

**RELIANCE STRUCTURES OF NEOPHYTE PRINCIPALS IN RURAL
CONTEXTS**

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By

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the development and establishment of reliance structures among rural neophyte administrators in southern Saskatchewan during their first year as principal. The primary research question was, **“What are the perspectives and reflections of rural based second year principals concerning the development and establishment of their own reliance structures during their neophyte year?”** Specifically the study focused on the contexts of the schools, the reliance structure, the formal and informal socialization processes, and the self-efficacy of neophyte principals.

The significance of this study was based upon the lack of coherence between the theory and practice for the preparation of new educational administrators (McKague, 2001; Ferrandino, 2000; Griffith, 1999; Lawson, 1999; Renihan, 1999; Davis, 1998; Restine, 1997). This study addressed a deficiency in the research by exploring the reliance structures of neophyte principals through a multi-method approach. First, a questionnaire was utilized to gain a general perception from the participants on their own reliance structure. Second, in-depth interviews provided more detail on the perspectives and experiences of first year principals with their own reliance structure.

The sample included 26 rural-based second year principals, who had no prior administrative experience. Twenty-five of the 26 neophyte principals returned the Reliance Structure for Neophyte Principals (RSNP) survey forms, for a return rate of 96.2 percent. As well, all 26 neophyte principals were asked to participate in an interview that further investigated their perceptions of how they established their supports in a reliance structure.

Of the 26 neophyte principals, 24 participated in the interviews for a response rate of 92.3 per cent.

A number of contextual factors were seen to influence neophyte principals' development of the reliance structure. These included: the location of the school, the size of the school, the size of the school system, educational background, and the prior experiences of the principal as an educator. Upon further analysis, the data suggested that **location of the school, size of the school, educational background, and prior experiences as an educator were perceived as the most critical variables in the development of the reliance structure.**

In regard to periodization (the time periods between August to December and January to June), **supervision of instruction** emerged as the most important professional development need for the beginning principals during the first year. **During the first term** (August to December), principals perceived that having access to formalized mentoring programs and knowledge of important dates would have better prepared and/or supported them. Another important finding was that respondents felt that budgets, timetabling, and graduation were areas which presented unexpected events and/or surprises **during the second term** (January to June).

Overwhelmingly, the perception of the principals in this study was that there was a need to establish a formal reliance structure for beginning principals. Principals identified mentoring programs, professional development opportunities, longer induction and orientation opportunities, knowledge of the culture, and increased administration time as **critical functions** in a reliance structure. The **most critical relationships** were with (in order of frequency of mention) school staff, the director and central office staff, and other

in-school administrators. Visiting the school, meeting staff, and getting to know the community, were viewed as **critical processes** in the reliance structure.

Beginning principals indicated that the **informal socialization processes** (casual relationships with others) were more effective than the **formal socialization processes**. The director and the assistant director were identified as the most frequently involved in orienting neophyte principals to their jobs. However, it was other in-school administrators who were the most valuable in orienting and providing support during the first year.

Several implications were derived from the findings of this study. Important among these is the need for consideration of a number of functions, relationships, and processes in the reliance structure. In order for this to happen, socialization processes need to be formalized. Formalizing the socialization process warrants the time, energy, and participation of other in-school principals and central office personnel who play an integral role in developing and establishing the reliance structure. The establishment of the reliance structure for neophyte principals will be crucial to the future development of aspiring administrators. Such an initiative could improve the opportunities for success for beginning principals, particularly those in rural contexts.

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Lastly, to the woman who so patiently supported the completion of this study, my wife, Cynthia. To my daughter Josee, who played so quietly underneath her Dad's desk while he typed the final draft. To both of you I am forever indebted. After saying that, thank-you.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated -

To all neophyte principals who are commencing careers in a very challenging and rewarding profession as educational leaders. It is with this that I share Homer's epic "The Odyssey";

When Odysseus left on an adventurous journey to fight the Trojan War, he gave the responsibility of nurturing his son, Telemachus, to his loyal friend, Mentor. In Odysseus's absence, Mentor educated and guided Telemachus. This education included every facet of his life. Mentor not only provided support and guidance, he taught Telemachus to think and act for himself. The twenty-year relationship between Mentor and Telemachus can seldom be duplicated on our administrative journey. Mentoring neophyte principals involves formalizing a number of functions, relationships, and processes in a reliance structure.

To my mother, **Muriel**, who taught me to read and write;

To my father, **Andy**, who taught me to work hard and persevere;

To my brothers, **John** and **Norman**, who continue to provide inspiration;

To my in-laws, **Dennis** and **Sheila**, who continue to support my dreams;

To my wife, **Cynthia**, whose love and friendship I devour; and

To my daughter, **Josee**, whose daily presence fulfills my life.

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Research conducted on school improvement and school effectiveness (Ferrandino, 2000, Griffith, 1999; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Renihan & Sackney, 1999; Zheng, 1996) reports that the principal is the key figure in the effort to improve schools. The improvement of schools and the effectiveness of schools become more complex considering the number of principals that will retire in the near future (Boon 1998; Ferrandino, 2000; Merrill & Pounder, 1999; Renihan, 1999). Lawson (1999) notes that principals' activities have become more difficult and that principals often have to learn on the job. He offers the following as some of the new challenges confronting principals: facilities challenges, resource generation and funding challenges, time challenges, people challenges, and information management and service delivery challenges. A number of researchers (Ferrandino, 2000; Griffith, 1999; Merrill & Pounder, 1999; Parkay & Hall, 1992; Renihan, 1999) believe that these challenges will have to be addressed by neophyte principals due to the large number of expected retiring principals. Parkay and Hall suggest that little is known about the work life and demands that neophyte principals face or what leads to their success in the principalship. They further contend that there is a need to understand more about the lives of neophyte principals so that future principals can learn from their experiences. "The more we learn today from novice principals about how to meet the challenges of beginning leadership, the better off tomorrow's schools, students, and new principals will be" (p. 3).

The role of the principal has been undergoing dramatic changes (Campbell, 1999; Daresh & Male, 2000; McKague, 2001; Seyforth, 1999). Legislation and/or educational reforms have had an impact upon schools and school systems (Portin & Shen, 1998), while other significant sociological changes have brought with them a diversity of student needs and interests. These complex issues have placed new demands upon schools (Murphy, 1992), which are extended in turn to the principal. Compounding the already complex role of the principal are those parents, students and teachers who come with increasingly high expectations and problem situations (Davis, 1998).

Education is being transformed in order to meet society's growing needs, and principals are being held accountable for this transformation (Lawson, 1999). The principal must lead this change process, but little effort is being made toward improving ways for preparing principals for this critical leadership role (Sergiovanni, 1995). Investigations by Duke (1988) suggested that the first year as an administrator is full of anxiety, frustration, and self-doubt. A more recent study conducted by Daresh and Male (2000) reaffirmed this by stating that principals are experiencing "alienation, isolation, and frustration [which] often mark the work of those who lead schools"(p. 99). In recognizing the need for improved principal preparation practices, Lawson suggests that the support offered to principals needs to be reflective of the public's performance expectations.

Inexperienced principals who lack the necessary support are at risk of failing in their jobs due to actions, events, or outcomes over which they may not always have direct control (Deal & Peterson, 1994; Sergiovanni, 1995). Davis (1998) explains that principals

are faced with the unrelenting task of maintaining the basic structure and order within increasingly hostile, unpredictable, and conflict-laden environments. In his study, Davis noted that the principal's job is becoming more challenging. He found that:

dwindling resources, burgeoning paperwork, crumbling facilities, increasing public criticisms and expectations, growing numbers of students with special needs, and increasing demands by teachers and parents to participate in decision making pose serious challenges to principals at virtually all levels and in nearly every area of the country. (p. 58)

The precarious nature of the principalship reinforces the need for continuous research into ways of supporting principals in their early years on the job. Along with the various stakeholder interests in schools, Begley (1999a) reports that principals are also faced with conflicts that occur among personal values, professional values, and/or organizational values. He acknowledges that principals are expected to know which values are appropriate to a situation without any prior training in philosophy or exposure to the literature on administrative ethics.

Evans (1996) noted there have always been chronic tensions in leadership: between managing and leading, and between resources and demands. This is, however, not new when one considers the increasing expectations being placed on principals. What is new, Evans suggests, "is the extent and intensity" of the job (p.152). These changing demands serve to decrease a school leaders' sense of efficiency and heighten their feelings of isolation, insecurity, and intensity (Portin & Shen, 1998). A study conducted by Daresh and Male (2000) reveals that principals have concerns in the support, or the lack thereof, they receive in their first year on the job. A recommendation coming from that study suggests that support must be actively sought, and be provided by peers, but

not necessarily from within the same school or school system in which the school leader works.

Studies conducted by P. Renihan (1985, 1999), in the context of Canadian school systems, reports the view that the reality of change is nothing new to the context of school leadership. Neither is the problem of leadership shortage located merely within a specific geographic location. Studies from across the globe (Bolam, McMahon, Pocklington, & Weindling, 1995; Boon, 1998; Brady, 1993; Merrill & Pounder, 1999) suggest that this is a widespread concern.

Providing opportunities for self-efficacy within schools is a complex activity, regardless of the experience of the administrator (Leonard, 1999). Walker and Shakotko (1999) suggest that in-school leadership theory and practice must commit to having aspiring principals spending more time reflecting on personal values, ethical stances, and other similar matters which may help them step into their new roles.

For many years, research on effective schools has emphasized the relationship between school leader efficacy and school success (Sergiovanni, 1995). If good schools need good leaders, more effective approaches for preparing and supporting candidates for school leadership positions is a necessity. Researchers (Begley, 1999a; Hodgkinson, 1996; Leonard, 1999; Walker and Shakotko, 1999) are beginning to realize the impact that values have in the decision-making process of in-school administrators. Begley suggests that the work of educational leaders has become less predictable, less structured, and more conflict-laden. Relationships among teachers, administrators, students, and parents can be highly interactive and subject to a variety of individual needs,

environmental influences, and competing values (Weick, 1976). Value conflicts arise from this uncertainty, which in turn compounds the complexity of decisions that are made by principals.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the development and establishment of reliance structures among rural neophyte administrators in southern Saskatchewan during their first year as principal. This involved an examination of the school context, informal and formal socialization processes as well as conception of the role, reference group theory, the relationship constellation, the notion of administrative mentoring, and the development of self-efficacy in performing their professional duties. The primary research question that guided this investigation was: **What are the perspectives and reflections of rural-based second year principals concerning the nature of their own reliance structures during their neophyte year?** To support the primary question, several specific areas were explored which included perceptions of participants as to:

1. The challenges and issues that confronted principals during their first year.
2. The level of need for a reliance structure.
3. The value of the socialization process.
4. The nature of the reliance structure.
5. The processes in establishing the reliance structure.
6. The relative significance and value of each element in the reliance structure.
7. The role of the principal in establishing and maintaining the reliance structure.

8. The impact of contextual factors upon the reliance structure (location, school size, system size, education, experience, gender).
9. The extent to which self-reflection and professional development related to the reliance structure.
10. The sense of self-efficacy perceived during the first year.

Definition of Major Terms

For the purposes of this study the following major terms are defined:

Neophyte Principal: a principal in the second year of a principalship who has had no prior administrative experience as a principal or a vice-principal.

Principal: the individual who is held responsible for the general organization, administration, and supervision of the school, its program and professional staff and for administrative functions that pertain to liaison between the school and the Board and its officials (Education Act, 1995).

Reference Individuals: those individuals associated with the neophyte principal in particular situations as role models/mentors. The neophyte who identifies with a reference individual is seeking information to approximate the behaviour and values of that individual (Merton, 1968).

The Relationship Constellation: a range of relationships that supports an individual's professional development at any given time (Kram, 1988).

Reliance Structure: those functions, relationships, and processes that a principal utilizes to develop and establish his/her reliance structure during the first year.

Rural Administrators: those in-school administrators in public school divisions within Saskatchewan who serve rural public schools.

Rural-based: all those public school divisions in Saskatchewan that serve rural public schools.

School: an educational institution, organized as a single unit and usually housed in one building. Its teachers offer specific kinds of instruction to a student population. In some cases, two schools (elementary and middle, and high school) may be housed in the same building (Dejnozka, 1983).

Self-Efficacy: a judgment of one's capability to feel good about what they were able to accomplish during the first year of the principalship.

Socialization: a process that prepares individuals to occupy a new position. This socialization occurs when the newcomer learns the norms, the value system, the social skills, and the required behaviour patterns of the organization or group in which the individual will enter (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979; Schein, 1968).

Southern Saskatchewan: those school divisions in rural southern Saskatchewan.

Assumptions of the Study

In this study the following assumptions were made and should be considered in the interpretation of the findings.

1. It was assumed that the multi-method (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989) interpretive approach (Denzin, 1988; Geertz, 1973; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) was appropriate for this study.

2. It was assumed that the respondents to the draft instrument in the pilot tests of the questionnaire and interviews were representative of respondents in the study sample.

3. It was assumed that respondents understood what was asked of them, had the requested information, answered conscientiously, completed and returned questionnaires voluntarily, and were representative of the sample.

4. It was assumed that all neophyte principals needed to develop and establish a reliance structure in their first year.

5. It was assumed that the data gathering procedures adequately and accurately investigated the factors pertinent to developing and establishing a reliance structure.

6. It was assumed that the respondents could accurately recall and reflect upon the circumstances of their socialization processes during the first year of their principalship.

Delimitations of the Study

For the purposes of this study the following delimitations apply:

1. The selection of the neophyte principals was delimited to individuals who, prior to their selection, had held no previous formal vice-principal or principal positions. In order to have the principals reflect on their first year, the selection of principals was delimited to those in their second year.
2. The study was an in-depth description of **twenty-five** neophyte principals' perspectives on the definition of their own reliance structure.
3. The study was delimited to the investigation of neophyte principals in the rural southern Saskatchewan.

4. Participants have the ability to recall details of their neophyte year as they pertain to their reliance structure.
5. Data collection took place during the months of May and June of the 2001 school year.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study were those that are commonly attributed to the interpretive paradigm and methodology, as well as the data gathering techniques utilized by the researcher.

1. The findings of this study were only generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to large populations. It is left to the reader to evaluate the utility of the findings for other contexts.
2. The study was limited by the relationship that was developed between the researcher and the participants, in that the quality of the data was dependent on the level of trust and cooperation that was achieved.
3. The data collected from the participants were limited by participants' ability to recall the specific occurrences of previous situations.
4. The data reported by the participants were limited by the manner in which the principals choose to report the facts.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is based upon the lack of coherence between the theory and practice for the preparation of neophyte principals (Davis, 1998; Ferrandino, 2000; Griffith, 1999; Lawson, 1999; Renihan, 1999; Restine, 1997; Tymchak, 2001;).

This study addressed a deficiency in the research by exploring the reliance structures of neophyte principals through a multi-method approach. First, a questionnaire was utilized to gain a general perception from the population on their own reliance structure. Second, in-depth interviews provided more detail on the perspectives and experiences of first year principals with their own reliance structure. It is anticipated that this approach was effective in furthering the understanding of an exceedingly complex social phenomenon. By identifying the reliance structures that the selected neophyte principals employ, observing the ways in which these people are used, and analyzing the nature of the principals' perspectives, this research helped to equip the practitioner with the means for bridging the gap between theory and practice.

This study was designed to provide an in-depth description of the perceptions of rural-based neophyte principals and the nature of their reliance structures established in their first year. The investigation intended to further develop and extend the knowledge of support systems that neophyte principals established in their first year on the job. A relationship constellation (Kram, 1988) was utilized to investigate the reliance structure that supports each neophyte principal's development. In turn, this study had the potential to investigate some of the alienation, isolation, and frustration (Daresh and Male, 2000) that rural neophyte principals experience when taking on the position of principal.

Much has been written about the principalship (Begley, 1999a, b; Crow & Mathews, 1998; Portin & Shen, 1998) however, there was a need for literature and research that supports neophyte principals in their early years (Lawson, 1999). This study had the potential to influence the support structures that current preparation and induction

practices lack. Reference groups (Merton, 1968) and the relationship constellation (Kram, 1988) may further the understanding on who neophyte principals tend to rely on for their critical developmental functions.

The knowledge gained from the reliance structure of neophyte principals stimulated boards of education to reflect on their own policies related to the induction of neophyte principals. Findings from this study could be of interest to such organizations as teachers federation groups or individual school boards, which developed and promoted new technologies for supporting neophyte principals in their professional occupation. The study proved to be of value to both academics and lay people working in the field of educational administration, as it had the potential to advance the theoretical literature. It was anticipated that an awareness of neophyte principals' reliance structures informed and provided educational leaders with valuable resources for enhancing principal preparation practices.

This investigation provided insight into the increasingly complex role of the principal and facilitated the practices of future administrator preparation programs. Lawson (1999) suggested that efforts were needed to commence improving the different approaches for preparing effective in-school leaders. Increasingly scholars recognized that if educational leaders, principals in this case, are to better serve schools in an ever changing society (Begley, 1999a; Davis, 1998), the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours principals possess must be different from those found in traditional educational administration programs for neophyte principals (Daresh, Dunlap, Gantner, & Hvizdak, 1998). Researchers (Beare, Caldwell, & Millikan, 1997; Renihan & Sackney,

1999) claim that in-school principals' efficacy has invariably emerged as a key characteristic of effective schools. Beare et al. suggested that there can no longer be doubt that those seeking quality in education must ensure that the development of potential leaders must be given high priority. Due to the international shortage of principals, the gap between the theory and practice for preparing neophyte principals has become a critical issue.

Ultimately, the significance of this study was determined by the heightened awareness of preparation practices for neophyte principals, the increased understanding of the dynamics of reliance structures, and the ability of theorists and practitioners to incorporate the concept of reference groups and the relationship constellation into their models of attaining self-efficacy.

