Professional and organisational socialisation during leadership succession of a school principal: a narrative inquiry using visual ethnography

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Leadership studies on principal succession show that new principals are required to address numerous challenges when adapting to a new school context. This paper, on a study that used a qualitative research design, reports on the professional and organisational socialisation of a new principal in a South African primary school during the first three years of the principal's appointment. Data were collected through a number of interviews and photographs and were presented in the form of a reflexive story. The principal's story illuminated the socialisation process and illustrated how he made sense of his role as a new principal of the school and the way in which he addressed the challenges in the school. The findings emphasised that socialisation in principal succession can be complex and varied, depending on factors such as the principal's personal characteristics and the school context.

Keywords: narrative inquiry; principal succession; professional and organisational socialisation

Introduction

Various leadership studies indicate how school principals play a key role in the quality of education in schools (Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2011; De Villiers & Pretorius, 2011; Drysdale, Goode & Gurr, 2009). It is only recently that these studies have started to focus on principal succession (Bartlett, 2011; Berrong, 2012; Martinez, 2007; Meyer, MacMillan & Northfield, 2009; Meyer & Macmillan, 2011). According to Bengston, Zepeda and Parylo (in press) principal succession is 'unavoidable' and the socialisation of new leaders 'inevitable'. For the purpose of this study principal succession can be defined as the replacement of a school principal by a new principal due to retirement, resignation or promotion that results in changes in organisations and in the people in these organisations (Glasspool, 2007).

A few studies report on principal succession in schools. Berry (2004) and Zepeda, Bengston and Parylo's studies (2012) for example, attempted to understand how school systems planned and managed principal succession. The study of Glasspool (2007) focused on the way in which professional and organisational socialisation influenced first-year principals in specific contexts. Martinez's study (2007) on principal succession focussed on the perceptions of secondary school principals regarding factors, procedures and strategies that could assist them with leadership transition. Meyer et al.'s study (2009) addressed the impact of principal succession on teachers

and their work. In a follow-up study Meyer and Macmillan (2011) found that various factors such as teacher morale, trust, loyalty and teacher efficacy had negative and positive implications on the performance of teachers before, during and after the new principal took over.

The consequences of principal succession affect many aspects of schools, such as the appointment and transfer of principals, the role players in the school and educational managers who draw up policies to enhance the positive impact of principals on schools (Hart, 1991). However, Meyer and Macmillan (2011) and Zepeda et al., (2012) indicate that very few studies on principal succession within the first few years after a principal's appointment have been undertaken. Moreover, the growing concern to sustain quality principalship in all schools where principals are replaced by new principals necessitates a study on principal succession in order to inform policy, school practice and future studies about strategies to plan for effective principal succession in schools (Garchinsky, 2008; Zepeda et al., 2012). This is also relevant in South African schools where the quality of education is of the utmost importance.

This article reports on a study on principal succession within a South African school in which a new principal replaced his predecessor who retired in 2009 after more than two decades in office. The school received the prestigious inviting school award from the International Alliance for Invitational Education during the predecessor's reign. It is an urban, Afrikaans primary school which is situated in a middle-class community in Gauteng. At the time of the study, approximately 10% of the learners were exempted from paying school fees and more applications for exemption were piling up. The school catered for Grade R to Grade 7 and offered approximately 70 extracurricular activities. The new principal was appointed at the beginning of 2010. The researcher was of the opinion that the influence of the new principal could have a great impact on the school considering the many years the previous principal was in office. The literature provides examples of "negative" influences of newly appointed principals, although "positive" impacts have not received enough attention (Oplatka, 2004:55). The study, which was part of other studies on principal succession, focused on the first three years after the new principal was appointed at the school. It built on the data collected during the principal's first year in office. The research question that emerged in the study was: *How did the principal perceive his professional and organisational socialisation within the first three years of his principalship at the school*?

Conceptual framework: Professional and organisational socialisation

Since principal succession is a process of development rather than a single experience the theories on professional and organisational socialisation provided a foundation for this study. Professional socialisation is regarded as the process whereby the incumbent becomes a member of a particular profession and who then develops "an identity within that profession" over some time (Parkay, Currie & Rhodes, 1992:45), while organi-

sational socialisation is viewed as the process whereby a person acquires the skills to fulfil a particular organisational role in a specific setting (Saks & Gruman, 2011).

