again the sample size, to make findings that can be generalised, one must be mindful of the sample size, which should be a true representation of the group studied (novice principals). Very unfortunately, the sample size of the proposed study cannot represent the novice principals of South Africa.

The delimitation of this study is the sample size; one could not be able to collect information from all novice principals as there are financial and time constraints that would be involved. In any case, increasing the sample size from the same district will yield almost the same results as these principals experience the same contextual factors.

1.11 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

- Challenges

A challenge (noun) is a circumstance or something that requires substantial mental or physical effort in order to be completed successfully and consequently tests a person's ability. It can also be described as a challenging circumstance in which great work, determination, and expertise are required for success. The challenge in management context, is described as obstacles that prevent effective running of an organization (Northfield, 2013).

- Novice principal

Principals who have been in their roles for 0–3 years are referred to as novice principals (Hvidston, McKim, & Mette, 2016). They are also known as principals who have recently been promoted but do not have prior experience working in the position they currently hold. Their length of service on the job goes anywhere from the first day they started to three years (Daresh, 2006).

- Management

The term “management” can be used to refer to a variety of actions that are geared toward the effective and efficient utilisation of organisational resources in order to accomplish the goals of the organisation. (Bush, 2006).

1.12 CONCLUSION

According to the examination of the relevant literature, the novice principals in South Africa and elsewhere still encounter a myriad of formidable obstacles. The fact that there is no training or course for becoming a principal, and that there are no structured professional development or mentoring programmes that the Department of Education has put in place to mitigate the challenges faced by novice principals, exacerbates these challenges. Additionally, there is no training or course for becoming a principal

in the United States. The fact that the core duties, which include managing the curriculum, finances, as well as human and physical resources, are not taught in the initial training of the principal as an educator also makes these challenges significantly more difficult to overcome. Despite the fact that these competencies are of the utmost importance for the efficient operation of the school, they are not taught.

The findings of this study will provide light on the difficulties that novice principals face, which are prominent in the Nquthu Circuit of the uMzinyathi District.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter is to concentrate on the body of information that has been acquired by researchers on the experiences of the novice principals in the field of school management. Literature or scholarship review creates an important connection between the research problem as well as the existing body of knowledge (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:73). According to Mouton (2012), this section helps to uncover the most frequently recognised empirical results in the study of the topic. In this particular study, it is the obstacles experienced by novice principals in school management that are the subject of study. The literature on this study includes the discussion of the concept of school management in the South African context, the experiences and transition of novice principals in school management, the managerial functions of principals, and ultimately, the significance of their professional development in executing their role as leaders of the schools. The literature also takes the synoptic view of the effort made by the Department of Education to mitigate challenges faced by novice principals in managing schools.

Being a principal is the highest position in a school, and it comes with authority and decision-making powers which is enshrined South African's schools act, 84 of 1996. According to Makhanya (2013), it is the most significant career move for principals. Thus, it is essential to investigate their (novice principals') initial experiences as newly appointed school principals (Leithwood, 2007). It is of great value to comprehend how they navigate their way through challenges and overcome them. This affords the chance to assess the efficacy of the Department of Education's activities in addressing the problems novice principals encounter during their first years as managers. This literature review covers their journey, departing from sets of selection criteria, transition, preparation and support. This will provide a better view of the gap that seems to appear between the scope of their work and their preparedness in terms of effective management of their schools.

If indeed the introductory years of principalship are challenging, one would assume that would, one way or another, other challenges may emanate from such, which could ultimately impact the learner's performance. There is research evidence that reveals a positive correlation between school leadership and management and learner attainment (Yong Tan, 2018). As a result, the literature study will also explore the effects of such challenges experienced by novice principals.

2.2 CONCEPT OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

The concept of school management revolves around the core duties of the principal as a manager of the school. Sepuru and Mahloakwane (2020)) further described it as a distinct process consisting of planning, organising, actuating and controlling performed to determine and accomplish stated objectives by human being and other resources. Koontz (1993) described it as the process of planning, organising and controlling people with the help of material resources to achieve goals. Kruger (2003:68) defined it as a process of designing and executing strategies, getting things done and working effectively with people. Ferdous (2016) described management as the art and science of handling human and physical resources in organisations, including schools. From these definitions, one may deduce that management is the hub of any organisation. No organisation or institution can accomplish its goals and objectives without proper and effective management (Mahmood, Basharat & Bashir, 2012).

The importance of school principals possessing and acquiring managerial skills cannot be over-emphasised (Manafa, 2020). Management is an integral part of any organisation. It includes skillful organisation and utilisation of human and physical resources for the achievement of goals and objectives (Ajaegbo, Adenaike & Kudu, 2004). In the school environment, this responsibility for the school to realise its goals and objectives rests with the principal (Manafa, 2020). Nkuna (2020) is of the view that it is the school principal's core duty to implement educational policies at the school level.

According to Nurochim (2016), school management is "the application of management expertise to the process of coaching, developing, and managing school-based business and educational processes.". From this definition, one may assume that

principals are expected to carry out duties entailed in the definition. The processes of coaching, developing and controlling to ensure that the school achieve its goal and objectives are very complex and require a high level of managerial competency (Sepuru & Mahloakwana , 2020).

Candidates assuming the position of principalship through provision (SASA 84, 1996) are expected to manage the school in a manner that is effective and has a positive impact on learner attainment. The principals are given authority or mandate to manage the schools by the head of department (HoD) (SASA 84, 1996). It has been shown that effective methods of managing schools have a direct impact on student achievement (Adam & Muthiah, 2020). In other words, when schools are well-run, student achievement tends to improve. Now, the SGB and the Department of Education must designate individuals who are competent and educated about school leadership and administration if they are to achieve their goals of improving students' academic outcomes (Sepuru & Mahloakwana, 2020). Steyn and van Niekerk (2012) argue that it is unrealistic to expect novice principals to succeed if they lack fundamentals of leadership and management. Management is a tough, highly complicated, ever-evolving, and everchanging role (Bush & Glover, 2003).

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Olum (2004), the theory is an outlook in which people make sense of their own world by grouping together inter-reliant concepts and principles that give the momentous area of knowledge.

This study's primary objective is to analyse the obstacles novice principals confront in school management, and I believe Henri Fayol's administrative theory is pertinent for guiding this research. Hence, the management theory of Henri Fayol has been chosen as the most applicable theoretical framework for this study.

2.3.1 Henri Fayol's Administrative Theory

Henri Fayol's administrative theory includes 14 principles of management, and it is from these principles that Fayol derived five core principles roles, or management functions, namely forecast and plan, organise, command, co-ordinate and control for the effective operation of the organisation (Olum, 2004).

In Fayol's administrative theory, Forecasting and planning are described as the act of preparing for the future and acting accordingly. Organisation is described as an act of development of the organisation's human and physical resources. Commanding is the act of maintaining the institutions' actions and processes running. Co-ordination is described as the alignment and harmonisation of the effort of the group, and ultimately control means the activities are performed in line with prescribed rules and processes (Olum, 2004). Oyedele (2015) suggests that these principles had a substantive impact on the management process in different kinds of organisations. Poudyal (2013) asserts that the wider scope of utilisation of these principles shows their significance in all organisations, including school systems. Fayol's management ideas place a far greater emphasis on the personal responsibilities of management.



Figure 2.1 show Fayol's five core principles of management

Source: (Ferdous, 2016)

2.3.2 How Henri Fayol's management theory contributes to this study?

This research examines the difficulties novice principals experience in school management at the Nquthu Circuit Management Centre, uMzinyathi KwaZulu-Natal. Fayol's theory operates within five principal roles, as mentioned. Fayol's core principles of management correlate with the core duties of the principal as stipulated in personnel administration measures (PAM) chapter 2.

According to Mahmood, Basharat, and Bashir (2012), Fayol's theory is one of the most well-known orthodox theoretical frameworks for understanding the management process in organisations serving the public, such as schools. According to Fayol's idea, these guidelines should be used by both employees and managers to better comprehend and steer their respective workplaces. This perspective holds that, with the right application of Fayol's key management function principles, even inexperienced principals may be able to successfully execute their management responsibilities despite the obstacles they confront.

2.4 SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT CRITERIA, PREPARATION AND INDUCTION OF PRINCIPALS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

In accordance with the legislative framework, the Employment of Educators Act (Act No. 76 of 1998) (Republic of South Africa, 1998), Personnel Administrative Measures ([PAM] DOE, Republic of South Africa, 2016) states that "In order to qualify for appointment as a principal"

- a person must have at least a recognised three-year qualification (REQV 13) which must include appropriate training as an educator.
- Must have seven years of teaching experience.

After application and short-listing, a candidate sits for an interview, after which the SGB recommends, and the provincial head of the department (HOD) approves the appointment (Gilmour, 2001).

According to Bush and Oduro (2006), this criterion for the promotion to principalship is low and worsened by the fact that there is no training before the appointment is effected. Mampane (2015) opines that some candidates had no previous promotional post experience nor served in a school governing body (SGB). The requirements of the principalship post permit such transition from an educator (post level 1) into a principalship (post level 4). This, at the time, occurs unfairly as a result of internal or external influence (Mampane, 2015).

In my own experience as a principal, the moment the appointment was made, in the form of receiving an appointment letter, I assumed the responsibilities and duties of the principal. This was done without being allocated a mentor nor being exposed to any preparatory programme. The managerial and leadership support was given in the form of workshops (after a long time), and there were not tailored to novice principals. These kinds of leadership and management of support usually came when there were changes that needed to be addressed, or there were general problems in schools that required external support.

2.5 TRANSITION TO PRINCIPALSHIP

In the South African context, receiving the appointment letter for principalship literally means “getting keys for the principal’s office and starting to work”. From my personal experience, a circuit manager would come to school together with the school governing body for the introductory purpose to staff members a few days prior or on the assumption date. A set list, ‘handover tool’, would be signed, acknowledging the transfer of documents and state of financial affairs handed to a new principal. This exercise was vague in nature in relation to the weight and meaning it carries.

Transition to principalship seems to be a global challenge for most of the novice principals characterised by these experiences: fear of failure, surprise and reality shock, loneliness, sense of incompetence, difficulty in striking a balance between the instructional and technical facets, vagueness in the principal-staff relationship (Maatouk, 2020).

Studies in different countries show that novice principals experience the feeling of shock after being appointed when they get in touch with the reality of tasks ahead of them as principals. The expected competency required has changed from what they are used to (Walker & Qian, 2006). This brings the strain coupled with fear of failure in performing the expected duties. At times, this is worsened by the inevitable comparison of the novice principal and the legacy and management practices of the former principal (Cottrell & James, 2016, p.11). This impacts the relationship of novice principals with the staff, especially the educators. Teachers may be both sources of support and anxiety. Staff reaction to novice principal's management style in relation to former principal pauses nervousness (Maatouk, 2020).

2.6 MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES FACED BY NOVICE PRINCIPALS

It is inevitable that whoever is new to any job or position, especially a senior one, will experience some challenges while trying to adapt and be expected to fulfil the expectations of the position. Taking principalship signifies a clear and, at times, abrupt shift in outlook, expectation, and work (Sepuru, 2020). In addition to these challenges is educational reform in schools, which adds to co-existing challenges of leadership and management (Mestry, 2017). Novice principals are no exception to this. This agrees with Makhanya (2013), who is of the view that these challenges are exacerbated by the lack of adequate or no training for principalship posts.

Burkhauser, Gates, Hamilton, and Ikemoto (2012) and Sepuru & Mahloakwana (2020) acknowledge that novice principals confront many obstacles that might affect their effectiveness as school administrators and managers.

According to Oplatka (2012), inexperienced principals experience reality shock and lack a comprehensive knowledge of what it means to be a principal. In a South African context, this may not come as a surprise since there is no formal qualification for a principalship position. The ability to fulfil the expectations of the principalship position squarely relies on the experience of teaching and possible management experience as departmental head or deputy principal.

Several publications have documented the enormous variety of difficulties first-year principals encounter. In agreement with Spillane and Lee (2014), Garca-Garduo, Slater, and López-Gorosave (2010) list the following as the most significant of these difficulties: “Feelings of professional isolation and loneliness; dealing with the legacy, practice, and style of the previous headteacher; dealing with multiple tasks, managing time, and priorities; managing the school budget; dealing with (e.g., supporting, warning, dismissing) ineffective staff; implementing new government initiative.”