The Researcher

The researcher is a second year Ph. D student in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan. He obtained his Master of Education Degree from the University of Saskatchewan, with a focus on instructional supervision. He received his Bachelor of Education from the University of Regina with a major in Physical Education and a minor in Social Studies. As an educator in a rural Saskatchewan town of 700, the researcher taught a variety of classes from grade nine to grade twelve. Post-secondary teaching experiences include being a sessional lecturer at the University of Saskatchewan.

The researcher was born and raised in rural Saskatchewan. He hopes that his background as a teacher in rural Saskatchewan will enable him to identify with, and build

rapport with, the research participants. Throughout the course of the data analysis, the researcher will attempt to thoughtfully consider the effects that his own sense making and consciousness regarding the research questions have upon the research findings.

Organization of the Dissertation

In this chapter the background, purpose, major terms, and parameters of the study have been presented and a case has been made for the significance of the study. In chapter two, the literature pertaining to this area of inquiry is identified and examined. An initial conceptual framework for the study is also identified and the key elements and relationships were described. The methodology guiding the study is described in chapter three. In chapters four and five the research findings are presented and discussed in relation to the research questions. There is also an elaboration of the findings and the implications for theory, practice and further research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Little is known about the reliance structures of neophyte principals, or about how socialization may affect the performance of a principal (Crow & Mathews, 1998; Heck, 1995) and even less has been gathered on how rural principals are affected by the following socialization processes: the conception of the role, reference group theory, relationship constellation (Kram, 1988; Merton, 1968), and administrative mentoring. The need for principal preparation practices to understand the complexity of problems associated with neophyte principals is crucial (Renihan, 1999) if they are expected to fill the upcoming void. The release of a 1998 exploratory study conducted by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) acknowledges that a significant portion of American principals will retire early in the twenty-first century, and it is assumed that a significant portion of these positions will be filled by neophyte principals (Holcomb, 1990).

The length of the 'socialization' period for a principal undoubtedly varies (Duke, Isaacson, Sagor, & Schmuck, 1984), however, the majority of new principals feel a sense of acceptance by students and community by the end of the first year (Hart, 1993). Duke (1987) suggests that after the first year, the feelings of uncertainty are due to a lack of support that a new principal receives from individuals at central office and from peer principals.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the development and establishment of reliance structures among rural neophyte administrators in southern Saskatchewan during their first year as principal. The literature in a research study is meant to describe studies about the problem to date; to position the study in the larger, ongoing dialogue in order to “fill the gaps”; and to provide a framework for establishing the importance of the study (Cresswell, 1998, p.95). The following thematic map (see Figure 2.1), was developed from the literature to depict areas related to the topic being researched, and to identify where this study fits into the larger literature scenario.

As indicated on the thematic map, an attempt was made to address this perceived literature gap by grounding the study with the theoretical underpinnings from literature on leader efficacy. In-school principal self-efficacy is a correlate of effective schools and addresses the present gap in the literature on the challenges and issues confronting principals. With a significant number of principals retiring or leaving the profession in the next decade and with the expectation that many of the replacements will be neophyte principals, the literature review focuses on the issues and concerns of beginning principals. The reliance structure of neophyte principals is developed by the researcher on literature based on the socialization processes that are associated with the efficacy of an in-school leader. Socialization literature is examined through the following areas: (1) the informal socialization of the individual, (2) the formal socialization of the individual within the organization, (a) the role conception of a principal, (b) the reference group theory, the relationship constellation, and (c) the administrative mentorship.

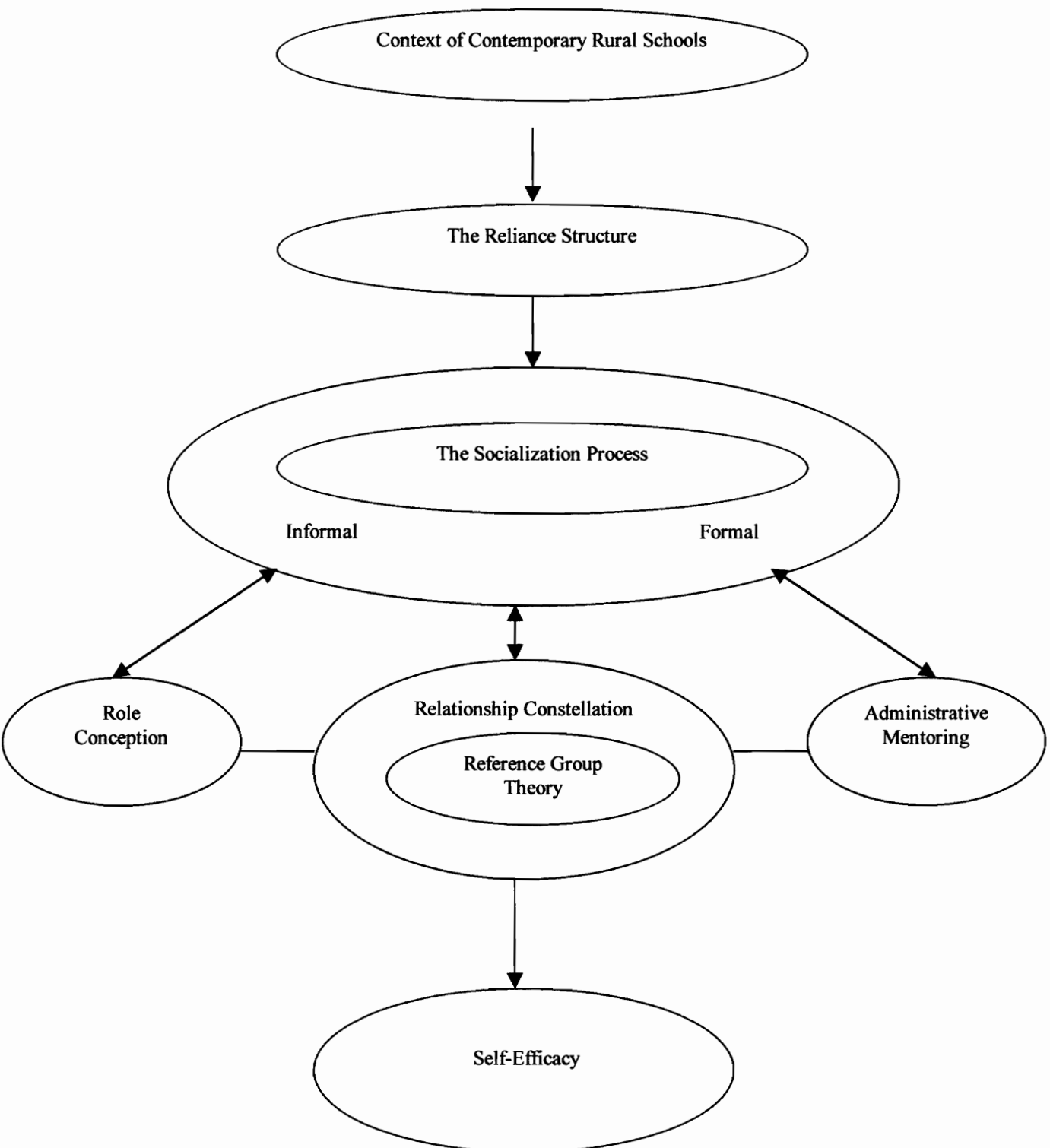


Figure 2.1: Thematic Map of the Literature Review

Context of Contemporary Rural Schools

Researchers (Jolly & Deloney, 1993) note that rural schools are faced with the traditional challenges of dealing with small numbers of students, low population density, and isolation. They further suggest that small rural school districts are facing pressures from both the economic and social problems experienced by school reform movements and small rural communities.

Despite some differences among rural communities, research points to characteristics that are common to rural areas such as the following: isolation, higher poverty, lack of job opportunities, higher unemployment, lower educational levels and depopulation (DeYoung & Lawrence, 1995; Herzog, 1996; Hobbs, 1994; Maynard & Howley, 1997;). Higgins (1992) reports that six general topics reflect the changes characteristic of rural settings in Canada and the U.S.A.:

1. Rural areas are no longer isolated from international, social and economic forces;
2. Changing demographics such as an aging population mean new policy concerns;
3. An increasing proportion of personal income is coming from social security, public assistance, and unemployment compensation;
4. Off-farm income is a larger and more stable source of income for farm families;
5. A visible national shift to service-producing activities creates a need for changes in the existing workforce; and

6. New information technologies hold a promise for new economic activity and to help remote communities overcome their isolation. (p. i)

According to Ward (1994), the aforementioned list has direct implications for change in how rural schools in the U.S. operate. Similar changes are also expected to have an impact on rural schools in Canada. For instance: (a) the population is becoming diverse and that diversity is likely to accelerate; (b) the diversity is exemplified in such things as increasing migration, high dependency on social programs, and rural depletion; (c) possession of intellectual property is becoming more important for economic well being than possession of land or capital; (d) fashioning effective public policy responsible to these demographic and economic changes depends in part on gaining a better understanding of political realities; (e) there is a gap between those who pay for public education and those who benefit. In consideration of these changes, it is easy to understand that there has been an increase in stress-related problems that principals in rural areas are confronted with (Hobbs).

One of the most important roles of the principal used to be to act as a liaison between the school and provincial policies and regulations, with the school board as a supportive conduit. McKague (2001) reports that in Saskatchewan, this assumption is breaking down particularly in response to four political, pedagogical, and social realities. The first is that there is a growing demand by local taxpayers that, because school funding comes largely from local property taxes, they should have a greater voice in the determination of local school policy. The second is that increased demands by teachers and principals that their professional role should include the development of policy,

curriculum, and daily schooling practice in response to local student, family, and community needs. The third is an increased awareness among educators that the student body is very diverse, and that schools and their curricular practices need to respond to this diversity by providing locally determined programs to meet a variety of student needs and to create an equitable system. Finally, a decline in provincial funding has had its impact on curriculum development, teacher and school support, new programs, and partly in response to a public demand for deficit, debt and tax reduction and the move to contemporary political philosophy which sees educational and social programs as increasing the responsibility of charitable communities and the private sector.

The Saskatchewan Government (2000b) released the document “Challenges for Education” which suggested that population trends will continue to shift from the rural to urban areas. In 1995, the enrollment in rural schools declined by 1700 students (Saskatchewan Education, 2000a), which is significant considering that almost two-thirds of Saskatchewan’s publicly funded schools are located in rural areas. During a period between 1992-93 and 1996-97 there were 42 provincially funded school closures in the province of Saskatchewan, of these 37 were rural schools (p. 1).

These closures are due in part to changes in agriculture which have influenced this demographic shift. According to Saskatchewan Education (2000a), the demographics are changing due to youth who are leaving rural areas because of uncertain changes occurring in the agricultural sector. “The recent elimination of the Crow benefit, branch line abandonment, and the move to inland grain terminals are all factors that impact on rural communities. Transportation has improved and many people prefer to shop in larger

centers” (p.1) Taken together these changes to rural areas have broadened the boundaries of what people are calling a community. The stable agriculture community represents only a small part of rural life. Today, retirement and manufacturing income account for more rural income than farming (Henry, Drabentstott, & Gibson, 1987). Many farm towns close to urban areas have become bedroom communities (Nachtigal, 1982). Canadian studies, and in particular Saskatchewan, support these findings (Stabler & Olfert, 1996) and suggest while some communities are experiencing growth, many others are in an economic and population decline.

Investigations in Saskatchewan suggest that growing numbers of students face difficulties that are barriers to learning, such as poverty, substance abuse and family breakdown (Saskatchewan Education, 2000). The number of single parent families has increased significantly in Saskatchewan from 18,100 in 1971 to 29, 040 in 1991. The studies show that students with physical and behavioural challenges are being integrated into regular classrooms across the country. Additional supports and integrated health, social and justice services are required to meet the diverse learning needs of all students (p. 1). Ferrandino (2000) reports that similar problems are being experienced in the United States as “some children require a full time medical aide, which the school is obliged to provide” (p. 5). In order to address these challenges of being an instructional leader and school manager, the principal must be part social worker, nurse, counselor, fundraiser, psychologist, legal expert, special education expert, security officer, community activist, marketer, and internet expert (p. 5).

In a study conducted on rural principals, researchers examined the working conditions of principals in order to identify key areas of job-related stress and found that the cycle of stress for rural administrators is more intense than it was the previous decade (Lam & Cormier, 1998). Rural principals in Washington State also believe that their responsibilities have changed during the last five years (Williams & Portin, 1997). They offer the following to explain how things have changed in Washington: (a) principals indicated they were in districts that were decentralizing decision-making to the local school site; (b) principals reported increased student diversity; (c) principals commented that interactions with parents has increased; and (d) principals reported the importance in having to consider client satisfaction when making decisions. These changes were in addition to new responsibilities created by the state with regard to educational reform, truancy reporting, and special education. As a result of these increased responsibilities, Williams and Portin suggest that rural principals will be confronted with several trends. First, principals will experience additional responsibilities that did not always come with the corresponding authority. Second, is the shift from leadership to management that principals will be expected to make. Third, a principal is having to function within an environment that is ambiguous which in turn provides complex new responsibilities. Last, is the decline in morale and enthusiasm that principals have for their jobs. These trends point out the added responsibilities that new principals are faced with in taking on the position of the principalship (pp. 1-15).

Challenges and Issues Confronting the Principalship

This section reviews the most serious challenges facing the principalship. Arising from these challenges are several issues that were addressed in detail from studies on beginning principals. One challenge of the principalship that appears in most studies is the feeling of isolation that many principals experience in rural settings (Din, 1997; Evans, 1996; Lam & Cormier, 1998; Merrill & Pounder, 1999; Renihan, 1999; Samier, 2000). Renihan explains that declining enrollments, combined with the down-sizing of division office staff has had the impact of reducing support by providing less contact with senior administration and by removing the vice-principal. He points out that the vice principalship used to be utilized as a training ground for prospective principals and for providing collegial support to those who truly need it (p. 29). Hill's (1993) research as a principal in rural California reflects these concerns and suggests that the rural principalship often lacks the support of assistant principals and other support staff.

Arnold's (1995) study of principal effectiveness in small rural schools identifies the most significant constraints that affect a principal's ability to run a school as time, energy, and the different goals of staff and community. On the latter point he suggests that an impediment to leadership occurs when community values differ significantly from those of the staff. In developing harmony among the staff, he suggests that the staff must remain united as a team. Further findings from his study on constraints to the effectiveness of principals' work in rural schools found poor attitudes of parents, and lack of time to exercise key leadership tasks.

Researchers (Leonard & Leonard, 1999) point out that the role of the principal is transforming to be more collaborative than it ever has been. Involvement of teachers, other staff members, parents, other community members and students in both policy and routine decisions is fundamental to a community school (Davies, 2000). It means that the principal must learn to accept institutional responsibility while relinquishing the hierarchical authority which used to be implicit in the job.

Tymchak (2001) suggests that the pressure on principals is a result of the fundamental change in family life, family structures, and family responsibilities. He claims that in today's society families are affected by: two working spouses, single parent families, rising divorce rates, casual sexual and cohabitational practices, the eroding effects of poverty on children and the resulting increase in the numbers of at-risk children and youth as well as the growing number of "hidden youth" with no family links. These additional changes in families have added to the pressure for principals to develop policy and practices to reflect these changes in society.

Filling administrative vacancies are not a new problem in rural education (Fowler, 1999), neither is the problem of shortage located merely within a specific geographic location. Studies from around the world suggest that this is a widespread concern (Bolam et al., 1995; Boon, 1998; Brady, 1993; Daresh & Playko, 1992; Merrill & Pounder, 1999; Renihan, 1999;). In his address to the Connecticut State Legislature about the issues confronting the principal shortage across the nation in the United States, Ferrandino (2000) points out that applications for the position are becoming fewer and fewer, noting

that “years ago as many as 25 to 50 people would apply for a vacancy in the principal’s office. Today, sometimes no one applies. Many schools opened this fall without principals or with acting principals” (p.2). He points out that principals report being begged not to retire or are being called back from retirement due to the shortages.

According to Ferrandino these shortages were found at all levels elementary, middle, and high school and in all types of communities urban, rural, and suburban. A study conducted by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (1998) offers the following explanations why qualified applicants are not applying for the principalship:

(a) compensation being insufficient compared to responsibilities; (b) job too stressful; (c) too much time required; (d) difficulties in satisfying parents or the community; (e) societal problems that make it difficult to focus on instruction; and (f) fewer experienced teachers being interested in the job (p. 3).

Literature from the United States also documents shortages of secondary school executives (Bowles, 1990; Jordan, McCauley, & Comeaux, 1994; McCormick, 1987; Merrill & Pounder, 1999). A study in the state of Utah (Merrill & Pounder), expressed concern over the availability of quality candidates for the leadership function. Results from this study suggest that only 29% of the 169 potential candidates have an interest in applying for the principalship. The findings from their study point to reasons why people are not coming forward to accept the position of the principalship. The more significant of these being insufficient compensation, job too stressful, and too much time required (pp.18-26). Perhaps because of these issues fewer individuals are applying for the rural

principalship (Wallin, 1999), and often the administrative qualifications of those who do apply are questionable (Merrill & Pounder).

Among some of the recent investigations in Canada, Renihan (1999) reports that the interest in the principalship is “waning”. From his study, he identifies the most serious issues facing the principalship. These include (a) proliferation of expectations for the role; (b) lack of administrative time; (c) inadequate compensation; (d) community politics; and (e) lack of support and recruitment (p.23). These issues serve to compound the difficulties that contemporary principals face in taking on an administrative position and will be further elaborated on in the subsequent section.