Although the principal in the study was previously a high school principal and a member of the teaching profession, his experience of a primary school was "totally different" to him. As such using professional socialisation as a lens to study the principal's socialisation is appropriate. This study in particular drew on the seminal work of Parkay et al., (1992), who identified five stages of professional socialisation in which to comprehend principal succession (Parkay et al., 1992:54–59):

- *Stage 1: Survival.* During this stage principals experience "shock", frustration and professional inadequacy while their personal concerns and professional insecurity are high (Parkay et al., 1992:56).
- *Stage 2: Control*. The primary concern of principals during this stage is to set priorities and to get in control of the "overwhelming flow of new demands" (Parkay et al., 1992:57).
- *Stage 3: Stability*. In this period principals handle management tasks effectively and they attempt to develop a "sober" approach to enhance and facilitate significant changes in the school (Parkay et al., 1992:58).
- *Stage 4: Educational leadership*. During this stage a strong vision becomes essential and principals expect long-term achievements with change initiatives, with a particular focus on teaching and the curriculum.
- *Stage 5: Professional actualisation*. The focus is on attaining personal vision (that is, to create a school culture which is characterised by growth, empowerment and authenticity).

Parkay et al.'s study (1992:59-61) of professional socialisation is based on four assumptions: (1) Principals start their new principalship at different stages of professional development; (2) Principals move at a different pace through the stages of professional development; (3) No single factor influences principals' stages of professional development. Factors that may influence a principal's professional development include personal characteristics, contextual variables and the effectiveness of the new principal's predecessor; and (4) New principals may function at different stages simultaneously.

A second lens, organisational socialisation, that draws on the prominent work of Garborro (1987) was used to interpret the results of the study. Garborro (1987:20-21) identifies chronological stages of learning and action that new principals face in this socialisation phase.

(1) *Stage 1: Taking hold (first six months)*. Deep learning occurs during this period when the new principal uses orientation within the school context to sets priorities for developing the organisation.
(2) *Stage 2: Immersion (6–12 months)* occurs when deeper diagnosis and learning occur, although only few changes are made within the school. Hart (1991) views this phase as the period when principals must adapt to their new position at the

school and the new school culture.
(3) *Stage 3: Reshaping (12–21 months)* takes place when some major changes are
    usually implemented.
(4) *In stage 4: Consolidation (21–27 months)*. This is when previous changes are
    assessed so that corrective actions can be taken.
(5) *Stage 5: Refinement (27–36 months)* is a period when little additional learning
    occurs.
Considering the challenges new leaders are confronted with, this transitional process
becomes critical since the nature of socialisation has a meaningful impact on new-
comers to the organisation. Moreover, socialisation into a new leadership position is
centred on the social interactions of people and organisations (Bengston et al., in
press), which, according to Hart (1991) may be overwhelming.

Research Methodology
In this qualitative study a narrative inquiry was used to focus on the socialisation of
the new principal (Fouché & Schurink, 2011). It involved in-depth data collection
methods that explored principal succession in a "bounded system" (Creswell, 2007:74)
– a particular school over a period of time. These methods included a number of
narrative interviews with the principal (Fouché & Schurink, 2011), including obtaining
photo-elicitation data (Epstein, Stevens, McKeever & Baruchel, 2006; Ortega-Alcázar
& Dyck, 2011) and school documents. The first two narrative interviews were con-
ducted during the second half of the first year after the new principal was appointed
at the school. Another three narrative and two photo-elicitation interviews were con-
ducted during the principal's third year in office. The narrative interviews in particular
focused on the principal's experience of the socialisation process and included ques-
tions such as: "How did you experience your appointment as a primary school prin-
cipal?"; "How do you describe your leadership style?"; "What influence has the school
had on you personally and professionally?"; "What influence has your leadership had
on the staff and learners since your appointment in 2010?" and "What changes have
you made since your appointment?" To prepare for the photo-elicitation interviews the
principal was requested to take photographs of changes which were the direct effect
after he took office at the school and which best revealed his experience of the
socialisation process. According to Kobayashi, Fisher and Grapp (n.d.) photographs
are an important means of collecting and analysing qualitative data. They help in the
retrospection of lived experiences of participants and by combining photographs with
other forms of data collection ensures contextual validity through triangulation (Koba-
yashi et al., n.d.; Schulze, 2007). The photographs were developed by the researcher
and thereafter used during the photo-elicitation interviews to explore the principal's
views on his socialisation into the new role as principal. The principal was requested
to explain the changes revealed in the photographs and to explain his particular role
in these changes. Field notes were taken during the interviews and e-mails with the

principal elaborated on the stories of the principal. The study occurred within the natural setting of the principal, the primary school, and informed consent was obtained from him to participate in this study.