“Challenges connected to interpersonal difficulties, namely with employees and the image of the school,” according to Weindling (2000), are the greatest obstacles inexperienced principals encounter. Included are: difficulties caused by the style and practice of the previous head; school buildings; communication and consultation with staff; creating a better image for the school; dealing with a weak member of the SMT (school management team); dealing with incompetent staff; and low staff morale.”

Clarke, Wildy and Styles (2011) summarised key challenges faced by novice principals in school management:

Management of human resources, which includes dealing with teaching and non-teaching staff and learners, dealing with underperformance, dealing with parents, and managing physical resources, which include: LTSM, school facility and finances.

The position of the principal is also described as multifaceted and multi-dimensional (Mestry, 2017). A novice principal would be expected to deal with multiple tasks, manage time and prioritise. These expectations are overwhelming to the inexperienced principal. Striking a balance between the competing activities with the expectation to show competency to all is very unlikely. Even worse, some schools in South Africa, the non-viable and small schools where there is no deputy principal, departmental head, or admin clerk. The expectation from the principal is to fully become responsible for curriculum activities, including teaching duty load at times up to 100 % and execute administrative work (paperwork) like in any other South African public school.

García-Garduño et al. (2010) further argue that these challenges are also worsened by the teacher unions. This claim is widespread even in South Africa, where unions are

very active in defending their members. This makes the newly appointed principals with no administration background hesitate in instituting administrative actions on active members of the prominent unions.

It must be noted that whenever a principalship post is advertised, the predecessor was likely, experienced, and had certain leadership and management skills. One may deduce that a comparison of the novice principals and the legacy, practice and style of the previous principal teacher is foreseeable (García-Garduño et al., 2010). Thus, the assumption would be that teachers, learners and school community members may reject or accept the management style of the novice principal.

According to Karokose, Yirci and Kocabas (2014) and Sepuru & Mahloakwana (2020), the research findings show that the challenges faced by novice principals in school management can be grouped into five facets. Namely financial problems, administrative issues, school community, school facilities and legislative framework (educational policies).

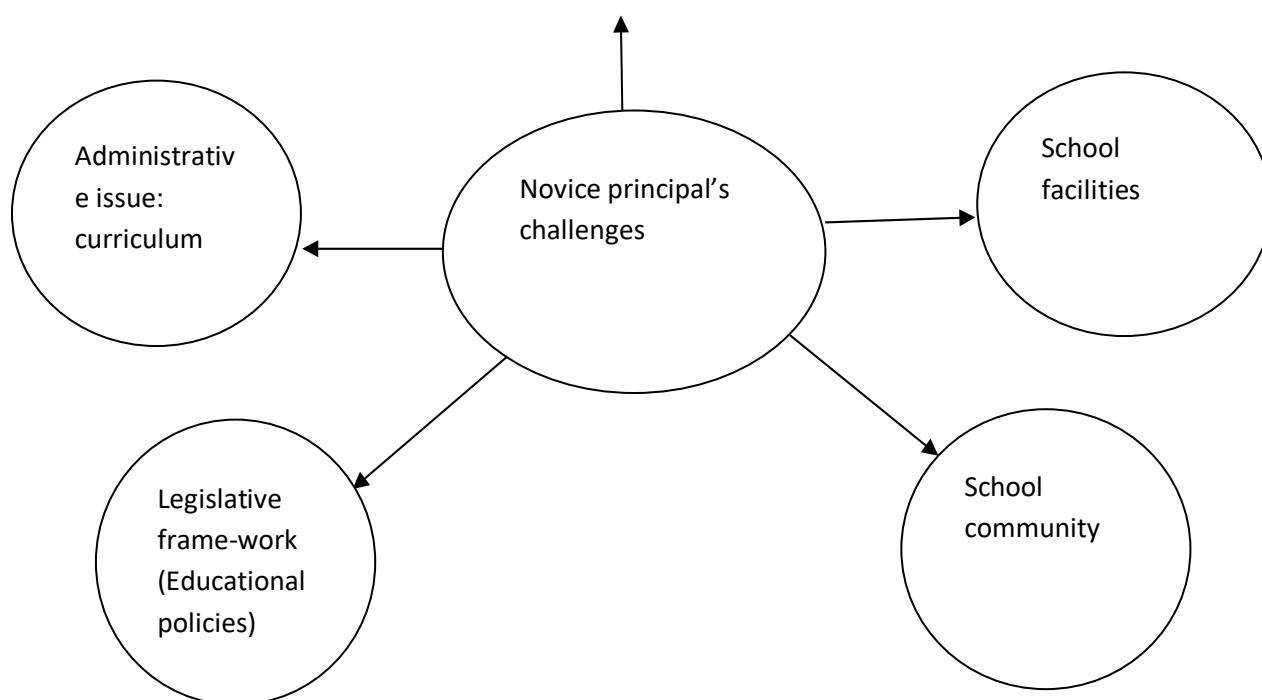


Figure 2.2 shows five aspects of challenges faced by novice principals.

Source : researcher's own compilation

2.6.1 Managing of finance

The Employment of Educators Act (Act No. 76 of 1998) (Republic of South Africa, 1998), (hereafter EEA), Personnel Administrative Measures ([PAM] DOE, Republic of South Africa, 2016) and Resolution 1 of 2008 of the Education Labour Relations Council (Education Labour Relations Council Limpopo Chamber, 2008) state that the minimum qualification requirements for the position of principal are a three-year teachers' diploma and seven years teaching experience.

According to SASA 84 of 1998 (chapter 3, 16.2h), the principal is an ex-officio member of the school governing body, with the responsibility to account for the finances of the school and capacitate the SGB to utilise the funds in line with Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999 and must take all reasonable steps to prevent maladministration or mismanagement of the school funds.

These are the expectations from someone regardless of financial literacy background.

Sayce and Lavery (2013) are of the view that financial management is a problem for novice principals. It is against this background that novice principals are 'deemed' to be financially illiterate and unfit yet are being trusted by the Department of Basic Education to part-take in financial taking decisions. These financial responsibilities and decision-making powers are given even though formal financial literacy programmes are not offered. It, therefore, comes with no surprise when they are often found 'wanting' when they are required to account for or complete or furnish financial statements.

It must be noted that the severity and the impact of such challenges might slightly differ from one individual to another, given the fact that some principals may be appointed from post level 1, some from departmental head posts and others from deputy principalship. Also, the context of the school and country plays a huge role. But challenges that are faced by novice principals across the globe are generally similar with slight variation because of contextual factors (García-Garduño et al., 2010), and this view concurs with Spillane and Lee (2014). The variation is due to contextual factors such as selection and appointment criteria used in a country. For example,

countries like England, the United States and Scotland have formal principal preparation programmes. Principals are selected in China based on their experience and effectiveness as educators. In Turkey, a candidate for the position of principal must have a positive administrator assessment and pass a centralised exam on Turkish language, history, and law, in addition to an interview focusing on evaluation abilities, attitudes, culture, and educational perspectives. In Korea, they have a highly selective process of selecting principals, and there is a certification requirement (Cowie & Crawford, 2008). In Canada, aspirant principals or deputy principals are compelled to complete the Principal Qualification Programme (Sepuru, 2020). Nevertheless, this is not the case in South Africa and many African countries, even though the principalship is deemed to be complex and demands a high level of competence.

According to research by Sepuru & Mahloakwana (2020), the lack of formal training for principalship in South Africa and many other African nations is directly responsible for this precarious scenario. It is evident that there is a mismatch between the competencies of principalship and the minimum requirements to qualify for the post, particularly in South Africa. These challenges that emanate from the literature review suggest this distinctive mismatch.

2.6.2 Managing human resources

A study conducted by Sepuru & Mahloakwana (2020) indicates that among the challenges faced by novice principals is managing human resources. Sepuru & Mahloakwana (2020) posits that novice principals lack basic knowledge of human resource management. This is evidently in dealing with matters like teacher and learner discipline, presiding over meetings, scheduling timetables and duty load allocation.

2.6.3 Administration (Managing curriculum)

Several studies have indicated that there are challenges related to school administration and foreseeable present and consequently affect teaching and learning (Pashiardis, Brauckmann & Kafa, 2018). This challenge emanates while principals are carrying out their duties and drastically affect the school's performance. The

administrative duty and responsibility of the school principal are outlined in PAM documents as follows:

- Assume full responsibility for coordinating and supervising all class-related activities across all subjects.
- Manage and co-ordinate the necessary and useful supplies and machinery.
- In addition to your regular duties as a teacher, you will also be expected to: Serve as secretary for the regular staff meeting and/or other non-teaching administrative tasks Staff welfare includes fire safety drills, first aid training, fee and other money collecting, and time management.

Management or administration of the curriculum activities has a direct impact on learner achievement. Learning is the central purpose of school, thus making management of such activity of great importance (Adam & Muthiah, 2020).

The quality of education, among other things, is determined by curriculum and the effectiveness of its implementation, and that is curriculum management. Principals are the curriculum leaders and managers in the school setting (Milondzo & Magongoa, 2018). The curriculum must then be understood intensively by all personnel, especially the principals of the schools (Lubis, 2015).

Managing the curriculum is defined by Kyahurwa (2013) as “the process by which school principals give meaning to the curriculum policy and see to it that the pedagogical characteristics of curriculum design are widely adopted and actively promoted in classrooms.”. Curriculum management involves sets of activities regarding teaching and learning and administrative actions that assist in achieving better learning (Kyahurwa, 2013). Managing these sets of activities requires a certain level of competency.

The study by Sepuru & Mahloakwana (2020) demonstrates that inexperienced principals feel themselves inadequate to lead and handle challenges relating to the school curriculum. According to this study, this emerges as a result of selection criteria for the appointment of principals in South Africa. Sepuru & Mahloakwana (2020) argues that the appointment of the principals enables teachers to be appointed as principals from all sorts of schools and phases without regard of their training speciality

and experience. In the practical sense, a person who has a Foundation Phase qualification may find herself or himself being a principal in a secondary school. Managing curriculum in a different band requires the application of an extensive understanding of policies and knowledge Sepuru & Mahloakwana (2020). The assumption would be, indeed, managing curriculum, one that has not been exposed to in terms of training and experience, would bring challenges.

Recently, the challenges of managing the curriculum were exacerbated by the fact that there was the COVID-19 pandemic from 2019 to 2022. Those who were recently appointed could not be workshopped by COVID-19 restrictions.

2.6.4 Managing stakeholders

Sepuru & Mahloakwana (2020) asserts that education is a societal issue, thus, other novice principals perceived that they would receive help from the school community or stakeholders to serve the best interest of the learner at school. A study by Sepuru & Mahloakwana (2020) reveals that stakeholders do not fully play their role in supporting the management of the school.

Cited challenges are the: poor parents' attendance in meetings, unions confronting novice principals rather than supporting, and SGB members not supportive of governance.

2.6.5 Legislative framework

Karakose et al. (2014) and Sepuru's (2020) studies show that there is a lack of knowledge in novice principals' understanding and application of education laws and policies. From these studies, it was clear that some schools do not have policies that comply with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996b), the Basic Conditions of Employment Act as amended (Act No. 11 of 2002) (The Presidency, Republic of South Africa, 2002), The Employment Equity Act (Act No. 55 of 1998) (Department of Labour, Republic of South Africa, 1998), and the Public Finance Management Act (Act No. 1 of 1999). (Republic of South Africa, 1999). This is a challenge as the school must function day to day using educational laws and policies.

2.6.6 Challenges brought by COVID-19 in school management

Almost all countries around the globe experienced an unprecedented challenge in the education system due to COVID-19 regulations. Schools managed by novice principals were no exception to this crisis (Kavarayic & Kesim, 2021). In addition to the challenges of daily school operations, novice principals were also expected to navigate their schools through times of uncertainty. Harris (2020) and Pollock (2020) point out that COVID-19 has drastically changed leadership and management practices. That has added a burden of management responsibilities. Novices and even seasoned principals are now required to adapt and operate to the new norms, moreover, lead and manage in such norms.

2.7 MANAGERIAL FUNCTIONS OF A SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

According to the Performance Administrative Measures (PAM) document, the principal's primary responsibility is to ensure that the school is being managed satisfactorily and in accordance with all relevant laws, rules, and regulations, as well as all personnel administration measures that have been prescribed. To make sure that the students' education is being pushed in the right direction, in line with established guidelines.