Proliferation of Expectations

In Renihan’s (1999) study, principals noted more time is spent on counseling and mediating with students than ever before. In addition, his research discovered that principals have more duties placed upon them due to changes in administrative philosophy and approaches within the systems. Principals’ concerns with expectations were illustrated through an increased pressure to meet with more constituents who assume more substantive roles in the school. Similar findings from a ten year study conducted by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) (1998) reinforces the perception of expanding responsibilities for principals in the U.S.A. Principals reported everything from marketing to fundraising to security to social work as the proliferation of expectations being placed on principals. They also reported that principals have less authority for the kinds of things that are basic to improving any company-hiring, firing, and budgeting.

Ferrandino (2000) reports that students are coming to school with a greater number of special needs than ever before. He notes that some children require a full-time medical aide which most schools lack the ability to offer a full complement of student services personnel like a counselor, a social worker, a speech therapist, a nurse and a psychologist. He reports that the principals' responsibilities are no longer viewed as simply the manager of the school as the principal remains in charge for the condition of the physical plant and equipment. He/she is also responsible for instructional improvement, staff development, curriculum design, development and implementation of the site-based decision making plans, and complex discipline and school safety issues (p. 5).

Administrative Time

Principals in Renihan's (1999) study made explicit the relationship between the proliferation of expectations and the consequent time pressures for the job. Principals pointed to the obvious deterioration in effectiveness when insufficient time is provided for the performance of critical tasks. Renihan's findings suggest that the amount of formal administrative time, particularly in rural schools, is inadequate for meeting expectations. One principal from the study remarked: "Time restraints are problematic. I do not have enough administrative release time to properly attend to everything that a principal must do" (p. 25). In addition, Directors from the study reported rural principals had a lack of administrative time considering the expectations of collaboration and consultation, which demanded significant amounts of a principal's time.

Ferrandino (2000) found that principals top difficulties as managers was the way their time was fragmented. He points to “the lack of real control of their time and little ability to focus on their main job responsibility---being an instructional leader---is a management dilemma that would hinder the leader of any organization” (p. 3). He further alludes to the fact that principals are asked to make decisions by the minute while working with an enormous array of issues and populations.

Rewards and Compensation

The proliferation of expectations, work intensity, the multiplicity of tasks, and the limited time in which to perform them, assist in explaining the rationale for reviewing the rewards and compensations that principals receive (Renihan, 1999). From his study in Saskatchewan, Renihan found several individuals who addressed the issue in terms of the relatively low economic return for the inherent risks and pressures. One comment alluding to the insufficient compensation was: “Training and pay scales for administrators in small rural schools, who have a large teaching load are inadequate” (p. 26). Given the difficulty in addressing the issue of compensation Dray (as cited in Renihan) points out that compensation varies according to the context.

Saskatchewan compares well to other provinces when examining the administrative allowances for large schools of 40 teachers or more. When small school [sic] of seven teachers of [sic] less are considered, Saskatchewan stacks up very poorly in comparison with others. Moving to rural areas may create a financial burden for families, thus salary can be another complicating factor in terms of attracting people to administration in rural Saskatchewan. (p. 27)

1995; Daresh & Male, 2000; Ferrandino, 2000; Merrill & Pounder, 1999; Renihan, 1999).

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) (1998) study conducted by the Educational Research Service (ERS) in the U.S.A. reports that “lack of sufficient compensation” is the strongest barrier to filling high school principalships.

Ferrandino (2000) believes that when administrators salaries are compared with other professions, “the people who are responsible for the future of our children simply are vastly underpaid” (p. 4). Furthermore, he notes that it is not uncommon for a new principal to actually earn less than a veteran teacher at the top of their career ladder.

Considering that the labour pool of future principals is mostly made up of teachers it becomes easy to understand why they may balk at applying for the principal’s job.

Ferrandino explains

They trade their 180-190 day work year for 210-240 work days per year; they take on enormous responsibilities and headaches; they lose their job security (most principals do not belong to unions); and they may earn just a little more or even less on a day-to-day basis than they do now. (p. 4)

In looking at the general concerns of educators toward the reward and compensation packages that principals receive, there appears to be general consensus that the circumstances of rural-based principals are viewed to be particularly inadequate (p. 4).

Community Politics

Given the difficulty of attracting people to the principalship (Griffith, 1999) an emergent concern resides in the increased demand for negotiating the needs of the staff, students, parents, boards, community, and other partners expectations (Davis, 1998;

Renihan, 1999). The principals in Renihan's study often describe their lives in smaller communities as living in a fish bowl, in which one's personal life and performance are open to constant scrutiny. Dray (as cited in Renihan) elaborates on the issue of community politics as follows:

Local politics can be a deterrent to those interested in assuming an administrative position in a small community. The extreme public nature of the role and the fact that a principal is never allowed to be a "private citizen" can make it very difficult from a family perspective to be an administrator in a small community. In addition, some communities have competing factions that can create a tumultuous situation for a school administrator. (p. 28)

Hopkins and Wendel (1997) argue that now more than ever before principals are being asked to get parents to participate in their child's education.

Parental involvement in the educational process is enjoying increased support and interest in the U.S.A. recently, in part due to the goals 2000: Educate America Act, which states: "By the year 2000, every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children" (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 1999). The concern principals have in developing partnerships is that these relationships have placed unprecedented pressures upon the political and leadership capabilities of principals (Renihan, 1999). Renihan argues that on one hand this raises significant questions regarding the availability and provision of training, while on the other it becomes problematic for the administrative/policy support that principals receive.

Support and Preparation

Principals are typically not prepared for the loneliness of the job and for the extensive demands of their time (Macmillan, 1998). Renihan's (1985) study in Saskatchewan emphasized the loneliness of the job, which is still a concern today. In addition, that study noted that declining enrollments combined with the down-sizing of central office personnel has had an impact of reducing support in rural schools in two ways: "one in the form of less contact from senior administration, and the other in the form of the removal of vice-principals (p. 29). He believed that when vice principals are removed from the school setting there is less training ground for potential principals and much needed collegial support is no longer available to those that need it.

The elimination of the vice principal in rural Saskatchewan has removed support that small rural school administrators need (D. Sangster, personal communication, April 5, 2000). Dray (as cited in Renihan, 1999) supported this argument and points out that

Without a vice principal, the principal not only assumes all administrative duties, but is often required to make important decision without the counsel or support of another school based administrator. Support from a division office administrator may not be readily available to a principal due to downsizing of division office staff in rural school divisions. This lack of administrative support may contribute to a feeling of isolation of the principal in a small rural school. (p. 30)

Daresh and Playko (1992) advocated that the support a principal receives is critical for making complex decisions. In addition, they argue that the support principals receive from vice principals assists them with their decision-making.

The workload of rural principals continues to be overwhelming (Din, 1997), yet traditional administrator training programs are irrelevant to and grossly inadequate for the

work responsibilities that are found in the school leadership position (Muse & Thomas, 1991). Muse and Thomas suggest that preparation programs need to be supportive of rural principals and should include partnerships between university and school districts, a selection process, internship field experience, and individualized curriculum. Erlandson's (1994) review of the National Policy Board for Educational Administration recommends policy development to include supporting the professional development of principals in the following areas: (a) a comprehensive preparation program for principals; (b) provide support for new principals; (c) systems need to develop collegial support networks and appropriate growth activities for principals; (d) engage principals in reflective practice; (e) have principals learn to become learners; (f) develop growth activities for assistant principals; and (g) develop collaboration among the primary stakeholders in the preparation of principals (pp. 4-11).

“School leaders’ lives are marked by frequent and multifarious changes in responsibilities, expectations, and directions that require continued learning and professional development” (Restine, 1997, p. 253). Data from Restine’s study reveals striking contrasts between principals prepared in nontraditional or innovative programs over those who were prepared in traditional programs. Nontraditional programs were utilizing cohorts, release time internships, affiliation with a mentor, partnerships, and the integration of course work and experiential activities. Conversely, traditional programs were described as simply courses prescribed by departments of education. Restine’s study reveals that non-traditional principal preparation programs articulated more support

coming from the likes of a cohort, mentor principals, and partnerships than in traditional preparation programs.

In summary, the thematic map (see Figure 2.1, p. 14) has identified the context for contemporary rural schools and displayed the challenges and issues in preparing and supporting a beginning principal to be effectiveness. Considering that neophytes will be replacing large numbers of retiring principals, the literature examines the socialization process of beginning principals, as a related aspect of a neophyte's reliance structure.

The Socialization Process

The socialization process consists of both an informal process and a formal process (see Figure 2.2). In addition to these two socialization processes, four additional

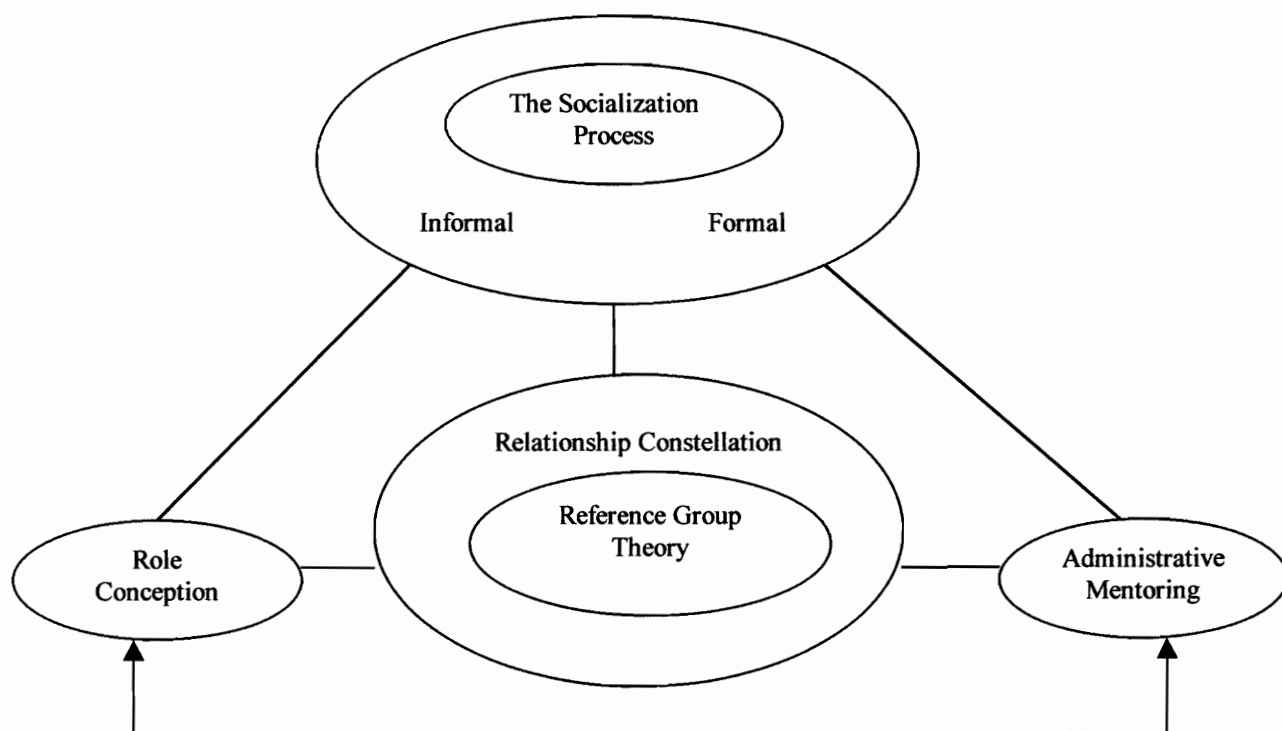


Figure 2.2: Socialization Process of a Neophyte Principal

perspectives will be addressed. These additional perspectives include role conception, reference group theory, relationship constellation, and administrative mentorship. Before describing these processes, a brief description of socialization is provided.

London (1985) claims that there are three organizational socialization stages for developing managers, which Peterson (1986) applies to the professional socialization of the principalship. In the first stage, the neophyte administrator develops a commitment to the district's values and goals, and a sense of personal efficacy. In the second stage, which represents years two, three, and four, the principal develops a sense of achievement and acknowledges his/her contribution. In the third stage at five years and beyond, the principal requires ongoing collegial contact and continuous reinforcement of his/her organizational efficacy (p. 152). Specifically this section of the socialization literature concentrates on the research of Hart (1991, 1993), Weindling and Earley (1987), and Hodgkinson, (1996).

Hart's (1991) comprehensive synthesis of socialization and leadership succession literature employs four themes in organizational socialization as: socialization tactics employed by the organization, socialization stages of new members, personal and social contexts which shape the process, and outcomes or effects.

Socialization Tactics

According to Hart (1991), socialization tactics entail the collective or individual socialization context in which the principal find themselves, the varying degrees of formality in that context, and the content of what is learned in terms of sequential or

random socialization. The social environment may also be manipulated in terms of role models and through a sense of belonging in the system (p.454).

Socialization Stages

Researchers (Feldman, 1981, 1976b; Hart, 1993; Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975; Van Maanen, 1975) have utilized socialization stages to elucidate the steps through which all new members pass. Linear models of socialization have stages moving through steps along a continuum, until equilibrium and integration within the new setting is reached, while cyclical perspectives see the process continuing perpetually (Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985). Phases of development and uncertainty are experienced in both linear and cyclical models of socialization when gradual change emerges and adjustments are necessary to stabilize the socialization process. Hart (1991, 1993) further delineates the socialization stages: the encounter, anticipation, or confrontation stage; the socialization adjustment, accommodation, and clarity stage; and the stabilization, role management and location stage.

Personal and Social Context

The socialization and succession stages occur in context, when newcomers enter into existing social worlds. This occurs when the neophyte brings a personal perspective, outside influences, and creative skepticism to the new environment. Organizational entry requires that the neophyte learn the nature of the new culture while attempting to effect change within it (Schein, 1985). The social structure is the context of succession; it is the human system into which principals seek integration. Hart (1993) explains that

individuals tend to increase their interactions with people that are similar to themselves and limit their interactions with people that are dissimilar.

Outcomes or Effects

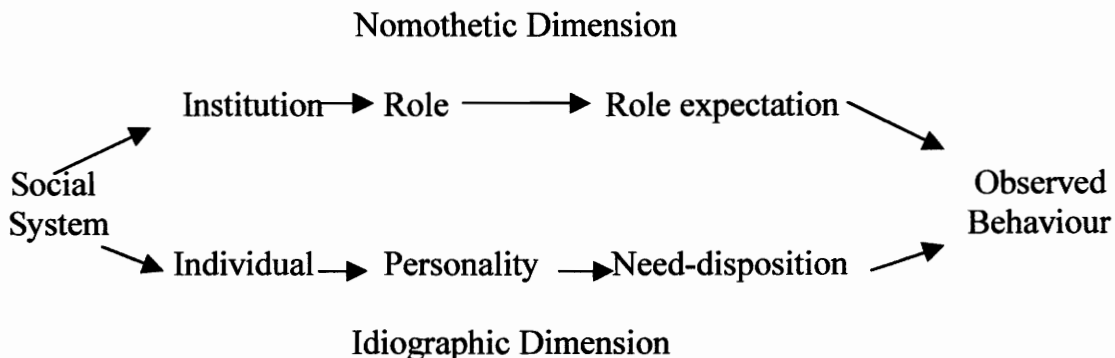
According to Hart (1993), the cumulative effect of socialization experiences in personal and professional settings were individual rather than organizational, because each principal's experience is unique. Predicted outcomes occur at the personal or organizational level and involve several aspects of the role. Content innovation outcomes occur with changes in the way the new principal performs the role. When role innovation occurs during socialization, the neophyte principal rejects most of the norms governing performance and conduct and attempts are made to redefine the ends as well as the means (Schein, 1978). The outcome that principals most often sought appears to be personal development accompanied by a re-evaluation of values and goals by members of the school community (Hart, 1991, p. 466).

Weindling and Earley's (1987) seminal study on the principal(s) in England and Wales documents the demands being placed on heads in the first year on the job. The research examines the range of strategies to cope with the demands of the job; identifies the knowledge and skills that are necessary to carry out the role; and provides guidelines for training the newcomers to their positions. Their study provides seven recommendations for assisting new heads with the challenges of preparing effective in-school leaders: (a) efforts to improve preparation for headship should be concentrated on aspiring heads; (b) providers should tailor senior management courses more carefully to the needs of Local Education Authorities (LEAs), heads, and deputies; (c) new heads

should fully recognize the importance of their relationships with senior management; (d) new heads should concentrate much of their effort in establishing good working relationships with staff; (e) new heads need to learn more about change theory; (f) LEAs should have a planned induction program for new heads; and (g) LEAs need to consider ways of improving support for heads (p. 184).

A follow up study conducted by Weindling and Earley (1987) reports that beginning heads are concerned with the need to respond to external initiatives, to engage in sound management while providing effective instructional leadership, and to elicit staff support in enhancing positive public relations. “The magnitude and speed of central government initiatives is unprecedented and the pressures on new head teachers are considerable” (p. 44).

Hodgkinson (1996) subscribes to Getzels and Guba’s (1957) theory on dimensions of organizational life as a method of socialization to administrative leadership (see Figure 2.3). He states that current educational organizations are institutions with certain roles and expectations (nomothetic) within which are individuals with certain



(Getzels & Guba, 1957, pp. 423-441)

Figure 2.3: Basic Organizational Dichotomy

personalities and need dispositions (idiographic). Therefore, the socialization process becomes the workable relationship between the nomothetic and the idiographic that administrators need to be able to facilitate. The nomothetic dimension consists of institution, role, and role expectations. In the nomothetic dimension, the organization creates certain positions that become occupied by individuals. Role expectations may come from job descriptions or group norms (Owens, 1998). The idiographic dimension consists of individual, personality, and need-disposition. Individuals occupying positions in the idiographic dimension end up bringing their own personality structure and needs.

In summary, the first perspective of socialization to the principalship was provided through the socialization and succession research of Hart (1991, 1993). Weindling and Earley's (1987) major study on socialization provides a second view while Hodgkinson (1996) provides the nomothetic and idiographic aspects of socialization. This next section reviews the informal and the formal aspects of socialization that are involved in developing effective principals.