Narrative inquiry is an appropriate approach to professional development (Clandinin, Pusher & Orr, 2007; Gough, 2008), which includes principal socialisation. Through analysing stories, narratives provide an understanding of personal and professional educational experiences (Clandinin et al., 2007; Clandinin & Huber, in press; Johnson, 2009). The narrative inquiry included a visual approach and often relied on an image-based social inquiry (Clandinin & Huber, in press; Clandinin et al., 2007; Emmison, 2011) which was used to stimulate and study the principal's knowledge construction and meaning of socialisation of the new principal. This study is yet another response to that of Møller and Eggen's study (2005:335) which viewed leadership "practice" as a narrative which may be useful in understanding and exploring the complexity of school leadership practice, in particular in the case of the principal's socialisation into his leadership role.

The researcher adopted an interpretivist approach to gain an understanding of the principal's experiences (Nieuwenhuis, 2010). She used the photographs to stimulate conversation with the principal about his professional and organisational socialisation, of which six were purposefully selected for this article. The recorded interviews were transcribed and translated into English. An embedded analysis was used to identify the key themes in order to try to understand the principal's views on his socialisation into his new leadership role (Creswell, 2007). The researcher coded the participant's interviews from a storytelling perspective and this involved "big gulps of text" (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004:2) that were often supported by the photographs in this article. The trustworthiness of the collected data was attained by collecting multiple forms of data over a period of three years.

Findings
Background to the school and new principal
The principal's predecessor took office in 1982 and he retired at the end of 2009. The new principal was appointed in 2010. This new principal had been the principal of a nearby high school and his two sons had previously attended the school in the study. This implied that the principal had developed constructs of the previous principal and the school prior to his appointment (Kelly & Saunders, 2010). As valuable as these experiences were, they could not prepare him sufficiently for the post. Recalling his experience as high school principal, which also revealed his leadership approach, the principal explained: "I was … definitely a bit autocratic as far as the school work and academic work were concerned".

When the new principal had heard about his new appointment, he felt "very threatened". He had "no illusions about the fact that he had big shoes to fill … Mr X [the predecessor] is really a legend and he makes a person feel inferior … He was a formidable principal". As proof of his admiration for his predecessor, he showed the

researcher a photograph of the ceremony where his predecessor had received a "Laureate award" in 2011 and he himself put the jacket on his predecessor. During his first year at the school, the principal often had to remind staff that he was Mr Y and not Mr X. He had to "prove things to myself and yet also be myself". He nevertheless believed that it was relatively "easy" to take over the reins with so many processes in place. Already during his first year in office, he could see that teachers were "accepting" him as the new principal. He, however, realised that he had to adapt his leadership approach.

> I had to make a concerted effort not to walk in here and handle these guys in the same autocratic manner. These guys also come from a system where things were done differently. They worked with a principal who did things differently than what I do.

The personal and professional influence that the school had on the new principal during this first year in office was remarkable. He explained:

> As a person, I found myself … My relationship with my wife, children and Creator has improved. I have become softer where I was previously strict and task oriented … My own children were amazed when they saw the children hugging their father's knees (photograph 1).

The principal referred to an occasion in which a mother remarked that her son had also seen the change in him. According to the boy the principal had such a deep frown on his face on the first day at school, which scared him, but "the frown was now gone".

Photograph 1 A child hugging the principal

From the start the principal realised that to steer the school, he had to start with a new vision and mission of the school which were previously "too big and elaborate" and "to make it the best school". The finalised vision and mission "were almost totally

new". The vision and mission statements were framed with a background that portrayed the life and growth of the school. The vision (photograph 2 translated) reveals the ideal for the school: "The barefoot, fun, performance school with a Christian character that strives towards excellence and aims to develop each child in totality".

VISIE

Die kaalvoet-pret-prestasieskool
met 'n Christelike grondslag wat
streef na uitnemendheid en hulle
ten doel stel om elke kind in
totaliteit te ontwikkel

Photograph 2 The vision of the school

Although the principal was initially hesitant to bring about great changes, he carefully observed how the school functioned. During his first year he noticed that parents tended "to interfere" in areas of the school, which he acknowledge with "respect and piety" for his predecessor. As a result, he *inter alia* changed the rules regarding their behaviour on the sports field. He considered himself to be "very task oriented" and preferred to set measurable objectives. He explained: "I decided that parents should no longer be allowed onto the field. They should sit in the pavilion." This led to apprehension by staff and parents although he believed that these new rules since then worked "very well".