According to SASA 84 of 1996, chapter 3, section 16a, a principal is responsible for the following six areas of responsibility. i) Overarching/Administrative; ii) Staffing; iii) Instruction; iv) Extracurricular and Co-Curricular Activities; v) Stakeholder Engagement; vi) Communication.

According to Sepuru & Mahloakwana (2020), a school principal's primary managerial responsibilities are strategic planning, organisational development, control, and leadership of educational systems. The following are some of the most important qualities of an effective school management, as outlined by Day and Sammons (2013):

- Making sure that management methods mirror those of the leaders.
- Reorganising the school's infrastructure to make it more efficient and productive.
- Formulating and implementing long-term strategies as a group.

- Maintaining a level of responsibility that is appropriate.
- The ability to really do things.
- Ensuring the organisation functions efficiently.
- Effective communication and working with others.
- Managing money efficiently and effectively.

2.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF NOVICE PRINCIPALS

Because of the high stakes involved and the extensive skill sets required of school principals, it's crucial to invest in training and growth opportunities for those in administrative roles (Oplatka, 2012). Principals need to be prepared to adapt to and capitalise on the environment around them, which is why education leadership training is essential. Principals in the modern day are responsible for more than just the administration of a school. They serve as accountable officers because of the many responsibilities placed on their shoulders that have an impact on the school's overall success (Fenwick & Pierce, 2002).

When it comes to determining whether or not a school is successful in terms of "learner attainment," the onus is usually placed on the principal.

According to Sepuru & Mahloakwana (2020) and Mitgang and Gill (2012), both classroom experience and educator certification do not provide educators with the necessary abilities for administrative roles in schools. Hence, maybe a principal can close the gap by participating in a professional development course. According to Mitgang (2012), novice principals need a professional development programme and a mentor who understands their context in the first year on the job. To some extent, the modest variation in difficulties faced by inexperienced principals can be accounted for through the provision of mentoring and professional development (Spillane and Lee, 2013).

Both Spillane and Lee (2013) and Northfield (2013) concur that unwelcomed challenges have been put on hold due to a lack of monitoring and professional

development for novice principals. To name a few: dealing with the previous principal's habits and legacy and handling staff members who are resistant.

According to research by Bush and Oduru (2006) and Bush and Heystek (2006), most South African school principals do not receive adequate training in school management. As a principal who is still actively teaching, I can say that this assertion seems to be supported by my own observations. The Department of Basic Education does not provide any kind of formal training for new principals to improve their managerial and leadership abilities.

Principals need to be adequately trained through professional development programmes to address the needs, problems, and education changes in the school (Mitgang, 2012). In South Africa, the minister of education recognised the need to train principals in management and leadership. (Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge & Ngcobo, 2013).

To further one's career, one might participate in a variety of formal and informal activities that contribute to one's professional growth, as defined by Mayer and Lloyd (2011). To counter this, Goss (2015) defines it as participating in formal practice through activities including training courses, conferences, workshops, and seminars. According to Waniganayake et al. (2008), staying current with the latest advances in one's field is possible through continuing one's professional growth. Goss (2015) argues that better teaching methods can result from principals' increased professional development. There is no denying the need of having a structured professional development plan. According to Goddard's (2004) research, principals cannot just grow on their own; they need to go through deliberate processes to nurture their potential. Training inexperienced principals in management, according to Mitgang and Gill (2012), could have a beneficial effect on the school, including the performance of the students. According to Sepuru & Mahloakwana (2020), developing new principals is crucial for keeping up with developments in the field of education. This is a formula for both individual stress and institutional failure if these programmes are not made available to first-year principals (Bush, 2006). According to Sepuru & Mahloakwana (2020), one of the most important aspects of training new principals is helping them

grasp the fundamentals of managing a school, including its curriculum, policies, human resources, finances, governance, conflicts, and meetings.

2.9 CONSEQUENCES FACED BY SCHOOLS AS RESULTS OF NOVICE PRINCIPALS' CHALLENGES

Research findings indicate that effective principals influence a variety of school outcomes, including but not limited to teachers' satisfaction, parents' perception of the school and ultimately, the school's academic performance (Mukherjee, 2013). Hermawati, Sugiyarti, and Handayani (2020) further allude that there is also a relationship between the success of the quality of education at schools and the quality of school principals. That is, if the principal of the school is of good quality, i.e. possesses adequate managerial skills, the correlation would the success of quality education is likely to happen. The most important constituency in the process of providing education is how the managerial process is executed by the principal (Hermawati et al., 2020). The position of the principal is complex and multifaceted, and the necessity of operative management is all-pervasive. The principal must possess managerial competence to impact the school's performance positively. The lack of such competency and inability to effectively execute the managerial duties impact the school's performance. Managerial skills are essential capabilities that determine the actualisation of educational goals.

2.10 DEPARTMENTAL INITIATIVES IN THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF NOVICE PRINCIPALS

The Department of Basic Education recognised that the leadership and management capacity of school principals are not adequate in enabling policies to impact most schools (DoE, October 2004) significantly. It introduced professional development initiatives for principals and aspiring principals in its policy framework for educational leadership and Management Development (DoE, October 2004). Department of Education introduced, advanced Certificate in Education: School Leadership, and Advance Diploma in Education: School Leadership and of recently, the Standards for Principalship was introduced (South Africa, 2016)

Department of Basic Education, in collaboration with NGOs and Universities, presented an Advance Certificate in Education: School Leadership (ACESL) for novice and experienced principals (Moorosi & Bush, 2015). The success of ECESL led to the development of an Advanced Diploma (ADE) as the qualification to raise the benchmark for principals in South Africa (Bush & Moorosi, 2005). These courses were not compulsory for principalship, and only selected principals enrolled. The research conducted by Bush (2011) and Msila (2015) claimed that enrolled principals improved their leadership and management practice.

The introduction of policy on the South African standard for principalship is of recent DoE initiatives to improve leadership and management practices of serving principals (novice and experienced) (South Africa, 2016). It pronounces the skills and qualities that are necessary for principals to perform their duties effectively. According to Moorsi and Bush (2005), the information provided on the standard will help in the recruitment, selection and appointment of principals. However, Nkuna (2020) noted some challenges with regard to the implementation of policy on the standard for the principalship. Nkuna (2020) cited a lack of training on the policy, a lack of support from DOE, a lack of understanding of the policy and a lack of commitment.

2.11 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the literature review underpinning the study was outlined. Literature in line with the study was reviewed by looking at various definitions of school management, managerial functions of the principals, challenges faced by novice principals in school management, and the selection and appointment criteria of principals. Ultimately, it highlighted the significance professional development of novice principals. The effects of COVID-19 were also looked at as the new challenge faced by novice principals in managing their schools.

The findings from the literature review suggested that the appointment of principals in South Africa relies mostly on teaching experience. Mampane (2015) recommends that the appointment criteria should be revised to include high academic qualifications and training in leadership and management. Novice principals are faced with multiple challenges in school management. There is a great need to develop programmes to

support them. The current existing professional development programmes seem not to address these challenges. The necessity to introduce an effective and wellstructured professional development programme for novice principals is very imperative and urgent if the Department of Education wants to improve the management of South African schools. In the next chapter, which is chapter 3, the research methodology which will guide the study will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter was a review of the available literature regarding the challenges experienced by novice principals in school management. In this chapter, the research approach, research design and methodology to be used are discussed in detail.

3.2 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Khatri (2020), the theoretical or philosophical foundation for the research work is referred to as a research paradigm, which is a comprehensive shared belief about the phenomenon by scholars around a particular subject. Kumatongo and Muzata (2021), in agreement with Perera (2018), defined it as a set of shared beliefs among the researchers on how the problem can be understood and addressed. It is how the researcher examines the methodological aspects of the research work, which is based on certain underlying principles. Perera (2020) further categorises the research paradigm into positivism, constructivism, post-positivism and pragmatism. Sepuru & Mahloakwana (2020) points out that each paradigm presents a different way of making the relation between philosophies, social experience and social reality. The research paradigm comprises four elements, namely: epistemology, ontology, methodology and axiology. However, the theoretical and philosophical assumptions that were used in this study are epistemology, ontology and methodology.

Kumatongo and Muzata (2021) are of the view that the philosophies are naturally utilised as the foundation of the research. The implication of the research paradigm in educational research is very important as the philosophical viewpoint of a scholar and the researcher's philosophical perspective from which research events are observed and examined. Khatri (2020) suggests that the research paradigm directs the researcher in how to structure, carry out and interpret the phenomena under study.

The philosophical assumption of this study was based on the literature review conducted in chapter two. That is predominantly noted challenges faced by novice principals in managing schools that are being assumed to be exacerbated by the recruitment and preparation processes for the principalship.

Khatri (2020) defined epistemology as a research paradigm that deals with how knowledge is accumulated from various sources. In this research, it was used to describe how the researcher came to know the assumptions about the experiences of novice principals in managing schools. This was done and also presented items of ontology, the philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality or existence (Khatri, 2020).

The study was guided by constructivism and interpretivism paradigms. Creswell (2018) describes constructivism as a paradigm rooted in the assumption that people pursue to comprehend the outside world through the development of the subjective meaning of their experiences. With this kind of paradigm, one could construct meaning by engaging with novice principals in their working environment to fully understand the realities of managing the schools. Again, interpretivism was used as the philosophical assumption that knowledge and meaning were acts of interpretation. It stood on the description of the phenomenon said or seen.

3.3 THE RESEARCH APPROACH

Botha, Kamper, and van Niekerk (2011:63) are of the view that if the researcher seeks to understand the meaning that people give to the event that they experience, the researcher must use the qualitative approach. According to Merriam (2009), this approach assisted me in the comprehension and interpretation of the meaning of social phenomena. The main objective of the study was to explore and understand the challenges of novice principals in managing the school. This approach enabled me to develop explanations for the challenges that novice principals experience in managing schools. The main reason why this kind of approach was opted for is that it outlines the purpose, procedures, and techniques suitable for this research topic. It enabled me to explicitly interpret the participants' meanings, experiences or perceptions, which is a challenge for novice principals in managing schools. Maree (2011:78) and Leedy and

Ormrod (2015) also postulate that the qualitative approach enables the researcher to study the occurrence or phenomenon in the real-world context, where the researcher can actively interact with the participants.

Maphoke (2017) opines that the advantage of qualitative research is that it provides a detailed description of participants' real experiences, feelings, and opinions and interpret the meaning of their action.

3.4 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Research objectives, methods, and how they will be implemented within real-world restrictions like time, money, and space make up the bulk of a study design. It's a strategy for bridging the gap between theoretical questions and practical experiments. The types of analysis required to achieve an objective are always determined by the research strategy. Data collection and analysis methodologies, as well as how the data will be used to answer the study objectives, are outlined.

A qualitative approach was used for this investigation. According to Mohajan (2018), qualitative research is a social action that seeks to understand people's social realities by concentrating on how they interpret and make meaning of their experiences. Creswell (2018) further alludes to it as an exploration process where the scholar gradually makes meaning of people's experiences through comparison, contrast, and categorisation. Interviews, observations, and user input were the primary means of data collection in this setup. As I'm interested in seeing how novice principals deal with tough problems, I used a qualitative methodology to learn more about their perspectives, motivations, and actions in the classroom. Case studies, narrative research, phenomenological research, grounded theory, ethnography, and action research are all examples of qualitative research designs. I have opted to do a case study because it will provide me the most in-depth understanding of the phenomenon.

3.5 CASE STUDY

A case study is an inquiry design in which the researcher conducts a detailed analysis of a case involving a process, animal, person, home, organisation, group, industry, culture, or nationality. This is congruent with (Sjøberg, Dybåm & Jørgensen, 2007; Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003), which describe it as an in-depth study of an individual, group, institution, or phenomena in a real-world environment, particularly when the phenomenon and context are similar. Here, depth refers to a comprehensive examination of the case. Woodside (2010) describes a case study as an investigation that focuses on characterising, comprehending, predicting, and/or managing the unit under investigation.

According to Gustafsson (2017:7), a case study requires the researcher to first determine the case and the sort of case to be implemented. So, I chose to take a sample of Nquthu's novice principals.