Informal Socialization

The next two sections of this literature review will address the formal socialization and informal socialization of in-school administrators. For the purposes of this section, formal socialization is considered to be any activity that is organized by the school district which can be termed professional socialization, whereas informal socialization includes activities that are not organized by the school district. The following section concentrates on various informal principal socialization models and studies.

Hall and Parkay's (1992) model explains the career stage development that a neophyte principal goes through as survival, control, stability, educational leadership, and professional actualization stages. The model demonstrates a movement from positional power towards personal power, or in other words from restricting actions of others to becoming increasingly open to facilitating growth and learning for all members of the organization (p. 352). By the end of the first year, principals are more realistic about expectations for promoting change and their level of career development is strongly indicated at this time. In terms of learning the role, Augenstein and Konnert (1991) report that neophytes learn from colleagues in schools both before and after they assume the principalship.

A study conducted by Begley and Campbell-Evans (1992) finds that personal motivation prompts aspiring school administrators to enroll as candidates in preservice training programs, along with curiosity about the role, a desire for professional development, and for personal enrichment. Other influences included the challenge of the job, personal interest, and the lure of added responsibility. A later study performed by Merrill and Pounder (1999) reported the strongest influences that attract principals include: making a difference in the lives of others, empowering school change, and experiencing the opportunity to develop and grow from personal and professional relationships. They also found negative factors that influenced potential principals from taking the position. These influences are due to job stress, dealing with pressure from special interest groups and trying to balance family and job responsibilities.

Given this difficulty of attracting individuals into the principalship, Bogotch and Reidlinger (1993) posit that less emphasis be placed on early socialization and more on recruitment. Other findings from their study reveal that new principals give significantly more emphasis to instructional tasks than did experienced principals and that new principals also appear to lack the understanding towards the conflicts that exist between schools and central office. Daresh and Playko (1992) believe that new principals' concentration on task learning perhaps masks the role conflict.

Holcomb (1990) identifies ten proficiencies that are considered most essential for success but are least supported by orientation and in-service training. These proficiencies include: human relations; building rapport with teachers, parents, and students; building esprit de corps, cohesiveness, and climate; communication skills; active listening; delegating, decision-making, and task analysis; and time management (n. p.).

Neophyte principals often experience both professional socialization to school administration and organizational socialization at the same time. The organizational socialization often displaces the more carefully structured and learned professional socialization; informal influences play a more crucial role than formal ones (Hart, 1993). In summary, research on informal socialization activities does not include aspects related to formal socialization. The literature intended to corroborate the research (Duke, 1987; Hart) findings that informal activities play a crucial role in socialization practices.

Formal Socialization

This next segment addresses formal principal socialization models and studies. Many principals report that experiential learning is one of the most important aspects of

job socialization, but that universities fail to address concerns of practical and immediate significance (Duke, 1987; Peterson, 1986; Wolcott, 1973). Most of the assistance that beginning principals receive comes in anecdotal, informal ways, through technical expertise, and emotional support. Organizational socialization seems to over emphasize professional socialization, so formal induction practices need to be developed within organizational socialization processes. Internship and apprenticeship practices designed to foster substantial learning during the first two years would improve most in-service programs (Peterson, 1986).

Begley and Campbell-Evans (1992) suggest that socialization practices need to shift away from the informal socialization processes (Feldman, 1989; Van Maanen, 1976; Schein, 1968), and begin to commit toward more specific and often mandated socialization processes. Principal socialization practices are now grounded in more than the context-bound practices or theories in use (Argyris, 1982), manifested by local practitioners serving as instructors, but the programs appear to vary widely in their perceived value (Leithwood, Steinbach, & Begley, 1992).

Most formal socialization practices for in-school leadership are considered to be the responsibility of universities (Griffith, 1999). However, most programs do not reflect changing societal views; seldom do they hold relevance to school leadership or for solving practical school problems (Begley & Campbell-Evans, 1992; Bjork & Ginsberg, 1995; Calabrese, 1991; Daresh & Playko, 1992; Griffith).

Greenfield (1988) suggests that new principal socialization models should acknowledge responsibility, right judgment, and self-reflection. Leithwood, Jantz, Coffin,

and Wilson (1996) suggest that formal socialization has the potential to foster real-life problem-solving skills for principals. The challenge lies in the development of effective socialization programs “around robust theories relevant to the current and future work of school leaders and to offer forms of instruction that lead to proceduralized knowledge consistent with such theories” (p. 341).

Daresh and Playko (1997) recommend technical and managerial skills, socialization skills, and self-awareness skills as being the most critical skills deemed as necessary for the principalship. Schmieder, McGrevin, and Townley (1994) questioned California principals and superintendents what elements they believed would improve current administrative socialization programs for principals. Self-awareness was believed to be the most significant, followed by socialization and technical skills. New principals want training practices to include more practical information on current issues and less theory, longer and more rigorous internships, training in conflict management and in human relations, opportunity to shadow a principal, opportunity to more frequently discuss negotiation issues, to offer budget training, and to provide more information on the politics of education. Superintendents perceived that the biggest challenges for neophyte principals to be interpersonal skills, academic and curriculum leadership, managing fiscal resources, and management and leadership roles (p. 285).

The aforementioned critical skills for new administrators are similar to those professional socialization skills identified by Parkay, Currie, and Rhodes (1992) as professional development, educational leadership, and professional actualization. In the study, it was perceived that principals need to act as visionary leaders rather than engage

in behaviours characterized by the survival and control stages. “The luxury of becoming socialized on the job is no longer a reality for beginning principals” (p. 289). More collaborative links between universities, in-school administrators, and school divisions are essential for a realistic understanding of administration realities (p. 291).

According to Richards and Fox (1990), school districts have the professional and ethical responsibility to provide training opportunities for aspiring administrators. Spradling (1989) recommends revising formal induction programs to include pre-service and in-service training to assist newcomers in dealing more effectively with time management, and with practice in delegation of authority and responsibility. District offices have the responsibility to establish mentor/protégé relationships with the new principal. Neophyte principals need assistance in budget preparation, staff member selection, student activity planning and supervision, and in dealing with unforeseen teacher turnover, community pressure groups, and unsatisfactory office personnel (p. 72).

The following four aspects are involved in both the informal and formal socialization processes. More specifically, the next section examines the notion of role conception as an integral aspect in the socialization process.

Role Conception

The move from a teaching position to the principalship is pivotal in developing creative leaders; it is at this point that either an ideology of creativity or a commitment to the status quo is developed (Shaughnessy, 1995). Instead of waiting for individuals to be self-selected into the administrative role, educational leaders should be identified and groomed in a systematic way (Boon, 1998). A number of researchers (Crow, Mecklowitz,

& Weekes, 1992) prescribe ways of addressing the call for reform towards administrator recruitment.

Neophyte principals have problems with clarifying the role of the principal (Hodgkinson, 1996; Owens, 1998) they question who they are and what they should be doing after becoming the principal (Barnett, 1995). New to the profession they have limits on technical expertise, and difficulties with the socialization process within the personal, professional and organizational roles that encompass the position of the principalship (Hodgkinson).

Heck (1995) offers an exploratory theoretical model of socialization that elaborates on Peterson's (1986) notion that organizational socialization is more significant than occupational socialization (p. 152) and on Hart's (1991) contention that organizational socialization was more important than professional socialization in shaping neophyte principal's performance. The results of this study reveal that organizational socialization directly affects administrative performance and that the effect of professional socialization is mostly indirect.

Ross (1991) suggests that central office administrators should design more helpful socialization experiences than what currently exists in most districts. More specifically, he addresses the issues of: communication, support of administrators during crises, and the necessity to encourage more women to enter the principalship. Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) advocate that "like it or not, school districts are very much involved in the training of principals. The informal on-the-job learning that accrues to teachers, supervisors, and administrators can be ignored or promoted" (p. 260).

In summary, research identifies role conception of the principal through an innovative rather than traditional (Crow et al., 1992), custodial orientation and through recognition of role clarification problems on the part of neophyte principals. Some researchers (Heck, 1995; Ross, 1991) suggest that central office administrators need to design more supportive socialization experiences for neophyte administrators, as organizational socialization has proven to directly affect administrative performance.

The next stage of a beginning principal's socialization process involves the following two-step process (see Figure 2.2): reference groups and the relationship constellation. The former discusses the process of selecting individuals as a frame of reference within the context of his or her field, while the latter discusses developing relationships that provide professional support in the areas that are desired by the neophyte principal.

Reference Group Theory

Some social scientists have adopted the term "reference group" to include behaviour oriented to groups and individuals (Hollander, 1981; Merton, 1968; Shibutani, 1961). Whatever the reason for the abbreviated expression, Merton suggests that research and theory tends to focus on the term reference groups to the neglect of reference individuals. However, for the purposes of this literature review, the term reference individual(s) will be utilized to mean the same thing as reference group(s).

The reference theory concept considers the influence that a particular group or individual may have on other people. By choosing relevant reference groups or individuals, the new principal is able to identify with standards and values that are

considered as rewarding to the school district. This next section focuses on the selection of reference individuals pertaining to its ability to function as an aspect of the reliance structure for developing effective beginning principals.

Selection of reference individuals.

In the beginning, reference individuals started with the simple idea initiated by James (1890), Baldwin (1906), and Mead (1934) and further developed by Hyman (1955), Stouffer (1955), Shibutani (1961) and Merton (1968) that people take the standards of significant others as a basis for self-appraisal and evaluation. Hyman's pioneering study sought to have his subjects report the groups or individuals which they had taken for comparison with their own status. Later research by Shibutani notes that each person acts on the basis of each individual's definition of the situation. People categorize the transaction in which they are involved, locate themselves within it, and decide upon their obligation. The consistency arises from the fact that people generally utilize the same perspective as those that they share a similar viewpoint. Once a person has adopted a particular point of view, it becomes their working conception of the world and this frame of reference is utilized upon each situation encountered by the individual. The diversity of interpretations often come from the fact that key objects, though designated by the same symbols, assume different meanings for people (pp. 250-251).

Merton (1968) generalizes that the aim of reference group theory is "to systematize the determinants and consequences of those processes of evaluation and self-appraisal in which the individual takes the values or standards of other individuals and groups as a comparative frame of reference (p.288). Shibutani (1961) defines the term

reference individual as any identifiable person whose supposed perspective is used by the actor as a frame of reference in the organization of his/her perceptual field. Merton suggests that reference individuals are innumerable: any of the groups of which one is a member or groups of which one is not a member, can become points of reference for shaping one's attitudes, evaluations, and behaviour. The contention arises for developing a theory of reference when different people are taken as a frame of reference for self-evaluation and attitude formation.

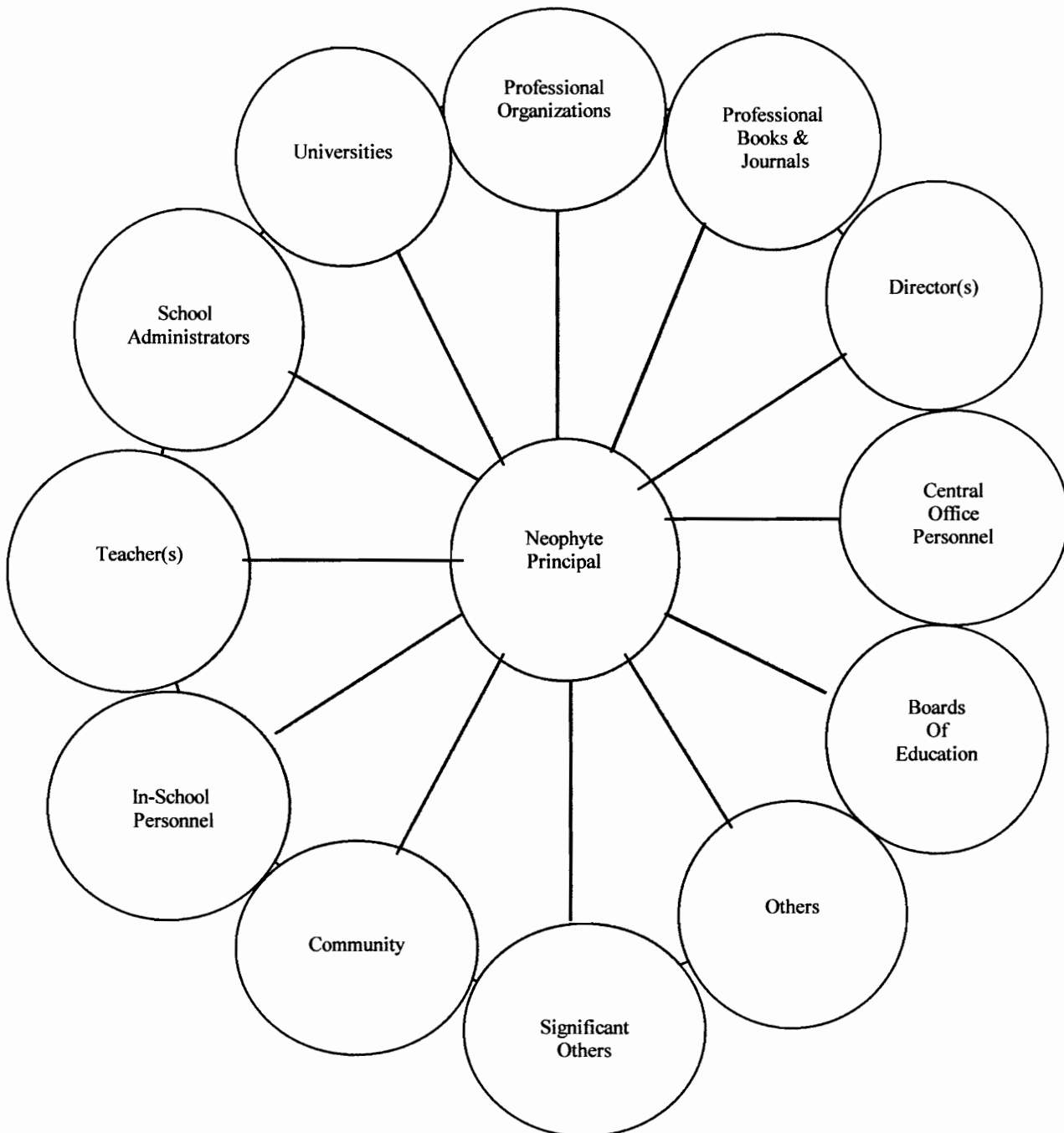
Reference individuals have often been described as role models in social psychology, yet as the terms imply the assumption obscures a basic difference in the matter to which they refer (Merton, 1968). According to Merton, the person who identifies himself/herself with a reference individual will seek to approximate the behaviour and values of that individual in several of their roles. The concept of role model is thought to be limited with only one or a selective few roles. A role model may become a reference individual if his/her multiple roles are adopted for emulation rather than emulation remaining confined to the one role on the basis of which the initial psychological relationship was established (p. 357). He further states that just as roles can be segregated in the course of social interaction, they also can be in the form of reference orientations. The emulation of an individual may be restricted to limited aspects of their behaviour and values and this can be referred to as role modeling. On the other hand, if emulation extends to include a wider array of behaviours and values of these people they can be described as reference individuals (pp. 356-357).

The conceptual distinction generates the problem of selecting people to act as role models or reference individuals. Merton (1968) states that “partial identification” occurs with the former while “full identification” occurs in the latter. The circumstances allowing for full or partial identification of a reference individual appear difficult. However, Merton distinguishes a role model from a reference individual by stating, “if the interaction is segmental and confined to certain role relationships, this alone would allow the emergence only of a role model rather than a more comprehensive reference individual” (p. 357). The partial identification of the one role may motivate the search for more comprehensive knowledge of the behaviour and values of the role model in other settings. This then extends a partial identification of a role model to full identification, thus generating an active concern over the role model’s behaviour and values that had been established prior to coming into prominence with the role (p. 357).

In summary, a reference individual is able to demonstrate several values and preferred behaviours due to his/her full identification with the neophyte, whereas a role model is able to demonstrate one or a selected few roles due to his/her partial identification with the neophyte.

Relationship Constellation

In review of the conceptual and theoretical framework described thus far, a neophyte’s reliance structure has been based upon the informal and formal socialization processes, the role conception of the principal, and the theory of reference individuals. The next section will examine the application of “the relationship constellation” as another aspect of a neophyte’s reliance structure (see Figure 2.4). Kram’s (1988)



(Adapted from Kram, 1988, p. 149)

Figure 2.4: The Relationship Constellation of a Neophyte's Reliance Structure

relationship constellation model is based on a corporate setting and consequently does not fit the educational context of this study. Therefore, to make the model more suitable to the context of this study terminology from the field of educational administration has been incorporated into the model.

The relationship constellation may not be adequate, in which case an individual may feel unsupported. In addition, the relationship constellation may change over time and as a result, a neophyte may choose to develop new relationships that provide the professional development that is desired. Figure 2.4 is to be utilized as an example of what a relationship constellation may look like and is subject to change pending on individual needs.

The term constellation of relations (Shibutani, 1961) signifies relationships that are developed whenever the same people come together they develop sentiments toward one another and form a distinct type of grouping. Thompson's (1976) preliminary study of engineers and scientists supports the notion of learning from one's subordinates to prepare individuals for advancement. In addition, an exploratory study of managers reveals that members provide career and psychosocial functions typically provided by mentors (Isabella, 1983). According to Kram (1988), career and psychosocial functions that support the development of a career can be provided by a range of relationships. This range of relationships is what Kram identifies as the "constellation of relationships" that supports an individual's development at any given time. In cases where the relationship constellation may not be adequate, she notes that the relationship constellation changes over time as people leave the organization, or major organizational changes such as

promotions, transfers, or reorganizations may disrupt previously enhanced relationships. At this time an individual may choose to develop new relationships that provide effective development (p. 149).