The principal acknowledged that he had to adapt his approach to teachers and "handle them with care" since they had "very, very thin skins" and took criticism personally. It bothered him that the school was a "bit laid back" in some areas and he "hated" it when the school was not successful in what it proclaimed to do. He tried to be a "nice guy", but he also wanted to "take a stand" and to "deliver good service". As such he considered himself to be "accessible" and preferred to involve people in decision making. However, he noted that he was a "bit of a 'control freak'" who often had to make unilateral decisions "to ensure that everything is done right".

Already in his first year, the principal realised that many learners had emotional

problems that influenced their performance. Due to budget constraints, one counsellor was appointed in his first year, while another counsellor was appointed in his second year. They also assisted parents with problems in the school. Apart from addressing the learners' emotional needs, the principal adapted the menu of the tuck shop. Healthy foods, on a weekly menu, were served and tables and chairs were fitted so that even parents could enjoy food and beverages (see photograph 3).

Photograph 3 Tables and chairs in the tuckshop

The operation practices that concerned the principal included the academic performance, the so-called "core business" of any school, the financial system and the road patrol system. His primary concern was the academic focus on which he placed a very high premium. It also explained why the new principal expected teachers to be qualified to teach their subjects, which were often not the case in the past. The principal first focused on monitoring some systems, which included checking examination and test papers of teachers. He instituted weekly tests and included a mid-year examination. Subject heads were responsible for monitoring teachers' work and everything was "double checked and revised". He explained:

> My predecessor, the wonderful man that he was, did not peer over people's shoulders … he trusted them … it was a crisis for me; we had to work very hard to combat this attitude about their academic work in and among the staff.

Previously, teachers had worked "very isolated" and each grade was on "an island". He instituted a system which addressed continuity and communication between grades and which, according to him, improved tremendously. He said:

> It was a huge leap to get the cooperation of the staff. But it has been sorted … it has made a huge difference. I am very proud of I t… although many teachers cried crocodile tears in my office.

The principal felt so strongly about his strategy that he considered it a case of "adapt or die". At the end of his first year, three teachers had resigned – which he experienced personally, although no teachers resigned during the next years which he considered to be positive.

The principal's "greatest challenge" was to decrease the number of learners in the Mathematics classes to 15 per class. Since the school did not budget for this in 2010, only Grade 7 learners benefited from it. The performance then raised to 75% and the smaller class system was extended to Grades 6 and 7, which worked "fantastic". He mentioned that the average for learners from this school who wrote the entrance examination at a nearby high school was above 80% compared to the grade average of 40%. The principal believed that the academic focus shifted "180 degrees" and the fact that the school was among the Super 12 as far as academics were concerned made him "very excited". He elaborated:

> You can walk around on the school ground any time. It is quiet and everyone works hard. The children have bought into the approach … It's a source of pride for them to work hard.

His strong academic focus had some consequences for the staff and learners: the learners were only allowed to participate in sports if they performed according to their intellectual ability, while the teachers could coach a team if their class performance was satisfactorily. Although this had caused initial apprehension, "it worked like a bomb".

As part of his focus on academic performance, the principal protected and supported teachers in executing their teaching responsibilities. He regarded it as his responsibility to "protect" hard-working teachers from the criticism of unfair parents. He gave parents the "bigger picture" when they voiced their complaints about teachers. The school also equipped teachers with resources (such as laptops, interactive white boards and data projectors) and provided appropriate workshops to accomplish their teaching tasks successfully.

Another operational change that occurred in the school was in respect of the financial control system. Already in his first year, the school succeeded in getting 97% of school fees – which they managed to maintain. He attributed it to the improved communication with parents. Moreover, to assist parents in supporting their children, the school placed homework on the school's website a week before it was due date.

A third operational change was that the reward system for learners had been expanded. He "inherited" the system, but regarded it as type of a "sausage machine". This system was extended to senior learners and he put his personal "touch" on it by spending much more time with learners bringing their books to his office. He also made "golden stickers" with his name on it which he affixed in their books and which

the learners "valued". This adapted system worked very well – he even gave "better sweets" than his predecessor – something that the learners "liked" (photograph 4). The previous reward system which he regarded as "snobbism" was also expanded to include more than the top 10 learners – approximately 175 out of 200 learners were in academic teams. Learners became "more dedicated to their academic work" and they "loved" the reward system.