3.6 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

Sampling refers to the procedure used to select study participants. This is a qualitative research study, and purposive sampling was utilised to pick sampled novice principals in order to comprehend the issue and collect data pertinent to the research issues (Creswell, 2013). In purposive sampling, participants are chosen based on the knowledge they possess that will contribute to the research (Maree, 2007). This is consistent with the opinion of Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2008), who believe that this style of sampling helps researchers to have access to individuals with extensive knowledge about certain issues due to their work experience. Hence, the novice principals were selected from the human resource database of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, uMzinyathi District in Nqutu. This action was taken in accordance with the advertised position and the appointment given between 2019 and 2022. Principals from urban and rural high schools and elementary schools with one to three years of administrative experience were sampled to represent diversity and contextual factors. Just those who were newly appointed as principals were chosen. Gender was determined by the number of participants who met the requirements for purposive sampling. Qualitative research is further distinguished by its small sample

size, as data gathering for each participant is comprehensive and in-depth. As stated in the table below, the total number of participants in this study was 10.

Table 3.1 shows the number of participants and years of experience in principalship

Number of years in principalship	No. of participants	Gender
1 year	4	2 females 2 males
2 years	4	2 females 2 males
3 years	2	1 male 1 male

Source: Researcher's own compilation

3.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

There are two types of data collection that were used in this study, namely semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Using this multiple method of data collection increased the trustworthiness of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2004, p. 23). Analysing or verifying the documents also complements the data collected through interviews. However, the interviews were the main source of data collection as the focus was on novice principals' personal experiences in managing the school, and they had the potential to provide information that was relevant to the research questions.

3.7.1 Document Analysis

I reviewed and analysed some documents such as curriculum management tools, curriculum management schedule, curriculum management policy, year plan, finance minute book, and staff minute book to establish how the novice principal practically manages the schools.

3.7.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interview comprises standardised and open-type questions. Walliman (2011:99) and McMillan and Schumacher (2014:356) further allude that in semi-structured interviews, the wording and the arrangement of questions are predetermined, and questions are open-ended. The utilisation of open-ended questions enabled me to ask structured questions and provided the opportunity for me, the participants, to discuss concepts or issues in detail. In this study, the questions were predetermined to fully explore the challenges faced by novice principals in school management. Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012) opine that such kind of data collection should be conducted face- to face with the participants in their own setting. I, therefore, visited the novice principals in their schools to understand their perspectives, experiences, views and behaviour in principalships.

3.7.2.1 Preparation for interviews

Maphoke (2017:75) strongly opines that when a researcher prepares for interviews, the consent form must be given to the participants. I, as a researcher, distributed the consent form to the prospective participants, which clearly defined the intentions of the research, the confidentiality of their identity and that their participation was voluntary, and should they wish to withdraw from participation, they were free to do so. The participants were then informed of the date and time for interviews and would be reminded the day before.

3.7.2.2 COVID-19 protocols

I personally brought unused masks and sanitisers to the venue of the interview and ensured that social distancing was observed. All other COVID-19 regulations or restrictions at the time of the interview were taken into account.

3.7.2.3 Conducting interviews

Maphoke (2017:76) highly recommends that the interviews must be recorded with digital devices, but for such, permission must be obtained from the participant in advance. I used a voice recording device after permission had been obtained from the participants to capture the interview and digest the information at a later stage. An

interview schedule was prepared, and all the participants were going to be asked the same questions. Masuku (2011:187) suggests that the interview must be interactive with participants, a researcher must listen to the participant, ask questions, gain access to their account and circumstances, and analyse their use of language and construction of discourse on the researched topic. Under no circumstances did I feed the participants' answers or influence the responses of the participants.

3.7.2.4 Concluding the interview

I thanked the participants for their input in the study and the time sacrificed in taking part. The participants were then informed on how and when are their going to receive the findings of the study.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Taherdoost (2020), the goal of data analysis is to derive insight from raw data sets. Cohen et al. (2009:183) agree that it is the process of organising, accounting for, and providing explanations for data, therefore this makes sense. Here, I sorted all the information I gathered from the participants into categories according on commonalities, differences, and other characteristics. The data analysis method that was employed in this study is thematic analysis.

3.8.1 Data Analysis Process

Thematic analysis is a method for analysing qualitative data that is described by Kiger and Varpio (2020) as "scanning over a data collection to recognise, analyse, and report recurrent patterns.". Clark and Braun (2017) suggest that thematic analysis is an appropriate and effective method to utilise in analysing the data when the researcher seeks to comprehend sets of experiences, behaviour, and thoughts across the data set. This method of data analysis was chosen because it allowed me to provide concrete and major ideas in the literature describing the issue under investigation. By applying the results of a theme analysis, we were able to draw attention to the most salient meaning constellation patterns hidden within the data.

Clark et al. (2017) hypothesise that thematic analysis consists of six steps that must be taken in order to conduct this type of data analysis. Afterwards, I completed the following processes of thematic analysis: familiarising myself with the data, generating codes, looking for themes, evaluating themes, defining and labelling themes, and preparing a report of the findings. The data analysis follows the procedures depicted in the following diagram.

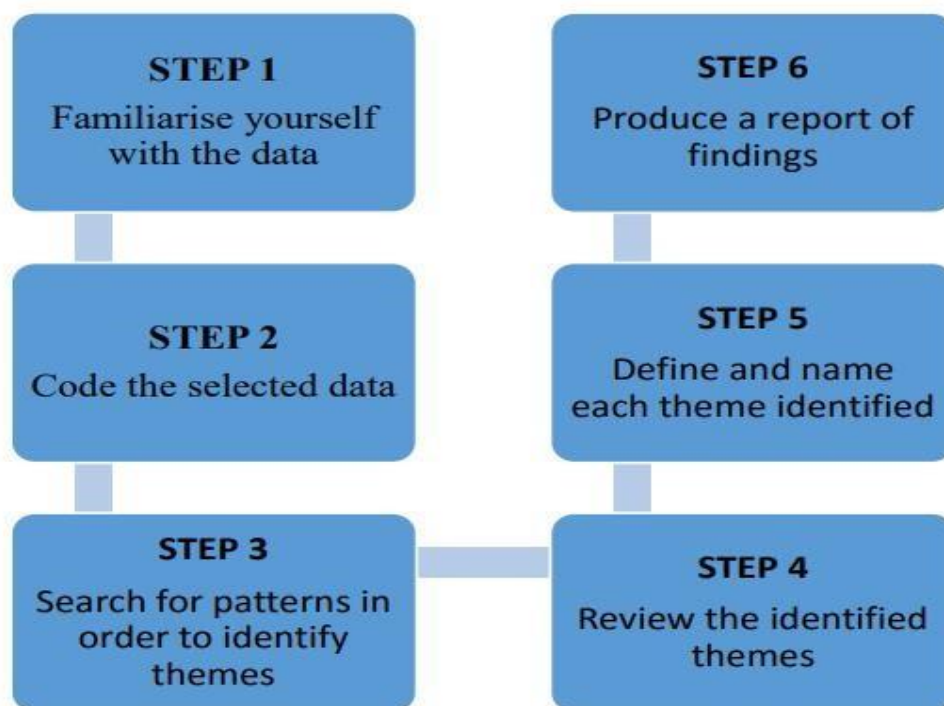


Figure 3.1 showing six steps of thematic analysis that will be followed in doing data analysis.

Source: Clarke: 2017

3.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE FINDINGS

Creswell (2008:267) describes the term trustworthiness as a term that describes the accuracy and credibility of data, and this definition is supported by (Wagner, et al. 2012), who is of the view that trustworthiness is related to the validity of data. Anney (2014) further alludes that the trustworthiness of the study is the methodological (research design, data analysis, data collection) accuracy and sufficiency of the research inquiry, which incorporates validity, reliability, credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability.

For credibility and trustworthiness, I am obliged to ascertain that the study is trustworthy and credible through my conduct in collecting the data and transcribing as it was without my personal interference. The study was based on objective findings, verified facts and was free from biasness. In so doing, the findings and the recommendations of the study were accepted as a body of knowledge that could be used by other scholars.

3.9.1 Credibility

According to Maree (2019), credibility can be defined as the researcher's ability to accurately convey a certain setting or incident as they have characterised it. According to Anney (2014), one can have faith in the veracity of the research findings of the study if they are examined closely enough. The level of credibility indicates whether or not the reported findings of the research represent an accurate interpretation of the primary data obtained from the sources. It is a way to find that the results do actually match reality (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). To ensure that the study meets this criterion of trustworthiness, the study employed three strategies, namely, triangulation, purposive sampling and member checks method,

3.9.1.1 Triangulation

The process of triangulation entails collecting data from a variety of sources in order to obtain evidence that is consistent (Anney, 2014). In this study, different sources were used to obtain information, document analysis and interviews were incorporated as sources to obtain corroborating evidence.

3.9.1.2 Member checks

According to Anney (2014), it is "the practice of continuously testing data and interpretation as it is collected from various sources." In other words, it is "continuous testing." The researcher's preconceived notions and assumptions about how the data should be interpreted and analysed were the focus of the member check that was performed. The researcher employed the usage of the audio-tape equipment, and

document records were consulted in order to make certain that the data that was interpreted was not skewed in any way.

3.9.2 Dependability

According to Durrheim and Wassenaar (2002:64), dependability is defined as the extent to which the reader is able to be convinced that the findings did really occur in the same way that the researcher says they did. According to Schwandt (2007), dependability can be achieved by the utilisation of an audit trail, a code-recode approach, stepwise replication, and peer inspection. In order for this study to meet the requirements of this component of trustworthiness, I carried out the necessary procedures to guarantee that the conclusions drawn from the study are reliable and accurate.

3.9.3 Transferability

According to Bitsch (2005), transferability is defined as the extent to which the findings of qualitative research can be utilised in another setting. In general, it relates to the extent to which the findings are applicable to other circumstances in which the same research has not been carried out. Due to the relatively small sample size of the qualitative study, it is hard for the findings and conclusions reached on this study to apply to any other populations or settings outside the Endumeni/Nquthu CMC.

3.9.4 Confirmability

According to the opinions of Anney (2014) and Shenton (2004), confirmability denotes that the data and interpretation of the findings have not been tampered with.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As Mouton (2012:238) is of the view that ethics concerns what is wrong and what is right in the conduct of research; therefore, in conducting this research, I ensured that what is made is morally and professionally acceptable. In as much as the interest of this study was to discover as much as possible but it was also conducted mindful of participants' rights.

The information gathered in this study using other people's knowledge and findings were acknowledged and referenced as per UNISA regulations.

In conducting this study, as it involves human interaction, the following were considered as outlined by Botha, Kamper and Van Niekerk (2011:59):

- Anonymity (keeping identity secret).
- Privacy (including the right to refuse to participate in your research).
- Confidentiality (keeping information confidential)
- Informed consent (being informed about the research aims, scope and dissemination, and having a choice in participating or not).

3.10.1 *Permission and Ethical Clearance*

Creswell (2014) is of the view that before the research is carried out, the researcher must obtain permission from the institution in which the research will take place, the participants and the ethics committee of the university. It is for this reason that before the research was embarked on, the ethical clearance certificate from the University of South Africa, permission from the Head of the Department of KwaZulu-Natal and the participants were received.

3.10.2 *Informed Consent Form*

This is a form used to inform the participant about the research work and its nature and purpose and ask for their permission to participate in the study. Before the research commenced, consent forms were given to each participant. Any potential harm or discomfort and benefit of taking part in the study were mentioned on this form.

3.10.3 Anonymity and Confidentiality

In light of this facet of the investigation, it can be deduced that the data was not utilised for any other reasons besides those of the investigation and that their confidentiality was maintained. The participants' identities were concealed through the use of codes in the research.

3.10.4 Protection from Harm

The participants in this study were not at risk of experiencing any negative consequences as a result of taking part in the investigation because the questions that were posed were not of a private or confidential nature.

3.10.5 Voluntary Participation

Pacho (2015:46) postulates that voluntary participation needs all participants to provide voluntary informed consent before embarking on the research. Participation in this study was voluntary; should it happen that the participants wished to withdraw at any moment, the participant was entitled to such, and that is stated on the informed consent form.

3.11 MY ROLE AS THE RESEARCHER

My role as a researcher was to gather the data while ensuring that I did adhere to research ethics. I obtained permission to conduct the study, formulated questions, organised interviews, and analysed the data. Furthermore, I was responsible for ensuring that there was no distortion of the data nor biasness from my side as a researcher.

3.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter explained which research paradigm, approach and design were used and the reason informing such choices. The population and sampling were also alluded to. Moreover, it highlighted data collection and analysis methods or procedures, clearly indicating ethical issues and accuracy in the interpretation of the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter dealt with the research methodology and design, instrumentation and data collection techniques, credibility, and trustworthiness of the study. The qualitative method was used to explore the challenges of novice principals in managing schools. The chapter explicitly explained each step used to gather the data and how it will be analysed.