Describing what a relationship constellation should look like for a particular individual is difficult (Kram, 1988). Research suggests that predictable developmental tasks are important and that relationships help address these tasks (Clawson, 1979; Dalton, Thompson, & Price, 1977; Hall, 1986; Levinson, 1978; Schein, 1978;). Kram suggests that having the ability to diagnose individuals' needs, attitudes, skills and organizational circumstances will point to the relationships that can provide critical developmental functions. Individuals benefit from a diagnostic approach to managing relationships in an organization (Kram). Kram believes that "a systematic assessment of one's developmental needs, one's current relationship constellation, the opportunities for building interpersonal skills, is the first step in managing one's relationship" (p. 155).

First, Kram (1988) suggests that a systematic assessment of one's developmental needs requires active introspection and self-awareness. Thus, rather than waiting for developmental opportunities, an individual identifies what he/she needs in terms of guidance, coaching, exposure, and other possible developmental experiences. She notes that some of these may be forthcoming in a system while others may be lacking. The most important aspect is the recognition of which developmental needs might be met in relationships with significant others (p. 155).

Second, according to Kram (1988), a systematic assessment of one's current relationship constellation indicates what relationships are providing which developmental

functions, and where assistance is necessary. When assistance is necessary, she suggests the next process in a systematic review entails identifying the opportunities for new relationships or for enriching existing relationships. The system may be able to identify an individual who might be available to provide developmental functions, and how to go about promoting such alliances. It becomes essential to anticipate what the developmental needs may be in order to build mutually enhancing relationships (Baird & Kram, 1983).

Networking is one option that individuals can utilize to expand one's knowledge (Kram, 1988). Networks vary in their purpose and function and whether they exist within an organization, a profession, or a particular geographical area (Welch, 1980). According to Kram, networking provides the functions of information sharing, career strategizing, emotional support, and friendship.

Finally, Kram (1988) suggests that an individual's self-diagnosis should result in a plan, which will enhance the relationships that provide developmental functions. She claims that if a relationship constellation needs to be modified and potential recruits are not apparent, one may have to look outside of the organization. However, she posits that often resources within the organization have not been utilized, but are unrecognized or out of reach because of individual skill limitations or organizational features that interfere with efforts to build relationships (p. 157).

In summary, the research map identified the relationship constellation as one aspect of a neophyte's reliance structure. The three perspectives that were addressed included the assessment of the individual, the assessment of the organization, and a self-

diagnosis. From these assessments, an individual can develop the relationship constellation to suit his/her professional development.

Administrative Mentoring

The last concept in the section on the informal and formal socialization process is administrative mentoring. Mentoring programs potentially play a role in the development of shared visions and socialization (Crow & Mathews, 1998). In educational administration, mentors act as role models, counselors, supporters, guides, friends (Kram, 1988), coaches (Daresh, 1997), advisors (Peddy, 1998), teachers, sponsors, encouragers, and befrienders (English, 1998) for the neophyte administrator. Examining mentoring from the theoretical perspective of socialization clarifies the goal of mentoring as aiding professional learning.

Brim (1966) defines “socialization” as “the processes by which persons acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that make them more or less able members of their society” (p. 3). Mentoring becomes a means of socialization to assist individuals in acquiring the knowledge, skills, behaviours, and values necessary to perform the role of an effective school administrator (Crow & Mathews, 1998). Fisher (1986) suggests that socialization is more than learning how to perform the techniques of the job.

Actual roles change in terms of their knowledge base, strategy, and mission (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Role changes occur due to environmental or societal problems and role succession where the individual has a different style than the predecessor (Hart, 1993; Schein, 1971). In addition, organizations also change through the socialization process. According to Crow and Mathews (1998) when newcomers enter an organization

the norms, values, and beliefs of these organizations become vulnerable when the talents of the newcomers differ from their predecessor. Boon (1998) reports that 'mentoring' has gained increasing popularity in the training of school administrators. Moberg (2000) suggests that mentors or role models "are likely to be especially influential in the professional lives of employees early in their careers, for the inexperienced are often concerned about meeting expectations and not violating crucial norms" (p. 685). Mentoring becomes a socialization method (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) that utilizes an experienced in-school leader to share his/her knowledge and expertise with a less experienced individual (Crow and Mathews, 1998; Peddy, 1998).

The separate school system in Edmonton, Alberta initiated a mentoring program in 1994-95 in response to indicators that project that eighty per cent of its practicing administrators will have retired at or near the turn of the twenty-first century (Gorius, 1999). In the United States, it is estimated that seventy-five per cent of current principals will leave their positions by the turn of the next decade (Daresh & Male, 2000; Ferrandino, 2000). Other fundamental reasons for initiating a mentoring program included significant changes in the role of in-school leadership, concern for new administrators who would not have access to district expertise to the same extent as their predecessors because of downsizing trends (Riordan & Hildebrandt, 1995). Research conducted by Restine (1997) suggests that traditional preparation programs are not meeting the needs of new administrators; and that mentoring programs are beneficial to mentors, protégés and organizations (Bolam et al., 1995; Boon, 1998; Caruso, 1992; Daloz, 1991; Daresh & Playko, 1992; Rosenbach, 1993; Wicks, 2000).

Benefits to mentors.

Some of the benefits that researchers have found for administrators who serve as mentors include: improved job satisfaction, increased peer recognition, and potential career advancement (Boon, 1998; Bolam et al., 1995; Caruso, 1992; Crow & Mathews, 1998; Daloz, 1991; Daresh & Playko, 1992; Daresh & Playko, 1994; Rosenbach, 1993; Wicks, 2000). Boon suggests that the greatest reward for mentors seems to be the improvement in overall job satisfaction. Mentors appreciate being assigned a protégé because it broadens their own knowledge and makes them more aware of how and why they do things in specific ways. In addition, protégés can help to solve problems and provide a new outlook or perspective from the outside (pp. 34-37).

Benefits to protégés.

Several researchers agree that there are also benefits for protégés in the mentoring practice. Reiche (1986) suggests that protégés develop higher levels of credibility, gain greater confidence, achieve a greater awareness of strengths, learn to make tough decisions, and learn management skills (pp. 50-56). Similarly, Barnett (1990) believes that protégés develop human resource skills and become more conscious of the dynamics of working with teachers (pp. 17-26). In addition, researchers (Daresh & Playko, 1990; Fagan & Walter, 1982; Playko, 1990; Rosenbach, 1993) note that protégés develop confidence, competence, and better communication skills in the mentoring practice. The protégés' perception is that contact with someone who is actually performing the job to which they aspire is a critical dimension of principal preparation (Daloz, 1991). It is well

known that mentors and protégés are not the only ones who benefit from a mentoring practice. Indeed, school districts as a whole are significant beneficiaries.

Benefits to school districts.

The literature suggests that mentoring enhances work effectiveness (Kram, 1985; Samier, 2000) and job success (Fagenson, 1989; Hunt & Michael, 1983; Roche, 1979; Stumpf & London, 1981). Writers (Crow & Mathews, 1998; Daresh & Playko, 1994; Rosenbach, 1993) propose formal mentoring programs have proven to be effective in helping new administrators develop professionally. They also believe school systems benefit from administrative mentoring programs by: reporting that they have staffs that are more capable; an attitude of lifelong learning is created among all administrators; higher motivation levels and job satisfaction are found in the staff; staff demonstrates an improved sense of self-esteem; and greater organizational productivity results (Daresh & Playko, 1994, p. 4). Myers and Humphreys' (1985) study indicates that many organizations utilize mentoring to reduce turnover and to build loyalty among the newcomers. They suggest that a mentoring relationship integrates the neophyte more effectively into the organization, so that they do not get lost in the system (pp. 9-14).

In summary, the educational administration literature is replete with research on administrative mentoring in addition to the general socialization literature. It includes definitions for the role of a mentor and protégé in a mentoring relationship, and of mentorship models (Eby, 1997; Daresh & Playko, 1992; Storey & Zellinsky, 1993), programs (English, 1998; Kram, 1988; Riordan & Hildebrandt, 1995), and studies (Bolam et al., 1995; Boon, 1998; Chao, 1997; Daresh, J. C., Dunlap, K., Gantner, M. W.,

& Hvizdak, M. 1998; Daresh & Male, 2000;). The thematic map (p. 14) has identified the significance of the socialization process in assisting the transition into the principalship for the neophyte principal. In consideration of the problems associated with beginning a principalship, the literature examines the kinds of assistance that neophyte principals are seeking in order to become effective leaders.

Self-Efficacy and the Beginning Principal's Need for Support

Over the last twenty-five years, efforts to improve the quality of education at the school level have focused on the principal as one of the most important figures in school reform (Ferrandino, 2000; McKague, 2001; Renihan. 1999). In general, one of the assumptions of leadership models is that what leaders do determines whether or not organizations are effective in achieving their goals (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). A number of researchers contend that what principals do is a direct consequence of what and how they think (Leithwood, 1995; Leithwood et al.,). Sergiovanni (1991) refers to mental images and frameworks through which administrative realities are envisioned by principals. Leithwood and colleagues (Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins, 1994) refer to internal processes (feelings, beliefs, preferences, and thought processes) which influence behavioural decisions. These internal processes, Leithwood (1995) asserts are "the lens through which all external influences must be interpreted" (p. 117).

During the first year of a principalship, neophyte principals try to exert their leadership in a way that is consistent with their personal intentions. At the same time, they experience pressures from subordinates, superiors, parents, and the community at large to act in a way that is consistent with their expectations (Crow, 1992). Neophyte

principals enter schools and school systems with clearly defined cultures. They are socialized to fit the existing culture rather than promoting an improved ethos. Thus, both personal and organizational experiences and conditions influence the role conceptions and subsequent behaviour of these neophyte principals (Osterman & Sullivan, 1996).

Conceptually, these perceptual differences represent differences in the principals' sense of efficacy. According to Bandura (1986), attitudinal differences as well as behavioural differences differentiate those with high self-efficacy from those with low self-efficacy. Those with a high sense of self-efficacy differ from those with a low sense of self-efficacy in three dimensions: assessment of their accomplishment in this position, expectations regarding their future success, and perception of the environment. The ones with a high sense of self-efficacy perceive themselves to have been successful in the past and emphasize their accomplishments rather than their failures. Based on their experiences in this position, they are optimistic about their ability to succeed in future endeavors; and when they assess the environment, they are more likely to focus on opportunities and sources of support. In contrast, those with low self-efficacy dwell on past failure (rather than accomplishments), are more anxious about their performance and pessimistic about their ability to succeed in the future, and dwell on problems and obstacles rather than on opportunities for success (Bandura, 1995).

For new principals the first year is known for being a notoriously difficult time, and research in the U.K. (Daresh, 1986; Parkay & Hall, 1992; Weindling & Earley, 1987) has shown that beginning headteachers experience problems as they commence new positions. In a study of beginning headteachers, Bolam et al. (1995) found that the most

pressing problems facing contemporary new heads are (a) concerns over the practice and style of their predecessor; (b) problems over personnel related issues such as incompetent staff; and (c) dealing with the school budget, time management, and creating and maintaining a good public image (p.35). According to Griffith (1999), the challenge of developing self-efficacy is “with providing coordination among classroom teachers, discerning needs of the external environment (parent and community), and providing a bridge between the external environment and the school” (p. 268). In addition, researchers (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982) found that neophyte principals are expected to create and achieve school consensus on instructional program, goals, and academic standards; maintaining student discipline; buffering classrooms from outside interferences; allocating school resources effectively; knowing community power structures; and maintaining appropriate relations with parents. Fowler (1999) argues that the reason that shortages are being reported in rural schools is that more and more responsibility is heaped on principals and that they receive less and less support.

The efficacy of a neophyte principal depends on a complicated set of factors (Lawson, 1999). Research identifies special challenges for the first year principal resulting from confusion around the actual dimensions of the role of the principal, implementing change, improving the instructional program, and feelings of isolation and loss of socialization (Daresh & Male, 2000; Griffith, 1999; Gunraj & Rutherford, 1999; Lawson, 1999; Renihan, 1999). According to McKague (2001), the traditional role of principals in schools are changing and will continue to be reshaped, redefined, and renegotiated as restructuring occurs. The role of the principal is changing in an

environment of restructuring and is confirmed by a multitude of researchers who use such terms as “shared decision making”, “shared management tactics”, “decentralized leadership”, “transformational leadership”, “servant leadership”, and “ethical leadership” (Crow & Peterson, 1994; Leithwood, 1992; Murphy, 1994; Murphy & Hallinger, 1992; Murphy & Louis, 1994; Sergiovanni, 1991; Walker, 1998) to describe the leadership of an effective school.

Educational administrators are occupying roles with peculiarly contradictory demands (Daresh & Male, 2000; Griffith, 1999; Gunraj & Rutherford, 1999; Kowch, 2000; Lawson, 1999; Merrill & Pounder, 1999; Renihan, 1999). On one hand, the principal is expected to work actively to transform, restructure, and redefine schools and the processes therein (Daresh & Male; Goldring & Rallis, 1993), while on the other hand, they hold organizational positions historically and traditionally committed to resisting change and maintaining stability (Bredeson, 1985; Sergiovanni, 1992). According to Murphy and Hallinger (1992), principals are being forced to clarify roles and responsibilities at a time when schools and societies are in a state of turmoil. These political, social, economic, and demographic changes are introducing unparalleled opportunities, unexpected crises, and seemingly intractable problems for new school administrators (Murphy, 1991).

Daresh and Male (2000) acknowledge that those stepping into in-school leadership roles face enormous responsibilities. These include having to resolve conflicts and problems within a wide range of constituent groups. The leader of a school is responsible for the maintenance of a multi-million dollar facility. He or she must deal

with diverse expectations from a variety of constituents. Along with these expectations, the principal's attention must focus on the ability of students to learn and, increasingly, be able to demonstrate that they have learned to external reviewers. Providing in-school leadership is a complex activity, but for the novice principal the challenges that appear now can be overwhelming (pp. 98-99).

The constraints under which rural-based principals work is not new, as P. Renihan's (1985) earlier study revealed that inadequacies existed in the available time for administration and supervision was inadequate, problems of isolation, difficulties with community and local board politics, and feelings of ambiguity regarding the role. A more recent study of in-school leadership in Saskatchewan reveals the challenges that people are not coming forward for the principal's job (Renihan, 1999). The following reasons were provided by prospective principals for not coming forward: (a) perceptions of hassle and work overload; (b) apprehensions about time demands; (c) poor incentives and compensation; (d) increase in responsibility; (e) perceived lack of support and isolation; and (f) reluctance to take on parental and community issues (p. 19). In the U. S., a study conducted by NASSP (1998) reports that "lack of sufficient compensation" followed by "job too stressful" and "too much time required" are the most significant barriers for filling school administration positions. Sigford (1998) suggests that in-school administrators are typically ill-prepared and ill-trained to handle the socio-emotional facets of their jobs. "The literature does not discuss the stages of change and grief that a person must complete successfully in order to remain and be successful in the position" (p. iv).

McAdams (1998) identifies several additional considerations in his analysis of the principal shortage in the U.S. He reports that the impact of democratic governance and the enhanced power of stakeholders like students, parents, and teachers have steadily diminished the principal's authority, despite the principal being held accountable for student performance. McAdams suggests that this "middle management bind of responsibility without commensurate authority" leads to increased frustration, increased stress, and diminished job satisfaction for many beginning principals (p. 39).

Summary

Following the comprehensive review of the literature as indicated by the thematic map (see figure 2.1, p. 14), the contents of the chapter identified three core literature areas. First, the literature on contemporary rural schools provides the context of traditional challenges that education is confronted with in rural areas. Subsequent literature addressed the most serious issues confronting the principal as the proliferation of expectations, insufficient administrative time, inadequate rewards and compensation, community politics, lack of support and preparation. Some of these challenges were due to social, political, economic, and demographic changes that have brought about unexpected problems for new school administrators.

Second, the literature pertaining to the establishment of a reliance structure for neophyte principals was examined. In order to develop the concept of the reliance structure, a number of relationships need to be developed in the relationship constellation. As well, a number of processes will need to be established in the informal and formal socialization processes for neophyte principals. The literature review focused on the

significance of neophyte principals understanding the nomothetic and idiographic dimensions of organizations. Subsequent sections included literature on reference group theory, and the selection of reference individuals for opportunities of administrative mentoring in a neophyte principal's socialization process.

Considering that a significant number of principals will be retiring in the next decade, the last section of the literature review focused on the challenges associated with developing leaders to be effective in beginning principal preparation programs. The literature revealed that the self-efficacy of a neophyte principal was dependent upon the amount and different types of support that a neophyte principal receives. This dissertation provides the means to view the context of contemporary rural schools, the reliance structures of neophyte administrators, and the socialization processes, which in turn may promote the efficacy of developing quality leaders to lead schools.

CHAPTER 3

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Essentially the problem posed by the researcher was to investigate the development and establishment of reliance structures among rural neophyte administrators in southern Saskatchewan during their first year as principal. Specific research questions were formulated to guide the investigation. These questions addressed: (1) the school context; (2) the reliance structure; (3) the informal and formal socialization processes; and (4) self-efficacy. The context of the school determines how readily available support may be. A number of areas had to be developed and established in the reliance structure. Informal and formal socialization processes prepared individuals to learn the norms, the value system, and the social skills of a new position. Determining neophyte principal self-efficacy removes the element of self-doubt that comes from being new to a position during the first year.

This chapter outlines the research design, the methodologies for the study, the concept of perception, the data collection instruments, the participants, the associated procedures for data analyses, and the procedures for establishing confidentiality and ethics for the study.