Photograph 4 Assorted sweets for learners' rewards

Another system that the principal took over was the "remarkable" value system, which was based on the values of faith, hope, love, integrity and excellence. This system was described in some previous studies (Steyn, 2007; Steyn, 2010; Steyn, 2012a; Steyn, 2012b). He did not intend to change the values, but rather to enforce them. He explicitly inculcated values by focusing on a particular value for two months in the year. Each of these values, with appropriate symbols, was displayed in the hall (see for example Photograph 5). The school started with the value "love" (with a heart symbol). He explained: "We started this whole thing [love value] about the man who asked Jesus what the greatest commandment is: 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and the second, which is just as important, that you must love your neighbour'". On Valentine's Day, the learners brought so many gifts that the foyer was almost stacked to the roof which was "amazing".

Photograph 5 The value "love"

A few structural changes occurred during the new principal's years in office. He regarded the foyer as a "real old-fashioned school foyer": unfriendly and uninviting which he changed "drastically" by refurnishing it and making it "brand new". A fresh bowl of flowers became part of the welcoming message to visitors (see Photograph 6). The principal explained how also they "drastically" changed the five administration

Photograph 6 Fresh flowers in the foyer

offices, the financial office, the front office of the administrative staff and his secre-
tary's office. The school also built a double storey building, an administration block
(see Photograph 7) and converted the Kids Development Academy Hall into more
classrooms. Although the school had previously cherished the gardens, the principal
added more gardens to beautify the premises (see Photograph 7) and they planned to
build a new grade R "school" on the premises.

Photograph 7 The new garden on the school grounds

When reminiscing since his appointment at the school, the principal stated that he
felt much more confident and "very nice" about himself and what he had been able to
achieve. He acknowledged that the school faced numerous challenges, but he felt
"good" about the changes he had been able to make.

Discussion
It is evident from the findings that a change in leadership had significant implications
for the new principal, especially after his predecessor's length of service and the "insti-
tutional memory" that was left in the school (Rothwell, 2010:10). The new principal
was, however, at an advantage due to his previous experience as a principal and be-
cause he had been a parent at the school before his appointment. Martinez (2007)
indicates that a principal's familiarity with a school is helpful in the transition process.
Moreover the transition to his principalship was eased because he succeeded well-
respected principal (Glasspool, 2007). He nurtured the value system he "inherited" and

only desired to more explicitly inculcate these values in the school's programme.

The principal acknowledged the positive impact that the school had on him. Reciprocal-effects models in particular hypothesise that relationship between the principal and the features of the school are interactive, which implies that principals adapt to schools and change their behaviour and thinking over time (Kelly & Saunders (2010). It was in particular his leadership style that the principal realised he needed to be adapted. However, as in Garchinsky's study (2008:127), the principal experienced some challenges in becoming a more "collaborative leader".

Since a school's culture develops over many years, a new principal is not in a position to change it within the first year of his/her principalship (Berrong, 2012). It is typical of stage 1 of professional socialisation (Parkay et al., 1992:56) that a new principal experiences some shock and feels threatened, which was also revealed in this study. The findings of the study also concur with stage 1 of organisational socialisation (Garborro, 1987:20) in that the new principal's adjustment in the school was characterised by careful observation. He preferred not to make major changes during this stage (Meyer et al., 2009). The principal realised that he had to show his personal commitment and vision through various actions and behaviours and that he needed time to understand how the school functioned and to get to know the staff, parents and learners (Kelly & Saunders, 2010).

During stage 2 of professional socialisation (Parkay et al., 1992:57) and stage 2 of organisational socialisation (Garborro, 1987:20), deeper diagnosis and learning occurred regarding certain aspects in the school in order to get control of the school. This study indicated that although the principal viewed the school as successful, he saw room for improvement (Kelly & Saunders, 2010). The principal realised that a number of changes were required to ensure school excellence, in particular with regard to academic performance and its related changes. This study confirmed the findings of Garchinsky (2008), Glasspool (2007) and Martinez (2007) that principals regarded academic performance as the main purpose of leadership and that they regarded it as their responsibility to supervise the quality it. More assessment opportunities were scheduled and teachers' work was monitored since the principal understood the learning needs of the learners from his experience as a high school principal. Instituting collaboration between staff members who worked as islands was a challenge which the principal successfully implemented (Berry, 2004; Kelly & Saunders, 2010).