This chapter presents bibliographic details of novice principals, interprets, and analyses the data collected in semi-structured interviews, field notes and management documents used by novice principals. It also identifies the themes from participants' responses to answer the main research question and sub-questions. During the stage of data collection, the novice principals were interviewed separately at their own schools after school hours. The data was collected at each school on the date agreed with each novice principal. The data of the participants with regards to the appointment was obtained from the Human Resources of uMzinyathi District, which has the schedules of appointments of school-based posts each year. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure that the data was accurate and not distorted when the analysis was done.

The participants were chosen from the pool appointed from the year 2019 to the year 2022; only novice principals were selected. Those who moved from being the principal lower post level and re-appointed as principals were not included, and those who moved from small schools to bigger schools were also not included.

4.2 BIBLIOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Table 4.1 biographic details of the participants

Participants'code	Qualification/s	Post level & No. of years in post level (prior principalship)	No. of years in principalship
A	SPTD, ACE, Studying towards Honours Education	PL1: 8 years	8 months
		DH:18 years	
B	BEd, Hons (theology)	PL1: 5 years	1 year 8 months
		DH:3 years	
C	BEd	PL 1:	8 months
		DH:10 years	
D	NPDE, ACE (maths)	PL1: 10 years	2 years
		DH: 9 years	
E	HDE, Theology	PL1: 4 years	1 years 8 months
		DH: 3 years	
		DP: 2 years	
F	SPTD	PL: 15 years	2 years
		DH: 10 years	
		DP:11 years	
G	B Ed	PL:4 years	1 years 8 months
		DH: 3 years	
H	NPDE, ACE	PL1: 7 years	2 years
		No management experience	
I	BSc in Maths, PGCE, Bed Hons	PL: 5 years	3 years
		DH: 5 years	
K	NPDE, ACE	PL1: 4 years	3 years
		DH: 4 years	

From the bibliographic details table of novice principals, two of them had eight months of experience in principalships, five of them had about two years, and three of them had three years in principalships. In terms of the management experience or managerial position occupied prior to being appointed as principal, one of them was appointed from post level one to the principalship, seven of them from a departmental head position and two from deputy principalship to principalship.

In terms of the highest teaching qualifications, six novice principals had teachers' diplomas and four of them coupled with an advanced certificate in education; three had bachelor's degrees, and one completed an honour's degree. All these novice principals manage public schools, and their schools belong to quintile 1. Three novice principals manage secondary schools, and seven novice principals manage primary schools. All the primary schools had no deputy principals, and one of the secondary schools had a deputy principal.

The interviews took place at the school premises; one could easily point out that the physical infrastructures were inadequate in most of these schools. One school had no administrative building at all and is multigrading, eight had small admin buildings but with relatively poor infrastructure, and one had relatively better physical infrastructure.

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) are of the view that data analysis is the process of organising the collected data and giving it meaning. It is done in terms of the participant's definition of the phenomenon, experience, and perspective (Sowell, 2001:146). Boeije (2010) describes it as a process of interpretation of data collected to give answers to the research questions guiding the study. The data was collected through the qualitative method, using semi-structured interviews, field notes and document verification as research tools. When the data was analysed, there were noticeable patterns in participants' responses in a semi-structured interview; hence themes were formulated.

4.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Braun and Clarke (2012:57) postulate that to give an accurate meaning to descriptive data, one must organise, compare and formulate themes across a set of data collected. Thus, the data analysis of this study entails a six-step framework of thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2012) for descriptive data.

Table 4.1: Thematic analysis steps

Step1: Becoming familiar with the data	Step 4: Review themes
Step 2: Generate initial codes	Step 5: Define themes
Step 3: Search for themes	Step 6: Write up

Step 1: Becoming familiar with the data

The data that was collected from the novice principals were transcribed in a form that was analytically convenient to the researcher, and this was in conjunction with listening to the audio recorder that was used during the interviews. The researcher has done this to get familiar with the set of collected data and to recognise the patterns, similarities and contradiction within the set of data.

Step 2: Generate codes

The data with related meanings and similarities were organised into the same category

Step 3: Search for themes

The categories of the data set were then given themes to create a comprehensive concept of all the data that was collected.

Step 4: Review themes'

The themes that were formulated were reviewed to ensure that the actual meaning of the participant regarding each aspect is not distorted nor lost in the process of the analysis.

Step 5: Define themes

The data of the similar codes were given names, that is, themes.

Step 6: Write up

The themes that transpired from the collected data set were then transcribed, minding the voice and the meaning of the responses from participants.

4.5 THEMES EMERGING FROM THE DATA

4.5.1. Orientation

Some novice principals did indicate that there was an orientation, and some indicated that there was no orientation at all. Those who assumed in 2022 attested that they are now eight months through the principalship, but there is nothing nor circular that has called them to an orientation workshop.

“I received the appointment letter from our CES stating the date of assumption. On the assumption day, I went to school, my CM introduced me to the staff and SGB of the school. That was all. From that moment, I was expected to execute my duties as the principal” Participant A.

“I thought soon after my appointment, we would be called for orientation, but very, unfortunately, we have been waiting, and I doubt there would be such this year....” Participant C.

It appears that there are no formal or structured programmes to orientate or induct novice principals, or perhaps there is inconsistency in the implementation of such programmes for novice principals in 2022.

However, those who were orientated indicated that it was a one-day workshop which was conducted by the teacher development sub-directorate and CES. Across all novice principals who attended the orientation workshop, it was revealed that those workshops were not meant specifically for novice principals but rather for all newly appointed SMTs.

“We did attend the orientation, but I don’t think it was meant specifically for us as novice principals. We were together with newly appointed DHs and deputy principals” Participant D.

These statements allude to the fact that the KZN DoE has no formal training or orientation programme that is specifically meant to orientate novice principals. If there is, that would mean KZN DoE has no mechanism to ensure that indeed orientation programmes are implemented. Whatever the case may be, the absence of formal novice principal’s orientation suggests that it may have a negative impact on how they manage their school.

“Most of the time, I use my prior- managerial experience to manage my school”
Principal F.

“I have my own personal mentor who advises me what to do to keep the school running” Principal G.

The absence of the orientation workshop led novice principals to have an alternative source of guidance. One may question the correctness of the information shared informally by the principals. But to them, evidently, that was not the concern, as long as there is someone shedding kind of light, it is better just being on one’s own.

4.5.2 Effectiveness of the orientation

Participants A and C were not offered the orientation into principalship; hence they were unable to comment on its effectiveness of it. However, the participants who were offered orientation by the majority reflected that it was a one-day session which seemed to be fruitful but inadequate considering the competencies required to manage the school effectively.

“I gained a lot, but I do believe there is a lot to be orientated to, and that could not be covered in just one day” Participant I.

It appeared that during the orientation, not only the novice principals were orientated in the same workshop but also DHs and deputy principals, which suggests that these orientations are not focused and specific for novice principals. That may hinder the fruitfulness of the orientation.

“We were grouped together with newly appointed DHs and DPs, the orientation was really not meant for us but rather an overview of what assuming a management position entails” Participant F.

PAM document chapter A, 4.2 and South African schools act 84 of 1996, chapter 2, 16a elaborate on the functions and the responsibilities of the principals. It is doubtful that all the facets of school management outlined in these mentioned documents could be fully covered and understood in a one-day session. According to Faylon’s theory core principles of management, a manager of the organisation must master this, i.e. organisation, controlling, planning, commanding and co-ordination the systems of the organisation or school. The novice principals ‘orientation seemed to fully expose them to these principles for them to manage their schools’.

4.5.3 Challenges faced by novice principals in schools

The novice principals mentioned a wide range of challenges they face in managing their schools. The extent to which they are challenged by different areas of management differs from one novice principal to another. Some of the challenges they

mentioned are contextual and far beyond their control. But some are minor challenges which could be mitigated by adequate training.

4.5.3.1 Limited resources

a) Limited human resources

Most novice principals complained about limited human resources. There was a great indication that teachers are limited due to PPN. Some schools operate without a deputy principal, departmental head, or administrative clerk.

“We have only four teachers in this primary school, without a clerk. When I am attending [the] principal’s meeting, learners are left alone without a teacher”
Participant H.

“I don’t have an admin clerk. I do all the administrative work by myself”
Participant K.

“One of my teachers retired, and DoE doesn’t appoint teachers at primary schools this year. We are forced to share the duty load of the retired teacher”
Participant F.

These are the typical statements pointing out that some challenges are beyond novice principals’ control, but still, there is a need for them to improvise to ensure that, at the end of the day, learners have learnt the curriculum of that grade. It is undebatable that human resource is one of the most valuable resources in education at the school level. Without an educator in class, there is no teaching and learning. Literally, the insufficiency of human resources, especially the educator, translates to the fact that some schools perform poorly because of this challenge.

b) Limited finances

It is an undeniable fact that finance is a limiting factor in almost all operations. From the responses across all sampled novice principals, there is an outcry of limited funds.

The novice principals perceive this as a challenge in managing their schools. Some sampled novice principals are heading section 21 schools with all functions (a, b, c, d) and some without function C. The angle from which this challenge is perceived differs. Novice principals managing schools without function C complained a lot more about the disadvantage of not being able to procure some goods by themselves

“The procurement system for school without function C literally has no value to us. We had R15 000.00 allocation but only to procure laptops with [a] market value of R6000” Participant K.

“Without function C, the school cannot purchase textbooks, educational material for the school by itself. We must order through the DoE, that’s where we are being ripped by the same DoE. We are getting educational equipment on double normal prize” Participant I.

This seems to be a challenge as with limited funds, an additional to this procurement system hinders the principal from getting “value for money” goods. These schools are situated in rural areas. According to participants, it is very difficult to raise funds. There are seemingly no potential sponsors, and the majority of parents are unemployed.

“The funds we receive from Department of Education is too little to meet our needs as a school. Again, it is very difficult to raise money from parent, this is a poverty-stricken community. Parents at times can not afford even to buy the school uniform” Participant E.

These statements suggest that the norms and standards become the only source of funds for the school, and in their opinion, it is not enough.

“With the little funds we get from norms and stands, we can not afford to buy decent and functional photocopier machines. At times, I use my money to fix things, the funds are really insufficient” Participant H.

One has deduced from such a statement that in cases where the school runs out of funds, there are problems with machines’ inability to buy enough LTSM. These challenges directly impact the teaching and learning and, ultimately, the performance of the school.

Also, the novice principals with function C complained about the funds not being enough compared to the needs of the school.

“The school has no admin building, library, doors are broken, and we find it hard to build or fix these things, not because we cannot manage the funds. This financial year, we were allocated R 50 000. That amount only allows us to pay for electricity bill, machine cartridges, photocopying paper and maintain the machine, that is all” Participant K.

4.5.3.2 Financial management

Management of finance is the responsibility of the school governing body; however, the principal, as the ex-officio member of the governing body, is by law an accounting officer (SA act, 1996). The responsibilities of an accounting officer are heavy and relatively require someone who understands finances very well. The composition of the SGB doesn’t necessarily require members to be experts in any specific subject or at least in finance. This, in some instances, leaves the SGB member with no personnel with financial literacy. Again, to be a principal in South African public schools needs no formal financial literacy education nor experience as a requirement, yet principals are given the responsibilities of the accounting officer.

All the sampled novice principals had no tertiary education in finances; some had little as high school level as a subject. Across all the participants, managing finance was noted as one of the major challenges.

“I had no financial background, and compiling financial statements is huge challenge. This aspect was touched on orientation workshop, but it was too scanty for a proper implementation” Participant E

“I was an member of SGB but never really been hands on finances, it was my former principal’s work only!....and now doing it by myself is very difficult” Participant F.

These statements from the participants again allude to the discrepancies between the responsibilities of the principals and the requirement stated in the PAM document. The principal is vested with the accounting officer’s responsibilities, yet from the onset, it is not the requirement that one must be financially literate to be a principal.

“We are a rural school; parents (SGB) are not educated. They completely depend on teacher component when it comes to financial decisions and reporting. It is unfortunate that though the teacher component is literate, but they are also challenged when it comes to finances” Participant C.

This is an indication that the school may be managed by the financially illiterate principal and also be governed by a financially illiterate governing body with financial decision-making powers.