Research Design

The selection of a research model was determined by the nature of the research problem, and the nature of the phenomena under investigation. The problem statement and research questions, as developed in chapter one, provided the guiding rationale for

the multiple-method approach for this inquiry. Greene et al., (1989) propose five purposes for combining methods in a single study as:

1. triangulation in the classic sense of seeking convergence of results;
2. complimentary, in that overlapping and different facets of a phenomenon may emerge;
3. developmentally, wherein the first method is used sequentially to help inform the second method;
4. initiation, wherein contradictions and fresh perspectives emerge;
5. expansion, wherein the mixed methods add scope and breadth to the study. (p. 255)

Researchers (Denzin, 1988; Geertz, 1973) have suggested that the interpretive methodology is the most appropriate strategy for understanding “lived experiences”. Lived experiences emphasize that experience is not just cognitive, but also includes emotions (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Interpretivists see their goal as providing a “description that goes beyond the mere or bare reporting of an act, but describes and probes intentions, motives, meanings, contexts, situations, and circumstances of action” (Denzin, 1988, p. 39).

Interpretive scholars consider every human situation to be novel, emergent, and filled with multiple, often conflicting meanings and interpretations (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Erickson (1986) defines interpretive research as the study of the immediate and local meanings of social actions for the participants involved in them. Denzin (1988) suggests that the interpretivist attempts to capture the core of these meanings and contradictions. This means that researchers study things, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

In the recent past, researchers have advocated the use of multiple research methods to increase the validity of test-based inferences (Eisenhart & Howe, 1992; Merriam, 1991; Denzin, 1989, 1970). This process is known as triangulation. Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies will be utilized to guide this investigation.

Triangulation

Triangulation is the use of multiple data gathering techniques and procedures to measure the same phenomena (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Mason, 1997). The term triangulation is also a strategy whereby data are collected from a variety of methods to cross-check the information received from an individual source. In addressing the issues of selective recall for this study, data was triangulated via surveys, in-depth personal interviews, and telephone interviews. As such, triangulation is grounded in the belief that both quantitative and qualitative research methods be viewed as complementary rather than as rivals (Renihan, 1985). The belief stems from the recognition that any one methodology brings with it a set of strengths and limitations (Merriam, 1991; Denzin, 1970). The value of triangulation lies in its ability to refine, broaden, and strengthen conceptual linkages through the employment of multiple research methods (Berg, 1989). Denzin reports, “the flaws of one method are often the strength of another, and by combining methods, observers can achieve the best of each, while overcoming their unique differences” (p. 308).

The present study, which examined the reliance structure of neophyte principals, adopted such an approach. In order to examine the reliance structure, the perceptions of neophyte principals were solicited via questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and telephone

interviews. With the study being based on a retrospective approach of principals' perception, a brief description of the concept was provided.

Perception

In this study, principals' perceptions of their reliance structure were described, identified and discussed. Murch (1973) describes perception as an individual's continuous interaction with the environment and the associated mental processes of interpreting the impact and importance of external events. Perception involves the manner in which the observer relates to the environment or the way in which information is gathered and interpreted by the observer. For the purposes of this study, perception can be defined as "the manner in which people view the world around them, the processes by which sensory inputs are received and organized into useful concepts" (Middlemast & Hilt, 1968, p. 51).

Renihan (1985) identifies three distinct phases of perception: "sensing" various information about an object or person; "selecting" from the information those facts that will be useful in forming the concept; and "organizing" the information into useful concepts or views pertaining to the object or person. Consequently, perception becomes an important process in the formation of concepts that influence our behaviour and, therefore, is critical to the current study. According to Casey (1976) "perception is viewed both as the critical point at which the external world first impinges upon the perceiver and as the way in which these data are assimilated by the perceiver to become the basis for subsequent cognitive activity" (p. 128).

The major factor controlling the perceptual activities of an individual is his/her attention or orientation to the stimulus (Bourne, 1966). Middlemast and Hilt (1968) suggest that the perception process may be influenced by several factors involving the nature of the perceiver. These factors include: the general nature of the other person; the intentions of the other person; the importance of the other person; and the emotional state of the perceiver.

Murch (1973) suggests "if we consider perception to be dependent on the interaction of effective stimuli and the sum total of all previous experiences of the individual, then each individual's perception of an effective stimuli would be unique and different from those of another individual" (p. 4). For these reasons, many scholars point to the individual and subjective nature of perception as a focal point for criticism. More specifically, problems of lack of awareness, faulty perceptions, the effect of group norms, mind-set, and social desirability have been proposed as sources of errors in the study of perception (Asch, 1956; Cronbach, 1946; Edwards, 1957; Oppenheim, 1966). On the other hand, researchers advocate the study of individual perceptions because of the succinct nature of the research methodology and the variety of social reality that is provided by different interpretations (Meighan, 1981; Moos, 1979; Rosenshine, 1970; Silverman, 1993; Walberg, 1976;).

The concept of perception is of significance to this study because, through the perception process, ideas become framed that later influence one's behaviour (Renihan, 1985). These ideas become the basis of the beliefs and assumptions that individuals hold when they conceptualize their position within an organization (Quinn, 1988). Therefore,

the study of second year principals' perceptions may provide a means to gain a better understanding of the reliance structures that are established during their neophyte year.

Data Collection

This study was delimited to an examination of rural principals within southern Saskatchewan. This study utilized three forms of data collection: survey questionnaires, in-depth personal interviews, and telephone interviews. Second year principals, with no prior administrative experience, have been previously identified by a telephone interview with all rural Directors in southern Saskatchewan school systems. The telephone interviews produced a population of twenty-six. Prior to the questionnaire being sent, all 26 principals were contacted by telephone to notify them of the study and that they met the criteria to participate. Questionnaires were then sent out to all twenty-six principals in order to gather initial data from the full population concerning the issues and challenges perceived during the first year of a principalship. After the surveys were reviewed, subsequent telephone calls were made to follow up on questionnaires that were not received. In total 25 of the 26 questionnaires were returned. All of the qualified participants were telephoned and had the opportunity to participate in an interview that corroborated and triangulated the survey data. Of these interviews, nine were conducted in-person, nine were tape-recorded over the telephone and six were directly transcribed over the telephone. The interviews were a means of providing further elaboration to the survey data.

The Survey

Survey research is a procedure in which one studies a phenomenon, often by securing information from representative groups of people, institutions or governments (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). According to McMillan and Schumacher many different kinds of information are sought through surveys: (1) facts about the research question; (2) opinions or judgments about issues; and (3) attitudes or beliefs of individuals or groups. Three methods will be utilized in this study: questionnaires, personal in-depth interviews and telephone interviews.

Researchers (Gall et al., 1996) define a questionnaire as “a measure that presents a set of written questions to which all individuals in a sample respond” (p. 289). The questionnaire utilized in this study is shown in Appendix A. It is used to collect data that were not directly observable, such as feelings, motivations, attitudes, concerns, issues, and experiences of individuals. Respondents can fill out the questionnaire at their convenience, answer the items in any order, take more than one sitting to complete it, make marginal comments, skip questions or give unique responses. The purpose of the questionnaire for this study was to gain general perceptions from the total population (26) concerning the neophyte principal’s reliance structure. The researcher developed the questionnaire because no appropriate existing instrument could be found that would elicit the necessary data for this study.

The first portion of the questionnaire gathered some general demographic information to clarify the professional context of the participants as well as to provide data that was beneficial when analyzing the questionnaire responses (see Appendix A).

The following were examples of demographic data that was beneficial in the analysis of the questionnaires: the grade structure of the school, the student population of the school, the number of years of teaching experience, the gender of the principal, the educational background, as well as other questions. A second portion of the questionnaire consisted of a Likert-type scale with responses ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree (see Appendix A). The participants were asked to respond to each of the items from the perspective of whether they strongly disagreed or strongly agreed with the statement. The final portion of the questionnaire consisted of responses to 12 open-ended questions. The open-ended questions served two purposes: (1) they give the participants an opportunity to expand upon thoughts or perceptions that may have been triggered while completing the questionnaire, and (2) they address the secondary research questions that are listed in Chapter one of this document. The resulting combination of these qualitative responses, along with the demographic information and the responses on the questionnaire, completed the data gathering for the first part of this study.

In designing the questionnaire, the guidelines proposed by Best & Kahn (1998) regarding characteristics of good questionnaires were adhered to by the researcher. These included: (1) dealing with a significant topic, where the significance was clearly stated on the letter accompanying the questionnaire; (2) being as short as possible but not long enough to get the essential data; (3) designed in a neat, attractive format; and (4) having clear distinctions with important terms defined, and making sure that each question dealt with a single idea. As items were included on the questionnaire, the researcher continually reflected back to the primary research question to insure that they were

relevant to the study. This effort was strongly supported by Jaeger (1997) when he wrote, "If a particular questionnaire item does not address one or more of the research questions, then it should not be asked" (p. 462). The questions for the questionnaire and the interviews were made up from the research questions, the thematic map, and the literature review (see Appendix E).

The questions that were utilized in this questionnaire were designed from the thematic map of the literature review (see Figure 1) and from the research questions posed in chapter one. More specifically, the researcher developed literature based questions relating to: the challenges and issues confronting new principals during their first year; the level of need for a reliance structure; the value of a reliance structure in the socialization process; the nature of the reliance structure; the value of individuals identified in the reliance structure; the significance of the processes identified in the reliance structure; the relative significance and value of each element in the reliance structure; the role of the principal in establishing and maintaining the reliance structure; the impact of contextual factors upon the reliance structure; the extent to which self-reflection and professional development related to the reliance structure; and the neophyte principals level of self-efficacy during the first year. The inclusion of these questions was based upon the findings from a recent review of the literature on the reliance structures of beginning principals.

There were several advantages in using questionnaires to collect data for this study. First, a questionnaire takes less time to collect data than other methods of data collection (Gall et al., 1996). Secondly, a questionnaire was an efficient method of

collecting perceptions from a population where a phenomenon was explored (McNamara, 1994). Thirdly, a questionnaire of this type yielded information that was valuable to the specific group concerned (rural second year principals) because the data described the existing phenomenon (reliance structures) within a rural educational setting (Nisbet & Entwistle, 1970). The data generated from the questionnaire proved to be useful to beginning principals in terms of future goals or plans concerning the establishment of reliance structures. As well, a questionnaire was a useful instrument when the phenomenon being investigated (perceptions of neophyte principals reliance structures) was difficult to observe (Crowl, 1996).

There were also some limitations in utilizing a questionnaire. Best & Kahn (1998) claim that a disadvantage of questionnaires were that the responses do not measure exactly what the participants' perceptions were, but rather they are simply an indicator, which suggests these perceptions. Another limitation of a questionnaire was that the participants are in total control of the data collection process (Gall et al., 1996). The researcher can not probe further into a particular item or ask for clarification. Once the participant has completed and sent in the questionnaire, nothing can be appended to this data.

Pilot Test of the Survey

The initial draft of the questionnaire was piloted with five faculty members and five graduate students in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan. The purpose of this pilot study was to provide a measure of validity and to gain valuable insight as to the design and appropriateness of the questionnaire items.

After revisions, the instrument was redistributed to a representative group of ten principals who attend graduate classes on Saturdays. Respondents to the draft instrument were considered representative of the study sample in that they were aspiring principals or were employed as in-school administrators. The underlying premise for the questionnaire in this study was to provide the researcher with quantitative data concerning how the participants perceived their own reliance structure.

Interviews

Gall et al. (1996) define an interview as consisting of “oral questions by the interviewer and oral responses by the research participants” (p. 289). Unstructured and semi-structured interviews allow the interviewees to more openly express ideas, opinions, and perceptions (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). All 26 of the identified neophyte principals in rural Saskatchewan were asked to participate in an interview to provide detail into the notion of the reliance structure.

Researchers (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; McMillan & Schumacher, 1997) suggest that utilizing both types of questioning provides a high degree of objectivity and uniformity, yet allows for probing and clarification. Interviews were favoured because participants speak in their natural language, and the researcher was allowed to pursue responses for more or better clarification concerning the issue under study. Data collection may be recorded through audio and video recordings, or through field notes. Honesty and accuracy in responses requires a situation whereby the respondents trust the interviewer, particularly if the interview questions require the respondents to take risks.

Due to the number of people who participated in the interviews, two types of interviews were conducted. Nine of the interviews were conducted in person, while fifteen were tape-recorded over the telephone. The data were recorded by means of three different methods. Nine of the interviews were conducted in person, nine were tape-recorded over the telephone, and six were handwritten during a telephone interview. These interviewing techniques and methods of recording data attempted to facilitate an understanding of reliance structures that neophyte principals develop and establish during their first year.

During the interview, participants were presented with a standard semi-structured protocol using open-ended questions that focus on the interviewee's perception of their reliance structure. Open-ended questions allow the participants to explore their own experiences without direction from the researcher. The length of the interviews were between 60 to 90 minutes. An initial interview guide was prepared and contained questions pertaining to the major areas of inquiry as suggested by the research questions (see Appendix B for the initial interview guide).

Principals were asked to describe the reliance structure that they established during their neophyte year. The principals were asked to reflect upon the issues and challenges they faced within their context, and then explain these more fully. Related questions pertained to socialization, reference individuals, the relationship constellation, and administrative mentoring.

There were several advantages for using interviews as a means of collecting qualitative data for this type of study. First, the open-ended format allowed the

respondents to reveal their own perceptions regarding reliance structures as compared to the questionnaire in which they selected a prescribed response (Nisbet & Entwistle, 1970). Secondly, the process of interviewing provided a means of triangulation in order to check the validity in the different portions of the questionnaire (Gall et al., 1996). Thirdly, the interview allowed the researcher to offer probing questions to the participants, thereby enriching the data through this interaction.

Just as there were advantages to interviewing, there were also some drawbacks.

The most obvious of these was the amount of time required to administer, transcribe, and analyze the interviews. Langenbach, Vaughn, and Aagaard (1994) concur as they write, "A thirty minute interview, once transcribed, can be 15-20 typed pages" (p. 214).

Another specific disadvantage that Powney and Watts (1987) identify concerns the relationship between interviewer and interviewees. They wrote, "When the interviewer is a member of the community being interviewed, it may be difficult for the interviewer to take on a non-judgmental role" (p. 183). As well, in situations where the researcher is also the interviewer, Powney and Watts warn not to impose personal perceptions onto that of the interviewees. The researcher was aware of these potential problems and earnestly endeavored to guard against them during the study.

Pilot Test of the Interview

The interview was given to faculty members and graduate students in the Department of Educational Administration. After revisions, the instrument was redistributed to ten people including faculty, administrators, and graduate students for further review. In responding, each participant was asked to make suggestions for

improving the interview instrument. As a result, a number of changes were derived from the pilot test of the interview.

Selection of Participants

In selecting participants for this study, sixty-two rural school district directors in Saskatchewan were contacted by telephone seeking second year principals who qualified for the study. The criteria set for the participants to be selected for the study were the following:

1. Participants must be in their second year of a principalship.
2. This was a study of individuals, who in their first year as principals had been new to administration. Therefore, interviewees must not have had any prior educational administration experience.

In the case of principals who met the above criteria, a series of questions were posed to gather more data (Appendix C). The following questions were utilized:

1. What is the location of the school in relation to the school division office?
2. What is the grade structure of the school?
3. Does the principal have graduate training?

The telephone survey produced the following information regarding the population of second year principals for this study. Of the twenty-six qualified individuals:

- Seventeen were close to the school division office;
- Nine were distant from the school division office;
- Seventeen served in K-12 schools;
- Nine served in other than K-12 schools;

- Nine had graduate training; and
- Seventeen did not have graduate training.

Principals identified as close to the school division office were those within fifty kilometers. Principals over fifty kilometers from central office were distant from the school division office. The grade structure of the school in which the principal was employed was distinguished as “K-12” or “other”. The principals’ educational background was determined by whether they had graduate training (GT) or no graduate training (NGT).

Twenty-five of the twenty-six principals participated in the Reliance Structure of Neophyte Principals (RSNP) survey and twenty-four of the twenty-six participated in the interviews (see Table 1). This study gathered prior information about the total population through telephone interviews. From the population of 26 seventeen were male and nine were female. The grade structure of the schools in this sample consisted of K-12, 7-12, K-9 and K-6 schools. The size of the schools varied from 45 students to 200 students. The size of the communities ranged from 175 people to 1700 people. Nine of the principals either were enrolled in a graduate program or had completed their program, while seventeen of the principals were not enrolled in a graduate program. The number of years of experience in teaching varied from two years to twenty-six years. As well, the location of the school division office in relation to the school varied in that some of the schools were in the same location as the division office, while others were as far away as 90 kilometers.

Validity

The internal validity of the questionnaire was enhanced by comparing the data with the responses from the interviews (Best & Kahn, 1998; Gall et al., 1996). Similar questions were included on both the open-ended question portions of the questionnaire and the interview schedule in order to test the validity of the responses. In this way, the researcher compared responses to similar questions between both instruments.

The external validity of the questionnaire for this study was not an issue because the intent of this research was not to generalize the findings to another population (Best & Kahn, 1998). The findings of this study were intended to describe the perceptions held by a particular population in order to understand the phenomenon of a neophyte principal's reliance structure with this context. Further, the reliability of the questionnaire was not a concern because the researcher is fully aware that if the questionnaire were to be administered to a different population, it would likely yield different results.

The content validity of the questionnaire was primarily concerned with the correspondence between the content of an instrument and the knowledge that it purports to represent (Jaeger, 1997). This type of validity will be assessed by the researcher through dependence upon the literature, feedback from the pilot study, as well as individual responses to open-ended questions.

For the interview phase of the research, the content validity was assessed by making the transcriptions available to the interviewees (Cresswell, 1994; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). The format of the interviews consists of a predetermined sequence and wording of the same questions, for all the interviewees, thus reducing interviewer bias

(Gall et al., 1996). In addition, content of interview transcripts was discussed with two other academics to ensure trustworthiness and credibility of the data.

To establish trustworthiness, the researcher returned transcribed interviews to the participants to be sure that the responses have been accurately recorded (Langenbach et al., 1994). This avoided problems such as the interviewer inventing replies or making incorrect quotes (Powney & Watts, 1987). Thus, the interviewees had an opportunity to check responses, and thereby enhance the reliability of the data.