Although there was initially some apprehension for the unknown from loyal staff members (Kelly & Saunders, 2010), it was particularly during stage 2 of both professional socialisation (Parkay et al., 1992:57) and organisational socialisation (Garborro, 1987:20) that the principal's task orientation led to tension and some resistance from teachers. Tension can be created if the practices the new principal suggests are not consistent with or fit the norms of the school culture (Meyer et al., 2009). It was evident that teachers in this study had previously developed a certain way of executing their duties in the same school. Apart from this, the leadership styles of the two

leaders differed significantly. Berry's findings (2004:106) show that an "opposite leadership style" from the predecessor and previous systems in the school could have an impact on the principal, which was also evident in this study. The new principal believed that his predecessor had often not been strict enough. Being task oriented, the principal for example changed certain rules for the sake of school excellence. Although the principal experienced interpersonal relationships challenging (Glasspool, 2007), he succeeded in building professional relationships that eventually led to enhanced teacher commitment (Meyer et al., 2009), parent commitment and learner commitment.

During stages 3 to 5 of professional socialisation (Parkay et al., 1992:57) and stages 3 to 5 of organisational socialisation (Garborro, 1987:20-21) more fine tuning of certain changes in this study occurred. It was also evident that the principal's self-confidence developed as he succeeded to achieve occupational identity (Kelly & Saunders, 2010) and the operational processes became more effective. It was in particular the improved academic performance that the principal valued. Another operational change included an improvement in the financial system, when more parents successfully paid their school fees. The principal acknowledged parents' concerns, but he was firm in protecting the school and teachers from unreasonable parents so that the teachers could concentrate on their core business (Martinez, 2007).

With important operational systems in place, the principal focused on the physical environment of the school, which included new buildings, extra classes, changes in some parts of the school gardens, alterations to the tuckshop and its menu, and some structural changes and interior design modifications in the foyer and administrative offices to make the school more inviting. According to the philosophy of invitational education, the physical environment is a "socially constructed support system" which sends powerful messages to role players that they are trusted, cared for (Purkey & Siegel, 2003:117). The principal's focus on making the physical environment "more welcoming" is confirmed positively by Hargreaves and Fink (2004:10). Purkey and Siegel (2003:117-118) in particular state that "Invitational Leaders keep a close eye on how to make things happen through the physical environment, for places that add to, or subtract form, respect for people" since people are very sensitive to the physical environment.

Conclusion

The findings of the study showed that principal's socialisation into a new school can be challenging and that there are various factors that may influence the professional and organisational socialisation of principals. They also revealed that a principal can function at different stages of socialisation simultaneously, depending on his personality and previous professional experience.

The following conclusions derived from the study:

•   The principal showed a strong task-orientation that developed from his previous

more autocratic leadership style as a high school principal.

- The new school context, with its inviting and caring character, had a positive influence on the principal's leadership practice with the result that the principal's leadership style changed to a more collaborative approach to leadership. He nevertheless maintained his task orientation and stood firm with regard to the academic performance in the school.
- Although the principal in the study was careful not to make drastic changes initially, he regarded it as important to address aspects that hindered quality education in the school. His stance inspired him to address certain operational aspects of the school, which included the academic quality in the school and structural changes to accommodate the growing number of learners in the school.
- The principal's previous experience as a principal and his maturity enhanced his wisdom in taking action and this led the school towards higher levels of academic performance. He clearly emphasised both teaching and learning by cherishing relationships and maintaining a balance between high expectations and efficiency along with care and performance.

It is recommended that strategies need to be identified to nurture and support the socialisation process of new principals. It implies a clear understanding of the challenges they face during the socialisation process.

Although this study was exploratory in nature and it may be useful for new principals to address the challenges related to their socialisation, two directions for further research can be identified. First, to broaden the study in order to include diverse new principals of different countries, school types and geographical locations. In particular more studies among newly appointed principals, especially those in disadvantaged communities in South Africa, are required to determine how such principals experience socialisation as described in this study. Second, to employ a longitudinal study so that certain trends in the socialisation of new principals can be determined. Third, if the socialisation of principals is a global concern, it is important to develop an appropriate instrument to measure principal's socialisation. Once such a socialisation pattern is determined, it may lead to an enhanced understanding of principals' socialisation – which may have a critical impact on the quality of principal succession.

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