4.5.3.3 Curriculum management

Managing the curriculum is one of the core functions of the principal. Ensuring teaching and learning of the stipulated curriculum cannot be over-emphasised for an effective functioning school. The observation from the responses indicated that there is a variation in the extent to which novice principals are challenged by this aspect. From the pool, some novice principals do have a deputy and departmental head, and some do not have even one departmental head.

“Managing the curriculum is one of my biggest issue in this position. I am the only SMT, and I must monitor all the teachers in all phases. This is too much for one man” Participant H.

This statement indicates that the challenge emanates from limited manpower, and indeed it is a challenge considering that the novice still must do the teaching.

Other challenges in managing the curriculum stem from the fact that the requirements of the principalship are too wide to attract specific candidates who are fit to manage the school of certain contextual factors.

“I majored in maths and Sciences, been teaching in FET, never been to primary school. Now that I am a primary school principal. I am expected to manage the foundation, intermediate and senior phase curriculum” Participant F.

The requirements of the principalship post are clearly outlined in the PAM document. A candidate must have at least seven years of teaching experience and m+ 3 qualification. The teaching experience is not specific. A candidate might have high school or primary school teaching experience and still qualifies for a principalship post at high school or primary school. Novice principals that were appointed from primary school to high school vastly indicated that they are curriculum management is a great challenge.

“The curriculum at high school is more demanding, I never taught in high school. It becomes very difficult to monitor and support teachers with curriculum-related matters” Participant D.

It is evident that this kind of mismatch in teaching experience becomes a challenge and impends quality education. In this kind of scenario, a teaching experience as a requirement plays little to no significant value in successfully executing the duties of the principal. It must also be noted that, even in big schools, a principal is also expected to teach at least 6% of the duty load. So, in a way, this kind of mismatch may lead not only to novice principals managing learning areas they are not qualified for but also to teaching them.

Some of the challenges emanate from the fact that the orientation workshop is either not offered or effective at all in the curriculum management aspect. Some sampled

novice principals were not offered curriculum management orientation at all, and some felt that it was too scant for effective implementation.

“We did attend the orientation workshop, and they dealt with many aspects in one day, a day was not enough to successfully understand issue of curriculum management. I am still not confident enough on this aspect” Participant C.

The issue of structured developmental programmes for principalship is seen as the most required and urgent to curb such a challenge.

4.5.3.4 Human relations

When novice principals assume their duties as principals of the school, the inclusion of human aspects is part of the package in their working environment. The relations between the employee themselves and between the employees and the manager, the principal, in this case, plays a huge role. The school as an organisation, with interrelated functions driven by a human being its performance, may be directly or indirectly affected by the relationship between the human beings as driving force.

Most of the novice principals did indicate that they experienced some resistance from their subordinates. The novice principals who experience this kind of challenge seem to also experience similar patterns of resistance from their subordinates. Participant F seemed to have identified the cause of the resistance.

“One of my challenges is that my deputy principal does not take instructions from me, and he also somehow influences others to do so.... Well, we both contended for the post, and I was fortunate” Participant G.

From this statement, one may deduce that this resistance may be brought by the fact that colleagues do contend for one post, and inevitably only one succeeds in the post. It also transpires that, at times, resistance takes part if the novice principal is not the preferred candidate by the staff member or school governing body.

“I heard that they wanted the previously acting principals, who is a DH to be the principal. He is still giving instructions....and some see him as their leader”
Participant H.

It is also noted from novice principals' perspective that some resistances are exacerbated by members affiliated with certain unions. It was notable that novice principals hesitate to initiate the disciplinary processes in cases of resistance from subordinates because of union support or intervention when the staff member is affiliated.

“Disciplining the culprits is a challenge, they call experienced union representatives in labour-related matters. It just complicates things even more, given the fact that I am new to the position, and I am not used in dealing with these matters” Participant A.

It seemed to be a genuine challenge to novice principals that resistance from colleagues is at times inevitable, but most seem to rise against such odds.

“Everywhere you go, whenever there are human beings, there are problems, a leader must find his ways to rise above all...” Participant B.

Among the novice principals who raised the concern of resistance from colleagues, it emerges from them that there is little external intervention that may mitigate this act. To them, a leader must find work on his or her personality and cultivate healthy human relation relations in the school.

“It takes time to be accepted, given the reality that we, ourselves as managers we have different personalities, and it is natural that people have their own preferred personalities and management style...But it is upon us to make it work!” Participant I.

In relation to Faylon's administrative theory as the theoretical framework that guides this study, if the subordinates of the novice principal fail to take direct instruction or exhibit acts of resistance, they forfeit one of the principles. That is co-ordination. The

theory assumes that for an organisation to be fully effective and prosperous, all the five principles of the theory must be in play.

4.4.4 How novice principals deal with challenges

a) Human resources

Irrespective of the challenges that novice principals encounter every day, the school must function, and teaching and learning must take place in the presence of these challenges. So, for learning and learning to continue to take place while there are challenges in different facets, novice principals find ways to make it happen.

“To make it work, I go to the community forums and plead that should it happen that there are students who seek for in-service training or practical component to complete their studies, must go to my school” Participant H.

“We literally seek for graduates with teaching qualifications to come and volunteer while still looking for employment” Participant F.

“We utilised the EEIs programme to at least address the issue of limited human resources, we even let them teach, which is outside the scope of their work” Participant D.

Improvising like these seems to mitigate the challenges faced in managing the functional school; however, making an improvise like the one mentioned by principal D, themselves create other challenges.

“We do improvise, but to find that those people who we take voluntary services from are not competent and do voluntary services for a short period of time” Participant B.

Noticeably across the majority of the participants, it transpired that dealing with the challenge of limited human resources (educators and admin clerks) is addressed by the principals themselves through encouraging voluntary services from the community.

However, the observation is that those voluntary services are offered for a short period of time. This means there is no stability. With regard to limited human resources, the DOE did not seem to help at all until the programme of EEIs.

b) Finance

Section 16 of the SASA (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) states that the principal must assist the governing body with the management of the school's funds. Evidently, it emerged from the participants that novice principals are also challenged in the aspect of managing the funds. Most of the participants accepted that it is difficult to assist the governing body in managing funds while they have either no financial education background or hands-on experience. However, it must be noted that Section 19 of SASA made a provision that the DOE must establish a programme to train governing bodies so they can successfully perform their functions. The participant showed that they understand that the capacitation of the governing body is the function of the principal and the BDE. But appeared that DOE conducted a once-off session.

"The SGB was trained once after they were elected since my assumption was there was no training. I sorely depend on my experienced neighbouring principal when we need to comply with financial reports" Participant A.

"When it is time for submissions of financial reports, and I take my file and go to my CM" Participant F.

"My auditor helps me a lot, SGB is illiterate, and the teacher component is not keen to seek advice when there is something we don't understand".

Management of finance is, by law, the responsibility of the governing body. The responses from the participants indicate that there is a lack of interest in the teacher component with regard to governing issues. So, because of this and illiteracy on the parent component, the management of finance becomes the responsibility of the principal only. They are the only ones who become concerned when management financial challenges arise.

Curriculum management

To ensure that teaching and learning are taking place and the prescribed curriculum is learnt, the principal must ensure that the curriculum is managed. It emerged that novice principals face numerous challenges in managing curriculum. However, in the midst of challenges, they improvise for the best interest of the learners.

“When I need to moderate the assessment of learners, I go to my neighbour school’s DH to do the moderation for me. Honestly, I do not like the content, and I do not like to rubber stamp” Participant E.

Some novice principals seek external help to ensure that what they can not comprehend in the implementation of the curriculum is, at the end of the day, implemented. But one noted that seeking external help is not a permanent solution, and literally, it is living on by begging. This is because even though the Department of Education is aware of contextual factors affecting such schools, evidently, from participants, there is no support or mechanism to ensure that such help from neighbouring schools is continuous and does not only rely on the relationship between the principal and neighbouring school personnel.

“The cluster co-ordinators of the learning areas concerned help me a lot when it comes to understanding of what to look to monitor and moderate the assessment” Participant F.

“Because of limited human resources, I have appointed the subject head to help me with the management of the curriculum. She is well experienced than I am” Participant A.

Even though from interviews, novice principals never mentioned that they were prepared to go and work at school with contextual factors that have numerous possibilities to hinder the management of the curriculum, somehow, they do improvise.

4.4.5 Transition to principalship

The PAM document indicates that for one to apply for a principalship, one must have at least seven years of teaching experience and undergraduate teaching qualification.

A typical example is participant H was appointed from post level 1 to principalship.

“When I looked at the requirements, I could see that I do qualify, I took my chances. Guess what I got promoted” Participant G.

Novice principals indicated there, at some point, managerial experience does count. The participant that never got managerial experience indicated that he wished that he got a DH or deputy principal post before the principalship

“I feel like I cheated the system, there is a huge gap between the demands of this post and my capabilities” Participant H.

Most novice principals who went through a managerial experience like a DH indicated that having a managerial experience of a DH has to a certain extent, helped them to execute their duties.

“When I was a DH for 10 years in my school, I use to manage curriculum, some duties of the principal are just the extension of what I used to do” Participant E.

“My former principal used to delegate me when I was a DH. There were moments when he was sick, I acted as a principal. So that experience on hand comes at play now that I am a principal fulltime” Participant I.

“If it wasn’t for the deputy principal post managerial experience, I doubt that I would be able to run this school. There is no school for principalship!” Participant F.

It became clear from novice principals’ point of view that managerial experience provides an advantage in managing the school. Participant F who went through DH and the deputy principal post, considers both positions more preparing for the

principalship post than any other strategies to help principals better manage their schools.

4.4.6 Support from DoE

It is the duty of an employer to provide orientation, training, and constant support to the employees for them to execute their duties effectively. The DoE has a similar duty to orientate, train and support novice principals. Most novice principals view the DoE pitching below what is expected.

“When I got appointed, I expected the DoE to respond quickly when I report a challenge...but unfortunately, that is not the case” Participant H.

“When I call to report a problem, they say I must write a letter. I have written too many letters regarding the issue of insufficient classes. They do not even respond” Participant K.

It emerged that the DoE in uMzinyathi District has no mechanism to deal with the challenges that are being reported by novice principals.

“When I report a challenge or request support, one person will tell me to go Mr X, and Mr X will tell me to go to Mr Y. being new, you end up going back with your problem unsolved” Participant B.

It also transpired from novice principals that union affiliation and being known as active in a certain union come into play when one needs support.

“Being connected will always be there. We experience similar contextually factors, and we are more needy, but those who are politically connected, and very active members of the union got mobile classes...” Participant I.

This indicates that, at times, novice principals are disadvantaged or advantaged to receive support because of their political orientation. From a novice principal's perspective, those who pay no interest in unions or are politically affiliated are likely

not to receive support. However, few novice principals indicated that they do, at times, receive support.

“Whenever I need support, I just call my CM. He is very supportive and approachable. But also limited to things that he can support me with, like infrastructures, that is beyond his capabilities” Participant K.

4.6 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is evident that novice principals face numerous challenges in managing their schools. Some of these challenges are contextual, and some are common in various facets of management among all novice principals. The principalship is multifaceted and the highest position at the school level, with heavy responsibilities. Some challenges are inevitable and thus need someone competent and highly skilled. The study revealed that there is a discrepancy between the competencies and duties of the principalship and the requirements of principalship stated on the PAM document. The study also revealed that the orientation or training for novice principals is either not done at all or very ineffective in matching the competencies of the principalship.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study was to explore the challenges of novice principals in managing schools in Nquthu Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal. The study was conducted in Nquthu Circuit under uMzinyathi District, KwaZulu-Natal. Ten novice principals who were appointed from 2019 to 2022 managing primary and secondary schools were sampled. The study utilised the qualitative research method and semi-structured interviews to acquire data from the participants guided by the main research question and sub-research questions. The acquired data from the sampled novice principals were analysed using thematic analysis.

The rationale for conducting the study was to:

- To determine how novice principals develop their leadership and management skills.
- To determine how novice principals deal with management challenges in their professional roles and responsibilities.
- To determine the consequences faced by the schools as a result of challenges faced by novice principals.
- To determine how the orientation of novice principals is carried out.
- To establish the role to be played by the Department of Education in mitigating challenges faced by novice principals in school management.