Confidentiality and Ethics

This study was approved by the University of Saskatchewan Ethics Committee (see Appendix D). Twenty-six principals who were in their second year and who had no prior administrative experience were contacted via mail and/or e-mail and asked to complete a questionnaire (see Appendix A). In the cover letter (see Appendix D) attached to the questionnaire was an explanation of the study with its purposes and operating procedures clearly specified. Each principal who was interviewed was contacted personally by the researcher to gain approval for study.

Participation in this study was voluntary, and anonymity of those who chose to participate was assured. Participants were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time. Transcripts were sent to the interview participants to ensure accuracy of data and to gain permission for the use of the data in the study.

Participants were assured that all responses were anonymous; the names of the participants did not appear anywhere in the results, nor did the names of the schools and/or school divisions in which these principals work. The data were securely stored on

computer file as required by the University of Saskatchewan guidelines. It did not allow for any identification of the individual participants or for their respective schools and/or school divisions. Confidentiality was further assured using identification numbers for the participants under study. This form of analysis guaranteed anonymity of response.

Data Analysis

The data gathered through the personal interview and the open-ended portion of the questionnaire were analyzed according to qualitative research guidelines (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 1994; Denzin, 1989; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Moustakas, 1988). This data were analyzed by coding similar families of information by hand. As well, the closed-ended data from the survey were analyzed according to the research questions and represented in table form through two different types of analyses. For the quantitative section of the survey, frequency counts and mean scores per item were utilized. The open-ended section of the questionnaire, were analyzed utilizing frequencies and percentages. Interpretive analysis (the identifying, coding and categorizing of data into meaningful units) were utilized to identify themes and patterns from the data (Creswell, 1994).

Inquiry into the personal interview process began with the posing of open-ended questions to allow the interviewee latitude in his/her responses. The researcher collected and analyzed all of the data as suggested by Creswell (1994). Each personal interview was transcribed verbatim followed by the researcher editing and making any corrections that needed to be made. Then the interview along with a letter of approval was sent to the

participant for verification and was used in the manner described in the consent form (see Appendix D).

As suggested by Creswell (1998) and Wolcott (1990), the text of each interview was divided into manageable units and was examined by the researcher to determine what each unit represented. The technique of “winnowing” the data was applied following the guidelines provided by Creswell. In engaging this process, the researcher identified codes that were attached with comments as a reminder of the context of the interview. At this stage of interpreting, attempts were made to discover the information in each interview, which was essential to the experience of second year principals and separating out elements that appeared tangential.

After interviews were transcribed, comprehensive lists of codes were identified and comments were attached to identify specific families of meaning. Units that overlapped were coded and organized to illustrate the association between the codes. In this manner, main families of data were identified so that the researcher could illustrate pertinent data in the neophyte’s reliance structure.

Presentation of the Data

The data were presented in two sections. The first part provided information on the respondents followed by a demographic description of the participants based upon Section I of the questionnaire. The second section consisted of responses to each (10) research question. Where applicable, the surveys were presented first and then the interview data further supplemented the responses to the research question (see Appendix E).

Summary

In this chapter the design of the study was described. Three research methods were identified: survey, open-ended questions, and interviews. Each of the methodologies were described and explained. The questionnaire allowed objective reporting of information, the open-ended questions permitted opportunities to gather additional information; while the interviews added insight into the development and establishment of reliance structures. The population included 26 second year principals from rural southern Saskatchewan. Of these, 25 participated in the surveys and 24 participated in the interviews. The RSNP questionnaire was designed as the data collection instrument for the mail survey. Frequency distributions, means, and percentages were utilized to analyze the quantitative data. The open-ended questions and interviews were analyzed according to themes and codes that emerged. Finally, the data analysis procedures were outlined based on the research questions.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to investigate the development and establishment of reliance structures among rural neophyte administrators in southern Saskatchewan during their first year as principal. The data collected by survey and interviews has been presented according to the research questions one to ten. Survey data consisted of three parts: demographic data, quantitative data, and data from open-ended responses. Interview data were utilized to further enrich the survey data.

Profile of Respondents

In this chapter, respondents to the survey on the reliance structures of neophyte principals (RSNP) are profiled. The (RSNP) survey forms were mailed to all 26 individuals who represented the population of neophyte rural principals in the 2000-01 school year. In addition, the neophyte principals were asked to complete the demographic section of the survey form.

Twenty-five (96%) of the 26 neophyte principals returned the RSNP survey forms. Of the 25 respondents who participated, 16 were males and nine were females. Of the 26 neophyte principals, 24 (92%) participated in the interviews that further investigated their perceptions of how they developed and established their supports in a reliance structure. Fifteen of the respondents in the interviews were male compared to nine who were female. These response rates to the survey and interviews along with the breakdown of gender are summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Response Rates from the RSNP Survey and Interviews According to Gender (N = 26)

DATA COLLECTION	Male	Female	% Participated	Total
Survey	16	9	96.2	25
Interview	15	9	92.3	24

Note: All interview participants had completed the survey

In order to further analyze this area, a cross tabulation by gender, school size, and participants education background is shown in Table 4.2. Eighty-eight per cent of the male principals worked in schools that had student enrolments of seventy-six students or more. The female principals were evenly distributed (33%) in all three categories relating to school size. The highest degree attained for the majority of the principals in this study was a Bachelor's Degree, and qualification levels were fairly evenly distributed according to gender.

Demographic Data

The data reported in this section were taken from the demographic section of the RSNP survey, which the neophyte principals completed. Demographic data were collected for the following areas: school location, school community, grade structure, school size classified by student enrolment, distance from central office, gender, presence

Table 4.2

Gender in Relation to School Size and Educational Background

Total	M (N = 16)		Gender		F (N = 9)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
School Size:						
<75	2	13	3	33	5	
76-149	10	63	3	33	13	
>150	4	25	3	33	7	
Highest Degree:						
Bachelor's Degree	10	63	6	66	16	
Post Graduate Diploma	1	6	1	11	2	
Master of Education	0	0	0	0	0	
Doctorate of Education	0	0	0	0	0	
Working on Post Graduate Diploma	0	0	0	0	0	
Working on Master's	4	25	2	22	6	
Working on Doctorate	1	6	0	0	1	

of vice-principal, education background, years of teaching experience, and years taught in school system before commencing the principalship. These variables were considered potential influences on the neophytes' ability to establish a reliance structure and they are described in the following sections.

Neophyte principals were asked to indicate the approximate distance (in kilometers) of their school from their school division office. Of the 25 neophyte principals reporting, three claimed to be in the same location as their school division office, five reported between 1-24 kilometers from the school division office, five were employed 25- 49 kilometers from the school division office, seven worked in schools 50- 74 kilometers from the school division office, and five were over 75 kilometers away from the school division office. The data were summarized in Table 4.3. These figures represent a fairly even distribution of respondents according to their distance from central office.

Table 4.3

School Location in Relation to the School Division Office (N = 25)

DISTANCE IN KILOMETERS	N	%
Same as the Division Office	3	12
1 – 24 km	5	20
25 – 49 km	5	20
50 – 74 km	7	28
Over 75 km	5	20
TOTAL	25	100

A cross tabulation was utilized to examine relationship between the respondents schools and school communities (see Table 4.4). Student enrolment in the respondents' schools varied from the smallest school size had fewer than 75 students

Table 4.4

School Size and Community Size (N = 25)

		Community Size			Total
		Small <300	Medium 301-699	Large 700+	
School Size	Small < 75	5	0	0	5
	Medium 76-149	4	9	0	13
	Large > 150	0	3	4	7
	Total	9	12	4	25

enrolled and the largest had more than 150 students. Just over half of all schools had a student population between 76 and 149 students. The largest proportion (52%) of the principals worked in medium size schools. In regard to community size nine (36%) were small sized communities (less than 300), twelve (48%) were medium sized communities (301-699), and four (16%) were large sized communities (over 700 people). The largest proportion of respondents (48%) represented medium sized communities.

Six response categories were provided on the RSNP survey form for the grade structure of the schools, K-12, 10-12, 7-12, K-9, K-6, and Other. The greatest proportion (64%) fell into the K-12 category. In all, the grade structures of the schools catered to six different grade structure combinations (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5

Responses According to Grade Structure (N = 25)

GRADE STRUCTURE	N	%
K-12	16	64
10-12	1	4
7-12	2	8
K-9	2	8
K-6	3	12
Others	1	4
TOTAL	25	100

Respondents were asked to identify the highest level of education that they had attained. The possible response categories were Bachelor's Degree, Post Graduate Diploma, Master's Degree, Doctoral Degree, Currently working on Post Graduate Diploma, Currently working on Master's Degree, and Currently working on Doctoral Degree. All respondents held a primary (bachelor) degree (see Table 4.6). Two respondents had completed their training for a Post- Graduate Diploma. Only one respondent was working toward a Doctorate Degree, while a number of respondents (24%) were working towards a Master's Degree.

Principals provided data on the number of years of teaching experience they had prior to commencing the principalship. In rural Saskatchewan, the number of years of teaching experience varied as to when neophyte principals were commencing

Table 4.6

Highest Level of Professional Training Attained in Relation to TeachingExperience (N =25)

EDUCATION BACKGROUND	Years of Teaching Experience						Total
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25+	
Bachelor's Degree	0	6	2	4	1	3	16
Post-Graduate Diploma (PGD)	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Master's Degree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Doctoral Degree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Working on PGD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Working on Master's Degree	0	3	1	0	1	1	6
Working on Doctoral Degree	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	2	9	3	4	3	4	25

principalships. Forty-four per cent of the neophyte principals had fewer than 9 years of teaching experience prior to accepting a position as principal. Twenty-eight per cent of the respondents had 20 or more years of teaching experience.

Data on the number of years taught in the school system were summarized in Table 4.7 as 0 years, 1-4 years, 5-9 years, 10-14 years, 15-19 years, 20-24 years, and more than 25 years. Sixty per cent of respondents indicated their school division

Table 4.7

Responses According to Length of Time Teaching in the School Division (N = 25)

YEARS TAUGHT IN SCHOOL SYSTEM	N	%
0	10	40
1 – 4	2	8
5 – 9	4	16
10 – 14	2	8
15 – 19	4	16
20 – 24	1	4
25 +	2	8
TOTAL	25	100

employed them as teachers prior to commencing the principalship. The other 40% of respondents had not been employed with their school division prior to commencing the principalship.

In the RSNP survey form principals provided data on whether or not they had a vice-principal. As of late, there has been tendency to remove the position of vice-principals from small schools in rural Saskatchewan, and this was reflected in the demographics for the present study. Eighteen (72%) of the respondents had no vice-principal, while seven (28%) did have a vice-principal. As an elaboration, the researcher analyzed the data in Table 4.8 according to school size and whether or not there was the presence of a vice-principal. The 28% who had a vice-principal came from schools with

Table 4.8

Presence of a Vice-Principal and the Size of the School (N=25)

Respondent Identification #	Enrolment	Presence of a V.P.
1	82	No
2	112	No
3	90	No
4	95	No
5	62	No
6	66	No
7	45	No
8	180	No
9	100	No
10	140	No
11	57	No
12	105	No
13	104	No
14	30	No
15	400	Yes
16	160	Yes
17	160	No
18	160	Yes
19	120	No
20	106	No
21	300	Yes
22	134	No
23	100	Yes
24	190	Yes
25	132	Yes

enrolments of 100, 132, 160, 160, 190, 300, and 400. For 72% of respondents who claimed to not have a vice-principal, enrolments varied from 30 to 180. The researcher analyzed the data further by examining the grade structure of schools that had the presence of a vice-principal. Interestingly, it may not be enrolments alone that are used for criteria for determining which schools have a vice-principal, but that grade structure

may also be an indicator in rural Saskatchewan. Five of the schools were K-12, one was 7-12, and one was 10-12 where there was a vice-principal.

Summary

In this section, the study sample was described. The sample data were presented under two classifications, the pertinent geographical data and the respondents' personal data. The description included demographic characteristics of the schools in the sample and of school-based educators who responded to the RSNP survey form.

About 96% of the neophyte principals in the sample completed the RSNP survey and 92% participated in the interviews. All of the neophyte principals were located in rural Saskatchewan schools. Most (68%) of the schools were 25 kilometers or more away from their school division office. Over half of the communities (52%) were classified as medium size (301-699). Thirteen (52%) of the school sizes fell between the range of 76-149 pupils. The majority (64%) of the grade structures of the schools were K-12. The gender distribution was 64% male and 36% female. Most respondents stated that their highest qualification was an undergraduate degree. Over 40% of the neophyte principals had fewer than nine years of teaching experience, and over 70% of the respondents had no vice-principals to access. The presence of a vice-principal seemed to be influenced by enrolments and grade structure.

Question # 1: The Challenges and Issues that Confronted Principals

During Their First Year

Respondents were asked a number of questions in both the survey and the interview concerning the issues and challenges of their first year as principal. Questions

in the survey asked respondents to respond to the level of preparedness they were for dealing with the issues and challenges of the first year. Questions in the open-ended section of the survey had respondents identify the most critical challenges or issues that they faced and to identify any surprises or unexpected events experienced during the first year. Questions from the interviews provided an opportunity for principals to elaborate on the challenges and issues confronting them during their first year. The data is presented below.

Survey Data

A five-point scale was used for the survey; mean scores of 1-2 indicate high disagreement, 2.1-2.9 indicates moderate disagreement, 3.1-3.9 indicates moderate agreement, and 4-5 indicates high agreement. Questions 11 through 14 in the quantitative section of the survey elicited responses to the first research question. Results on these survey questions were presented in Table 4.9. The perceptions of respondents with respect to their preparation for the challenges of present day rural schools indicated a moderate level of agreement with a mean score of 3.28. However, 44% agreed whereas 24% disagreed with the statement. The respondents (3.24) were also ambivalent reporting only moderate agreement that they were well prepared for dealing with value conflicts between teachers, students, and parents during their first year. Six (24%) disagreed, while nine (36%) agreed with the statement. The lowest mean score (2.92) was on item 13 dealing with their preparedness for the stress that is associated with the job. Only five (20%) agreed with the statement whereas nine (36%) disagreed that they were well

prepared for the stress associated with the principalship. On item 14 dealing with the responsibilities associated with in-school leadership, respondents only moderately agreed (3.32), however more agreed eight (32%) than disagreed (12%) with the statement.

Table 4.9

Perceptions of Respondents Regarding Preparation for Challenges and Issues During First Year (N=25)

QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONS

Survey Question #	Item	Frequency			Mean	S.D.
		(1+2)	(3)	(4+5)		
11.	I was well prepared for the challenges of present day rural schools during my first year.	6	8	11	3.28	.94
12.	I was well prepared for dealing with the value conflicts between teachers, students, and parents during my first year as principal.	6	10	9	3.24	.97
13.	I was well prepared for dealing with the stress that is associated with the principalship during my first year.	9	11	5	2.92	1.04
14.	I was well prepared for dealing with the responsibilities associated with in-school leadership during my first year.	3	14	8	3.32	.85

Results of questions addressing training and experience are presented in Table

4.10. There were differences in the level of preparation among those who had undergraduate degrees versus those who had graduate training. Principals with graduate

Table 4.10

Perceptions of Preparation for Challenges: According to Training and Teaching Experience (N = 25)

QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONS		Percentage Who Agree or Strongly Agree							
		Training				Experience			
		Undergraduate		Graduate		<10		10+	
Survey Question #	Item	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
11.	I was well prepared for the challenges of present day rural schools during my first year.	6	(38)	5	(56)	12	(48)	13	(52)
12.	I was well prepared for dealing with the value conflicts between teachers, students, and parents during my first year as principal.	3	(19)	4	(44)	12	(48)	13	(52)
13.	I was well prepared for dealing with the stress that is associated with the principalship during my first year.	3	(19)	3	(33)	12	(48)	13	(52)
14.	I was well prepared for dealing with the responsibilities associated with in-school leadership during my first year.	5	(31)	3	(33)	12	(48)	13	(52)

training agreed that they were well prepared for dealing with the challenges during the first year. Interestingly, there were some differences relating to teaching experience. The most notable finding came on the item of dealing with stress. Results showed that principals who had more than ten years of teaching experience were better prepared for dealing with the stress that is associated with the principalship during the first year.

Additional information regarding the challenges and issues during the first year of a principalship was obtained by means of open-ended questions. Respondents

in the open-ended section of the survey identified most frequently “issues in regard to replacing the incumbent” as being the most critical challenge they were confronted with during their first year. Respondents # 1 and # 20 stated that their greatest challenge was cleaning up some of the messes left behind by the previous incumbent. Some of the clean-up was perceived as ‘poor discipline structure’ and a lack of ‘staff supervision and accountability’. It required establishing better communication between the parents, students and the school. In addition, the previous incumbent in one of the schools, took all the Saskatchewan Education materials and information so that the new incumbent was left with nothing. Respondent # 11 noted that it was a challenge replacing a principal who had been the principal for so many years. It became difficult to change the stagnant culture that was created. Respondent # 3 had to overcome the previous principal’s reputation which had created bad feelings and mistrust during their tenure.

Three other most frequently identified challenges that principals faced in their first year were: “budgets”, “divided staff”, and “change in relationship with staff and students”. In regard to dealing with all the accounts and budgets, respondent # 24 noted that he/she “should be trained in accounting not education”! Others claimed that budgetary restraints meant having to say ‘no’ at times.

On the topic of divided staff, respondent # 6 suggested that he/she had to deal with staff members who had trouble getting along. Respondent # 11 elaborated that being new in a school that had little personnel change in the past, was a challenge to them during their first year of a principalship.