This chapter intends to summarise the entire study projects, the finding about the challenges of novice principals in managing schools, and provide recommendations. In this study, novice principals were found to be faced with numerous challenges. The extent to which these challenges affect their effectiveness in managing schools differs from one principal to another. It was established that there exists a gap between the required competencies of principalship and the minimum requirements stipulated in the PAM document. It was also established from the findings that the orientation workshops intended to capacitate novice principals are not consistently offered. It was

found that novice principals are unable to utilise all the five principles of Henry Foyol's theory of management to manage the schools effectively.

5.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Background and rationale of the study, problem statement, research questions, objectives, and concept definition were discussed in Chapter 1. The procedures used to assure credibility and trustworthiness were briefly described. The study's shortcomings and restrictions were also discussed.

In Chapter 2, the literature on the issues novice principals have in managing schools was given. In addition, management activities, including the selection, appointment, and preparation of principals, received consideration. In addition, it emphasised the significance of novice principals' professional development and DoE activities to develop novice principals.

The chapter 3 addressed the study's research design and methodology, data gathering processes, data analysis, reliability, and ethical considerations.

The chapter 4 discussed the analysis and interpretation of data based on developing themes supported by direct citations of novice principals' experience and perception in managing schools.

This chapter provides a synopsis of each chapter of the study, research findings, and recommendations based on the conclusion derived from the research.

5.3 SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS

The main aim of the study was to explore the challenges that Nquthu Circuit novice principals face in managing their schools. It, therefore, becomes of paramount importance for the study to address the research question posed at the beginning of the study. The findings are presented in the following sub-sections:

5.3.1 Main research question

• What are the challenges that Nquthu Circuit novice principals face in managing the schools?

The findings from the participants indicate that there are several challenges faced by novice principals in managing their schools. Some of the challenges are directly linked with the principal's job description stipulated in the PAM document and the functions and responsibilities of the principal in section 16(1) of Act 84 of 1996. In the main, the findings revealed that participants are challenged in these facets, namely limited resources, human relations, Financial and curriculum management, and transition to principalship.

a) Limited resources

The participants whined that the resources are extremely limited; this refers to human and physical resources and finances. It is palpable that limited resources limit the overall performance of the organisation. Novice principals indicated that there is a shortage of educators and support staff. On that note, more burden is on the principal and teachers to make sure that learners do obtain the learning outcomes. The study revealed that some schools operate with as few as four teachers, including the principal, to teach from grade 1 to grade 7. In such circumstances, educators are expected to teach more than one grade in one class. Undoubtedly under such a setting, novice principals find themselves unable to cope with their management responsibilities.

Schools, like any other organisation, need sufficient funds to function. Public South African schools are funded by DoE and are at liberty to request donations from the private sector, business individuals and parents. Novice principals revealed that the funds provided by DoE are not sufficient to keep the school functioning. It was noted that with the amount received, novice principals could not buy photocopier machines, sufficient LTSM and maintain infrastructure. Their rural schools are unable to raise funds from parents or the private sector. The school resides within poverty-stricken

communities. Novice principals managing schools under section 20 without function C claim that the situation is aggravated by the DoE procurement system. The school, without function C, do not physically obtain money for LTSM but makes LTSM orders with their allocated amount through DoE. According to novice principals, receiving the order through this system almost doubled the price at normal stores.

b) Human relations

The school, like any other organisation, involves human interaction. The findings of the study indicate that participants noted human relations as one of the challenges in managing the school. According to the participants, bad human relation with either one member of the staff member, educator or SGB has the potential to affect their ability to manage the school. The study revealed that this challenge arises in many forms. Most participants recognised that there was some form of resistance from their colleagues. One participant acknowledged that a colleague, SGB member or staff member might display a form of resistance or disrespect merely because one may have his or her personal interest in the post.

In addition to challenges related to human relations, according to participants is the interference of union representatives whenever there is some sort of misunderstanding or issue of discipline. Novice principals expressed the fear of taking disciplinary action against educators who frequently fail to carry out their duties because of a union representative. The participants in the majority have the perception that union representatives see them as employers and enemies to fight whenever the case of human relations surfaces.

c) Financial management

From the participants, it was evident that most novice principals do not have formal qualifications in finance. Some do not even possess experience or participated in financial making-decision committees while they were in lower-level posts. The participants indicated that because of such inadequate experience and lack of knowledge, there are implications related to that. Financial making decisions, a compilation of quarterly reports, and making sound budgets are among the notable

consequences. The inability to comprehend and execute the above-mentioned aspect has direct and indirect potential to expose novice principals to mismanagement of funds. The mismanagement of public funds is a punishable offence in terms of the Public Finance Management Act No.1 of 1999.

d) Curriculum management

The study revealed that novice principals are challenged when it comes to curriculum management. The findings show that the principalship requirements do not specify the curriculum need of the school. As a result, educators teaching at primary schools are eligible to apply for high school principalship. Also, high school educators are eligible to apply for principalship at primary school. This is completely insensitive to the curriculum needs of the school, especially to schools without DHs. The curriculum, learning area content and its management are grossly overlooked in this context. Evidently, some challenges emanate from these mismatches.

Again, inexperience also contributes to the challenge of curriculum management in the sense that there are novice principals who assume principalship without prior occupying a managerial position. The findings revealed that those who occupied DH or deputy principalship posts experienced fewer challenges related to curriculum management.

e) Transition to principalship

The findings of the study revealed that all the participants assumed the principalships without training. According to participants, they received a letter from CES and were introduced to educators, staff members and the SGB of the school appointed. The introductions were described as brief and not much related to the responsibilities of the post. The handover documents were signed, and office keys were given. It was discovered that from that day of introduction, novice principals were expected to execute their duties the right way on the day of assumption. Later on, some novice principals and newly appointed SMT received a circular for a one-day orientation workshop

This kind of transition is very abrupt and brief for someone occupying a position of such a high calibre; more is expected to be done for a smoother transition. One would expect that before physically assuming duties, novice principals would be offered intensive training. Taking into consideration that some are without managerial experience.

5.3.2 RQ1: How do novice principals develop their leadership and management skills?

The findings revealed that novice principals are likely to acquire their leadership and management skills in five ways. Once they acquire it, they bring delegated post-level 1 teachers to do minor managerial duties. Second, they acquire these skills if they occupy managerial positions. Thirdly through enrolling in managerial courses. Fourthly through attending the workshops, and fifth, through networking.

a) Delegation

The sampled novice principals' responses showed that being delegated at the early stage of their carrier, to a certain extent, contributed to their managerial skills. Things are as simple as drafting the seating plan for assessment and ensuring that learners do follow the set seating plan. These seem to be the most practical ways in which the teachers aspiring to be principals acquire managerial skills. Novice principals who were delegated for managerial duties prior to being principals acknowledged that delegation was informal but mostly contributed to their effectiveness in managing their schools. However, there are chances that not all aspiring teachers will necessarily have a chance to be delegated duties relevant to a principalship. In that case, an alternative to acquiring leadership and managerial skills is still relevant.

b) Prior managerial experience

Most of the sample novice principals occupied managerial positions prior to principalships. One was appointed from level 1 to principalship. In accordance with PAM, such a transition is permissible. The findings show that novice principals with prior managerial experience seem to be more capable of dealing with challenges and executing their duties compared to one without managerial experience. It was therefore

noted that prior managerial experience to principalship has advantages in managing schools.

c) Enrollment

Novice principals enrolled on leadership and management courses acknowledged that further enrolling on such courses positively contributed towards their effectiveness in managing the school. He further alluded that the content learnt is timeously integrated with the reality of management in the school.

d) Workshops

The participants acknowledged that going to workshops also assists in enhancing their managerial skills and how to execute their duties. However, it was discovered that these workshops are scanty and not regularly conducted.

e) Networking

The study revealed that there are informal groups made by novice principals usually in the same geographic area (neighbouring schools) or experiencing the same contextual factors, e.g. multigrading schools. In these informal settings, there are experienced and novice principals. That is where at the time, knowledge and skills are shared.

5.3.3 RQ2: How do novice principals deal with management challenges in performing their professional roles and responsibilities?

The study revealed that most novice principals hold a strong perception that it is their responsibility to ensure that teaching and learning take place even though the principalship is multi-faced with challenges. The participants devise numerous strategies to counteract challenges. One of the strategies they use to cope with limited human resources and little finance is inviting members of the community to offer voluntary services. One novice principal goes as far as inviting students who are studying toward teaching qualification to do practicals at his school. It was also

discovered that participants utilise unemployed post-matric pupils through voluntary programmes to help with admin work.

Some novice principals also acknowledge that they do get assistance from DoE, especially with things that have no financial implications. One novice principal acknowledged that his CES is, most of the time, available for advisory assistance.

5.3.4 RQ3: How do novice principals get orientated into their new roles as school managers?

It is the responsibility of the employer to train the employee for the effective execution of the set duties. The DoE has the same duty to provide induction or training for assuming principals. However, that was not the case for all the participants. The research findings showed that not all the principals who assumed the principalship position were trained or inducted. According to the findings, it was an introduction to SGB and staff members. Most did not attend the orientation. For those who attended, it was a one-day workshop and not specifically intended for novice principals but rather for new SMT.

5.3.5 RQ4: What are the consequences faced by the schools as a result of the challenges faced by novice principals?

The study revealed that novice principals face challenges in managing their schools. The main challenges that were evidently common were: limited resources, human relations, financial management, and curriculum management. Challenges of novice principals in managing schools may pose, threatening consequences to school functionality. Depending on the aspect of the challenge a novice principal faces, one challenge may lead to another. This is because the school's functionality and effectiveness are integral to many aspects. A typical example, a school with limited infrastructure may experience overcrowding, inadequate classes, library and laboratory. Because of such circumstances, learners do not have access to quality education, and as a result, one might expect poor-performance in learners. As a result

of poor performance, parents may decide to move their children to other schools. Eventually, the school may be forced to multi-grade.

5.3.6 RQ5: How does the Department of Education support novice principals in managing schools?

The study reveals that although novice principals are faced with numerous challenges, there are initiatives that the DoE has taken to assist them in better executing their responsibilities

- **Bursaries.**

Currently, there are bursaries and programmes that are offered by the DoE for principals to enrol on leadership and management course. One of the participants is a part-taking in the programme and holder of the bursary.

- **Workshops**

Although the expectation was that the DoE should offer training or workshop prior to the assumption of duty for principalship, it is noted that there are workshops that are conducted. These kinds of workshops may not necessarily be specific for novice principals but arguably add to the knowledge and positively contribute to leadership and management.

- **EEIs programme**

The DoE has, in the past two consecutive years, provided the teachers and general school assistants through the PYEI. This has been applauded by most principals, especially those who manage multigrading and small schools. It assisted in lessening most of the administrative work.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Formal induction and training programme**

Currently, there is no formal training for principalships. Principals are appointed based on teaching experience and minimum teaching qualification. However, the principalship is a multi-dimensional, highest managerial position at the school level. The minimum requirements for principalship are too low to attract only highly skilled individuals. The research findings indicate novice principals are multi-faced with numerous challenges upon the assumption of this position. This is because there exists a gap between the prospective principals and the duties and responsibilities attached to the position.

The study, then, recommends that principals are formally trained in school leadership and management before they assume their duties. This study revealed that although there is a one-day induction workshop, it is not consistent every year and not sufficient to help novice principals manage their schools. The training programme for novice principals should be formally structured and compulsory, and its content should be informed by the literature.

- **Requirement for principalship**

PAM document stipulates that the minimum requirement for principalship is seven years of teaching experience and a three-year teaching qualification. The study findings revealed that these requirements are not sufficient to secure or attract a pool of highly proficient prospective principals. Educators without prior managerial position experience nor leadership and management, upon application and interview, find themselves managing schools. Then through the trial-and-error method, they try to grip managerial skills in a real-life situation. The study revealed that some of the challenges faced by novice principals arise as the result of the standard set for recruitment of principalship. It does not create a pool of highly qualified, experienced perspective and competent candidates.

It is therefore recommended that the managerial position experience (departmental head) or leadership and management qualification are set as the minimum requirement of principalship. Setting the above-mentioned minimum requirements for principalship has the potential to create a pool of competent, experienced and highly qualified prospective principals.

- **Mentoring programme**

It transpired from the study that there are mentoring programmes for novice principals. Some novice principals find themselves mentors on their own to help them better adapt and execute their duties as principals of the school. Apparently, to a certain extent, it is indicated that this is helpful. The recommendation is that the DoE should take the initiative to run mentoring programmes for novice principals, in which every novice principal will have a seasoned professional mentor. The mentor and mentee will meet regularly and discuss managerial and leadership matters. There are professional learning communities (PLCs) in some circuits at Nqutu, but they are not formally structured and without structured, scheduled sessions. In that manner, they are inefficient and ineffective.

- **Support from DoE**

The study reveals that novice principals are not adequately supported by DoE. ELRC, Collective Agreement No. 4 of 2017 (RSA, 2017) states that the circuit manager must support the principals. It is on this note that it is recommended that the district officials must ensure that the circuit managers, indeed, are supporting novice principals as their immediate supervisors. Novice principals outcried numerous requests forwarded to their circuit managers, but there were no tangible responses. It is also recommended that the physical planning section on the district level prioritise the building of infrastructure on the basis of the needy, i.e. classes, libraries, and administrative buildings. This is one of the challenges that novice principals are unable to succeed in tackling it.

5.5 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This was a qualitative study, and the number of participants was limited to 10, because of this small sample size, results may not be generalised. Therefore the findings of the study apply to the Nquthu Circuit in uMzinyathi and are valid for novice principals that were selected. In addition, of 10 novice principals selected, only nine availed themselves throughout the study. That was the limitation of the study in the field.

5.6 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The study explored the challenges faced by novice principals in managing their schools. The study can help the DoE to reformulate the policies with regard to minimum requirements for principalships. In addition, it will assist in formulating effective training programmes to counteract the challenges experienced by novice principals in managing their schools. It will also assist the aspirant principals in preparing themselves for principalships better.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

The study revealed that novice principals are really challenged in managing their schools, which directly or indirectly impacts the overall performance of the school. In mitigating and counteracting these challenges, novice principals must be extensively trained for the post. Current programmes for the training of novice principals are seemingly not effective. Extensive studies must be made in looking for effective training programmes and methods for principalships. It is recommended that research is made on policies for the recruitment and appointment of principals in South Africa.

5.8 CONCLUSION

The main aim of the study was to explore the challenges of novice principals in managing their schools at Nquthu Circuit in the uMzinyathi District. The findings answered the main research question and sub-questions. The findings confirmed that there are numerous challenges faced by novice principals in managing their schools. It transpired that the DoE has no mechanism in place to prepare novice principals to effectively manage their schools since there is no formal training for principalship. Unprepared, upon the assumption of duty, novice principals find these challenges

overwhelming. The study recommends that the DoE set the minimum requirement for principalship higher to target the highest proficient, qualified and experienced candidates and implement a focused novice principal training programme.

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APPENDIX A: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPALS

1. Whilst you have been appointed, have been you inducted or orientated into a new role as a principal? Provide an explanation for who and the way you have been orientated.
2. Did the orientation met your expectation and useful in executing your duties as a principal?
3. How often does the departmental provides leadership and management supports specific to novice principals?
4. How was the following aspects been treated in orientation or developmental workshops?
 - a) Curriculum management
 - b) Financial management
 - c) School governance
5. To what extent did attending the orientation or developmental workshops influenced you on how you execute your duties as a principal?
6. What are the challenges are you experiencing as a new principal?
7. How does the school suffer because of these challenges?
8. How are you dealing or coping with these challenges?
9. How are/were supported as school principal?
10. What is your opinion about providing training and support to novice principals on school management?

APPENDIX B: BIBLIOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Bibliographic details of the participant

1. Year appointed: _____
2. Highest teaching qualification: _____
3. Other qualifications: _____
4. Studying towards: _____
5. Total years of teaching experience: _____

Post level	Number of years in a position
Level 1(educator)	
Level 2 (departmental head)	
Level 3 (deputy principal)	
Level 4 (principal)	

Signature of novice principal: _____ Date: _____

Signature of a researcher: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C: DOCUMENT VERIFICATION TOOL

	MANAGEMENT TOOL/ POLICY DOCUMENTS	AVAILABILITY	
		YES	NO
1	Curriculum management tool/s		
2	Curriculum management schedule		
3	Curriculum management policy		
4	Year plan		
5	Finance policy		
6	Finance minutes book		
7	Staff meeting schedule		
8	Staff meeting minutes book		
9	Incident register book		
10	Assets management policy		
11	Constitution of the school		
12	Leave management policy		
13	Disciplinary policy		
14	Personnel Administrative Measures		

Signature of novice principal _____ Date _____

Signature of a researcher : _____ Date: _____



APPENDIX D: REQUEST TO CIRCUIT MANAGEMENT CENTRE

TEMPLATE FOR REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Request for permission to conduct research at Nqutu Circuit Management Centre. Title of my research: The challenges of novice principals in managing schools in Nqutu Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal.

Date: 10 Septemeber2022

Mr P Sadaw

Chief Circuit Manager

Nqutu CMC

034 271 4240

Dion.Sadaw@kzndoe.gov.za

Dear Sadaw

I, Mr L.C. Msele am doing research under supervision of Prof. IR Lumadi, a Senior Lecturer in the Department, College of Education towards a Med degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: **The challenges of novice principals in managing schools in Nqutu Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal.**

The aim of the study is to investigate the challenges faced by novice principal in school management. Your CMC has been selected because it has schools that are headed by novice principals. The study will entail interviews with sampled novice principals.

The benefits of this study are:

- 🚀 This study can help policy makers in the DOE when deciding on the appointment of school principals.

- ✚ The study can provide insights that lead to better understanding of the experiences of novice principals in their early years of practice as leaders and managers of schools.
- ✚ Recommendations from this study may be used in developing programmes that can assist with preparing teachers and aspiring principals in the area of school leadership and management.
- ✚ The study can also be useful for district support officials and circuit managers to enhance their support programmes for novice principals.

Potential risks are not anticipated.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Feedback procedure will entail sharing a summary of the findings with you.

Yours sincerely



(signature of researcher)

Msele L.C

Manzolwandle principal



APPENDIX E: REQUEST TO CIRCUIT MANAGERS

TEMPLATE FOR REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Request for permission to conduct research at Hlajakazi circuit: Title of my research: **The challenges of novice principals in managing schools in Nqutu Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal.**

Date: 10 September 2022

Mrs J.N Ntombela

Circuit Manager

Hlajakazi circuit

0822167584

Joyce.ntombela@kzndoe.gov.za

Dear Mrs Ntombela

I, Mr L.C. Msele am doing research under supervision of Prof. IR Lumadi, a Senior Lecturer in the Department, College of Education towards a Med degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: Title of my research: **The challenges of novice principals in managing schools in Nqutu Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal.**

The aim of the study is to investigate the challenges faced by novice principal in school management. Your circuit has been selected because some of your schools are headed by novice principals. The study will entail interviews with sampled novice principals.

The benefits of this study are:

- ✚ This study can help policy makers in the DOE when deciding on the appointment of school principals.
- ✚ The study can provide insights that lead to better understanding of the experiences of novice principals in their early years of practice as leaders and managers of schools.
- ✚ Recommendations from this study may be used in developing programmes that can assist with preparing teachers and aspiring principals in the area of school leadership and management.
- ✚ The study can also be useful for district support officials and circuit managers to enhance their support programmes for novice principals.

Potential risks are not anticipated.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Feedback procedure will entail sharing a summary of the findings with you.

Yours sincerely



(signature of researcher)

Msele L.C

Manzolwandle principal

APPENDIX F



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2022/10/12

Ref: **2022/10/12/50993399/24/AM**

Name: Mr LC Msele

Student No.: 50993399

Dear Mr LC Msele

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2022/10/12 to 2025/10/12

Researcher(s): Name: Mr LC Msele
E-mail address: 50993399@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 0763647796

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof. RI Lumadi
E-mail address: lumadri@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 071 532 2761

Title of research:

The challenges of novice principals in managing schools in Nqutu Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal

Qualification: MEd Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2022/10/12 to 2025/10/12.

*The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2022/10/12 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



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Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2025/10/12**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2022/10/12/50993399/24/AM** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



Prof AT Motlhabane
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
motlhat@unisa.ac.za



Prof Mpine Makoe
ACTING EXECUTIVE DEAN
qakisme@unisa.ac.za

APPENDIX G



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Private Bag X9137, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200
Anton Lembede Building, 247 Burger Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3201
Tel: 033 392 1051

Email: buyi.ntuli@kzndoe.gov.za

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Ref.:2/4/8/41140

Mr LC Msele
PO Box 1593
NQUTU
3135

Dear Mr Msele

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: "The challenges of novice principals in managing schools in Nqutu Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal", in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 26 September 2022 to 31 August 2025.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

UMZINYATHI DISTRICT

Mr GN Ngcobo
Head of Department: Education
Date: 29 September 2022

APPENDIX H : PARTICIPANT'S INFORMATION SHEET

Date: 10 September 2022

Title: **The challenges of novice principals in managing schools in Nqutu Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal.**

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT

My name is Mr L.C. Msele. I am doing research under the supervision of Prof IR Lumadi, a senior lecturer in the Department, College of Education towards a M Ed degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: **The challenges of novice principals in managing schools in Nqutu Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal.**

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study is expected to collect important information that could help the school as follows:

- ✚ This study can help policy makers in the DOE when deciding on the appointment of school principals.
- ✚ The study can provide insights that lead to better understanding of the experiences of beginner principals in their early years of practice as leaders and managers of schools.
- ✚ Recommendations from this study may be used in developing programmes that can assist with preparing teachers and aspiring principals in the area of school leadership and management.
- ✚ The study can also be useful for district support officials and circuit managers to enhance their support programmes for beginner principals. In addition, policymakers in the department can use the recommendations to inform curriculum developers in universities to incorporate the training of beginner

principals in school leadership and management.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You are invited because you have been recently appointed as the principal of this school and you have never been a principal of any other school before. I obtained your contact details from Chief Circuit Manager. There will be 10 participants in this study.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

Describe the participant's actual role in the study.

The study involves audio, video taping and semi-structured interviews. The questions that will be asked are related to your experiences as novice principal in school management. The expected duration of participation and the time needed to complete specific research activities is two sessions (about an hour long) in two days.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

- ✚ The challenges that you are facing in different facets of management can be identified
- ✚ Programmes that are meant to support novice principals in school management can be enhanced and be specific in dealing with real challenges faced by new appointed principals.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

There is a very low risk of negative consequences as you participate in this study. Participants are non-vulnerable adults and there is no sensitive information involved.

The only inconvenience foreseeable on your part can be the sacrifice of your time since the study cannot take place during teaching or examination hours. However, if there are unforeseeable risks that may occur, the researcher will immediately contact the relevant authorities.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

You have the right to insist that your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research OR Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

A report of the study may be submitted for publication, journal articles, conference proceedings but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. Please keep in mind that it is sometimes impossible to make an absolute guarantee of confidentiality or anonymity, e.g. when focus groups are used as a data collection method.

Focus group is a method of collecting data, in a safe environment, from more than one individual at a time regarding a particular subject. While every effort will be made by the researcher to ensure that you will not be connected to the information that you share during the focus group, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will treat information confidentially. I shall, however, encourage all participants to do so. For this reason, I advise you not to disclose personally sensitive information in the focus group.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet in my permanent residence, Loskop at Mandabeni area, 3330, for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

There is no payment or any incentives for participating in this study since the study is done only at a local level.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the CEDU ERC, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Mr L.C. Msele on 0763647796 or email lc msele@gmail.com The findings are accessible from 01 January 2023. should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Mr L.C. Msele at 0763647796 or lc msele@gmail.com

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof. IR Lumadi at 012 429 2123 or lumadri@unisa.ac.za

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.



(signature of researcher)

Mr L.C. Msele

APPENDIX I: EDITING CERTIFICATE



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WE BELIEVE IN THE MAGIC OF BOOKS

18 May 2023

To whom it may concern,

This is to certify that I have edited Lungelo Cyprian Msele's dissertation titled **The challenges of novice principals in managing schools in Nquthu Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal**, ethically and to the best of my ability checking the grammar, spelling, punctuation, tense and sentence construction, as well as repetition/redundancy. I did the formatting, Table of Contents and corrected the page numbering.

I checked the references for spelling, punctuation, format and spacing, deleted duplicate entries, and indicated missing references in the list that were in-text.

The student had the ability and choice to accept or reject my suggestions and changes. Detecting plagiarism was not part of my scope and it was the student's responsibility to avoid plagiarism.

I wish him the best of luck.

Yours sincerely,

Bridget Lötzt



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