In regard to the change in relationships with staff and students (from being a teacher to becoming the principal), respondents suggested that growing accustomed to a new position within a new school and school division was a challenge (Respondent # 23). Similarly, the most critical challenge respondent # 1 experienced was to be accepted by staff in his/her new role, as previously he/she had been on staff as a full time teacher. Furthermore, several respondents commented that becoming the principal caused some resentment among the other teachers. Respondent # 24 reported that, “a resentful staff member who had applied for the principalship, resented not getting it”.

Respondents were asked about surprises that they experienced during their first year. Responses from this open-ended question suggested “lack of professionalism” was the biggest surprise. In this respect, three respondents claimed they were surprised at some of the issues that were brought to the office. As a teacher, “I would never have dreamt that these issues would come to the office” (Respondent # 13). Respondent # 11 commented that he/she experienced “grown ups behaving like children and getting resistance from people who didn’t want the job, but felt they could do it better anyway”. A third principal expressed his/her sentiments on this issue by stating:

I expected to feel somewhat ‘isolated’ in my new role, but was surprised at the degree of this, as I could no longer discuss issues with previous teaching colleagues. At times I received opposition from unexpected quarters. (Respondent # 1).

Neophyte principals in the RSNP survey indicated that “angry parents”, “length of the day”, and “local and division board issues” were other surprises during the first year (see Table 4.11). On the topic of angry parents, two respondents were surprised and had

Table 4.11

Unexpected Surprises During the First Year of the Principalship

SURPRISES	Number of Times Selected (N=59)
Lack of professionalism	8
Angry parents	5
Length of the day	4
Local and Division Board Issues	4
Stress and intensity	3
Staff worked together as a team	3
Dealing with secretaries and janitors	3
Issues related to replacing previous incumbent	3
The support of parents and students	3
Discipline	2
CUPE personnel	2
Local Board	2
Staff supervision	2
Number of meetings	2
Isolation	2
Other	6
TOTAL	59

not expected the amount of abuse that was encountered from a few parents. In an attempt to defuse an angry parental concern one participant offered the following advice. “My advice to a beginning principal is to be sure to follow protocol. Have the parent contact the teacher to discuss the concern first” (Respondent # 17). These comments were representative of the verbatim comments that neophyte principals believed were surprises to them during their first year as principals.

A number of the principals reported they were surprised at the length of the day that is required to fulfill the duties of a principal. Several of the respondents did not expect to be away from family as much as they were attending the number of meetings and completing the necessary paperwork. Respondent # 2 noted the unbelievably long days and reported that it is not unusual for a neophyte principal to work 18 hours a day.

The respondents in the survey noted they were surprised at some of the issues that arose from local and division board members. Principals in the study suggested that some of their boards had personal agendas. Respondent # 12 reported that two or three unethical things were occurring at his/her school. In dealing with these, “what came, as a surprise was the amount of flack, stress, and pressure that came from the unlikely source of the board trustee” (Respondent # 12). Another principal suggested that he/she was surprised to find out they were “dealing with a board that was less than supportive. I believe this was because they perceived me to be too young to be the principal” (Respondent # 23).

One issue, Respondent # 14 was surprised to discover that:

The division board was unhappy with our decision to purchase a particular type of computer. The board has attempted to step in and override our decision, an attempt we see as a management decision at the school level. I see this as a power struggle with the board attempting to strong-arm a first year principal.

On a positive note, 28% some of the respondents were surprised at the support they received from “teachers”, “parents”, and “students”. Two respondents were amazed at how staff forgot old quarrels and differences and started to work together. Another principal was “surprised at how my staff actually listened to me, I thought they would not accept what I had to say” (Respondent # 8).

Interview Data

In the interviews, five questions (2, 7, 8, 10, and 11) dealt with the challenges and issues confronting the principal. These provided important elaboration on the above primary data. During the course of the survey the transition in roles from being a teacher to becoming a principal came up as an issue. Interviewees were asked why they believed this to be the case. Two respondents commented that they perceived the transition to be different and one perceived that:

as the principal you are on an island by yourself having to make the final decisions and all of a sudden you become an expert in everything that you didn't have any knowledge of before hand. (Respondent # 10)

The interview responses suggested that sixty-four per cent (64%) of the respondents claimed they noticed a difference in the transition from being a teacher to becoming a principal. Two principals provided the following comments:

I think it's tradition. It's part of the notion that no matter what there is a hierarchical structure in education, and staff view it that way. You're the final decision maker on lots of decisions. I believe in giving my staff the ability to make a number of decisions, but never the less they do look to me for the leadership. It's different when you are in the classroom. You're the leader of your classroom, you're the leader of lots of the activities that go on, but you still have that person you are answering to in certain situations. (Respondent # 17)

The second principal perceived that "the biggest transition from being a teacher to becoming the principal in a small rural community is going from being responsible for the students in your classroom to being responsible for the education of all students in that community" (Respondent # 23).

Respondent # 6 reported that he/she noticed a difference in the transition from teacher to principal. As a teacher in the classroom:

you are making a lot of decisions, you are involved with the kids, but you are mostly making decisions within that classroom. I think as soon as you become an administrator you're up front in the public eye. Especially in a smaller rural town which has a lot of concerns about whether the school will close or not and they see you as the person who is upfront in promoting that school. (Respondent # 6)

One thing Respondent # 11 realized in the transition from teacher to principal was that:

I am responsible for everything, for the furnace, for every blade of grass. If there is a problem I can't complain about it, I have to do something about it. You have to do something, you can't pretend you don't see it.

A number of respondents felt it was difficult to separate the differences in roles from being the teacher one period and the principal the next. Respondent # 20 claimed that for himself/herself:

it's been a little bit difficult in that a lot of people see me as a very young administrator. Some people have a little trouble seeing the lines knowing me more as a colleague than an administrator. That's been something that I have had to overcome. Out here I still teach 50%. You almost have to draw the lines yourself. I'm a teacher this period and an administrator second. When you have your admin time you're an administrator first and you have to do those things during that time.

One of the reasons the transition in roles from teacher to principal came up as an issue:

was because I taught with the teachers for years and then all of a sudden I was put into the role of principal and it was hard for them to think of me as principal and for me to think that I was their boss. I found that hard because I didn't think that I had any more experience or qualifications to tell them what to do, than if they were to tell me what to do. (Respondent # 22)

Twenty per cent (20%) of the principals suggested that the transition from being a teacher to becoming a principal was not an issue. Respondent # 23 summarized the

sentiments of the group by offering two reasons why the transition was not an issue. The first reason “because this was my first year here and secondly because I am still a majority of the time (60%) a classroom teacher” (Respondent # 23). Sixteen per cent (16%) of the participants provided responses that did not configure into the categories.

In the interviews, principals were asked to identify ways in which they could have been better prepared and/or supported for dealing with the issues and challenges of the first term (from August to December). The data in Table 4.12 reveal that the two most frequently chosen areas for principals to be better prepared and or supported with is a “mentoring program” and “knowledge of important dates”. The following discussions

Table 4.12

Preferred Vehicles for Support

AREAS OF SUPPORT	Number of Times Selected (N=39)
Mentoring Program	6
Knowledge of Important Dates	4
Timetabling	3
Culture of the school	3
Principal's Manual	3
Division Orientation	3
Budgets	2
Conflict Resolution	2
Discipline	2
TOTAL	39

represent the comments on the most frequently chosen area of support desired by the principals. Respondent # 23 reported the significance of an administrative mentorship:

When it comes to administrators I can't underestimate the importance of a mentoring program. If you are interested in becoming a principal what you would do is set up regular meetings with an administrator or even taking recently retired administrators who can actually work with the principal in the school during daylight hours. Just advising them, what are some of the considerations that you need to be thinking of right now. What are some of the start up considerations? I can't think of any better way to support and prepare a beginning principal for this position than having the previous incumbent, who was a very successful administrator, still be there to help me out. In my case the mentoring program certainly would have helped. I think to be an effective administrator it takes preparation that could take years. We have a candidate pool of administrators in this division that have been identified at an early point in their career. They have a desire that they would like to become an administrator at one point in their career. So it's started. Anytime we have administrative seminars or conferences they're invited to them. They have an opportunity to learn from the administrators in their school so they will set up days where they follow along with that administrator, tag along, and do everything that that administrator would do. That to me is a very competent and practical way to train an administrator to be a principal.

In addition, Respondent # 6 offered the following areas of support for principals in a mentoring program:

I have always been a supporter of administrative mentoring and I know the difficulty in putting them together. Taking a couple of days in the summer with a set program to teach you about budgeting and finance, how we do that within our school division. What you are responsible for. We are going to just review some of the greatest issues that you will be dealing with things like staff leaves, EDO's, those sorts of things that you will deal with on a daily basis. Anything to do with suspensions, expulsions, what the Board expects, what the Director expects. How to do growth plans, supervise staff or resolve conflict? You get a bit of on the job training before hand with some of those things, but the majority of those things you have never dealt with before. Now suddenly you are the person that makes the decision about a leave or about something to do with budgeting or finance, resolving conflicts between a teacher and a parent. (Respondent # 6)

Respondents in the interviews noted that "knowledge of important dates" was critical for preparing them during the first term. Respondent # 10 reported not having enough time for first year teachers because other deadlines had to be done. He/she

suggested “an advanced warning/memo would allow me to do things in advance (Respondent # 10). Prior knowledge at the beginning of the year would assist neophyte principals with some of the duties during the first term:

Certainly some of the information from the Department of Education are some of the things that are critical at the beginning of the year. And those are things that you hope your secretary knows when you come into a school. There are some deadlines there that need to be met. You go to your first admin meeting or principals meetings and people are tossing dates around - Have you got your registration in? And if you're not sure what they are talking about you can get into a real bind. You can get some kids in some trouble with transcripts and those kinds of things. So I think a lot of that information is really important early in the year. (Respondent # 20)

Other suggestions that principals identified as areas in which they could have been better prepared and/or supported were timetabling, understanding the culture of the school, developing a principal's manual, a division orientation, budgets, conflict resolution, and discipline.

Interview respondents (64%) suggested frequently that the attitudes of staff were a surprise to them when commencing the principalship. The surprise in attitudes of staff sometimes came as a result of some staff not accepting who was hired for the position. Respondent # 24 claimed “there was one problem and that was when one of the former vice-principals had applied for the principalship and didn't get it. That was a bit of a touchy issue and still is a little bit I'm sure”.

Twenty-eight per cent of the respondents reported that the attitudes of staff were not a surprise for them. Respondents who knew and worked with their staffs before becoming the principal support these opinions:

There wasn't anybody on staff that I didn't know. I think everyone on this staff would have been a member for the last three years. In three years working in the same building, 200 days a year, you pretty well know what people's personalities are and you know how far they will go before they will snap.

(Respondent # 18)

Respondents of the "other" category were employed in one-room schools and thus were not affected by the attitudes of staff.

Participants were asked to provide suggestions on how they can be better supported in working with staff. Responses varied from staff being educated on the role of a principal to principals seeking training on developing communication skills and relationships. One respondent felt that "undergraduates need to be trained in being professionals. They need to understand that a new principal is just a person in a role that they ascribe as a top of bureaucracy" (Respondent # 2). Other principals emphasized the importance of spending a lot of time on communication and building relationships with the staff. Respondent # 20 felt that:

any time you are dealing with people, whether it's staff or the community it's hard to train somebody to be a good communicator with staff. The SSBA Module 1 "Working with People" is very good at developing and building relationships. I was very lucky that my area hosted Module 1 in the first couple of months of the principalship.

Sixty-four per cent (64%) of the new principals agreed that "supervision of staff", was the most important professional development need for beginning principals. Twenty-eight per cent (28%) of the respondents did not agree that supervision of staff was the most important professional development need. They reported a need for professional development in areas that dealt with "budgets" and "timetabling".

A number of respondents believed that supervision is poorly done in their school divisions. Respondents offered the following provisions to make supervision of staff better by providing (a) training, (b) necessary release time, (c) checklists, and (d) mentoring opportunities. A number of principals noted the significance of training in the area of supervision:

Ideally it would be nice to receive some training on supervision. Even just a form or something that is concrete, so that when you go into a supervisory situation that you know what to look for, the things to be doing, the kind of dialogue that needs to take place. (Respondent # 17)

One principal suggested that “supervision needs to be in policy and teachers need to be aware of the expectations, procedures, and the instruments that are going to be used. It needs to be tied to their professional development” (Respondent # 11). The following statement explained how one school division made staff supervision a priority early in the year by formalizing the practice.

We didn't do any supervision in the first couple of months until the Director had a formal process in place. The process is very structured so that everybody in our school division is doing the same thing. When I go into a teacher's classroom I go through the same formal developmental sheets as the Director. He can come in and do the same thing. We can sit down and discuss the areas that there wasn't any consistency between his report and mine. Then we can go in and refocus on some of those things. (Respondent # 20)

Several responses were made on the lack of time provided to conduct supervision.

One participant's comments captured the feelings of the principals:

I found it tough getting into the classroom sometimes just because it is a time consuming process. A lot of school divisions are putting more loads on the principal with regards to supervision, so it is going to be their responsibility to provide administrative time or some kind of time where principals get three or four periods that a sub comes in to cover a class. Just because supervision is so

time consuming it's going to place more on principals who have only 20 or 30 per cent administration time. (Respondent # 4)

Developing checklists and offering mentoring opportunities were other suggestions principals offered that would make better provisions in the professional development needs of beginning principals in the area of supervision.

Principals in the interviews were asked if there were any unexpected events or surprises they experienced during the second term (from January to June). The most frequently identified unexpected events or surprises were dealing with: budgets, timetables, graduation, local and division board issues, staffing, final exams, and angry parents. Interview data were illustrated in Table 4.13.

Respondent # 3 identified that a "principal's planner" would be one way that he/she could have been better prepared and/or supported to deal with the issues and challenges of the second term. The principal's planner according to this principal:

would go through each and every month, the forms that you need to fill out or things that you should start planning and preparing for. It would be a checklist of ideas that you get every year and if there are additions or deletions you would add them to the next year. Anything from important school policies to helpful reminders would be very helpful. (Respondent # 3)

In addition, Respondents # 1 and # 6 suggested that they would have benefited from talking to other administrators:

I could have been better prepared if I had more discussion with another experienced administrator that has been through these challenges and issues. Meeting in a structured process with somebody who has been in the profession would allow us to meet and discuss how to handle these issues. (Respondent # 6)

Table 4.13

Unexpected Events and/or Surprises Experienced During the Second Term

UNEXPECTED EVENTS/SURPRISES	Number and Proportion of Times Selected	
	(N=37)	%
Budgets	8	22
Timetabling	7	19
Graduation	5	13.5
Local and Division Board Issues	4	10.8
Staffing	4	10.8
Final Exams	3	8
Angry Parents	2	5.1
Other	4	10.8
TOTAL	37	100

Respondents were also frustrated with the challenges of having to listen to angry

parents complain about inaccurate information:

The Division office was supportive but they didn't get involved. They were, "Well we know you are doing a good job and don't worry, some people say that." That doesn't always help. That doesn't always go far enough. Sometimes I think there needs to be more support behind you. When Central Office finds out about some of these things that are ridiculous, they should call these people and say, "Listen, I hear you have got a problem with this or that. This is what I understand. What is your difficulty"? Or meet with them. Central office personnel should demonstrate how to handle that sort of conflict in a meaningful way and show support that they are really behind you. In the studies I have researched, that is one of the number one reasons why administrators quit, is due to the treatment that they get from the public. So I think that is something that we have to be upfront in dealing with – How do we deal with that? We need to have strategies to do that. Certainly those were my biggest challenges during the second term. (Respondent # 6)

Summary

Respondents had a moderate level of agreement in being well prepared for the challenges of present day rural schools; for dealing with the value conflicts between teachers, students, and parents; for dealing with the responsibilities associated with in-school leadership during the first year of a principalship. In comparison with principals that have undergraduate training, it was perceived that principals with some graduate training were well prepared for dealing with the challenges of the first year. There was moderate level of disagreement in being well prepared for dealing with the stress that is associated with the principalship during the first year. Upon further analysis, it was perceived that principals with more teaching experience were well prepared for dealing with the stress that was associated with the principalship during the first year.

Participants in the survey identified the most critical challenges of the first year as: issues replacing the previous incumbent, budgets, and dealing with divided staffs. Lack of professionalism, angry parents, length of the day, local and division board issues were areas principals identified as surprises that they experienced during the first year. In addition, twenty-eight per cent of the respondents suggested that they were surprised at the support they received from teachers, parents, students, and First Nation's families.

In the interviews, 64% of the respondents reported that they recognized a difference in the transition from being a teacher to becoming a principal. Sixty-four per cent of the principals suggested that they were surprised at the attitudes of staff when they commenced a principalship. In comparison, 28% found that the attitudes of staff were not a surprise to them when they started a principalship. Respondents perceived that

developing communication skills and building professional relationships would be ways of supporting beginning principals in working with staffs.

The most frequently mentioned ways that respondents suggested for being better prepared for the issues and challenges of the first term (from August to December) were mentoring opportunities and knowledge of important dates. Supervision of staff emerged as the most important professional development need for beginning principals, while some of the respondents felt there was a need for professional development in areas like budgeting and timetabling.

Principals felt that there were a number of unexpected events and/or surprises they experienced during the second term (from January to June). These unexpected events and/or surprises are: budgets, timetables, graduation, local and division board issues, and staffing.

Question # 2: The Level of Need for a Reliance Structure

Questions were asked in regard to the level of need for a reliance structure for beginning principals. In essence, these questions captured the sentiments of the principals as to the level of need for a reliance structure. The following responses reflected the perceptions of the participants.

Survey Data

Figure 4.1 illustrates the choice of the respondents from the survey, relating to this question. There was a very high level of agreement among the respondents toward question # 10 (a need to develop and establish a reliance structure for beginning principals) with a mean of 4.60. **Overwhelmingly, (92%) participants felt a very high**

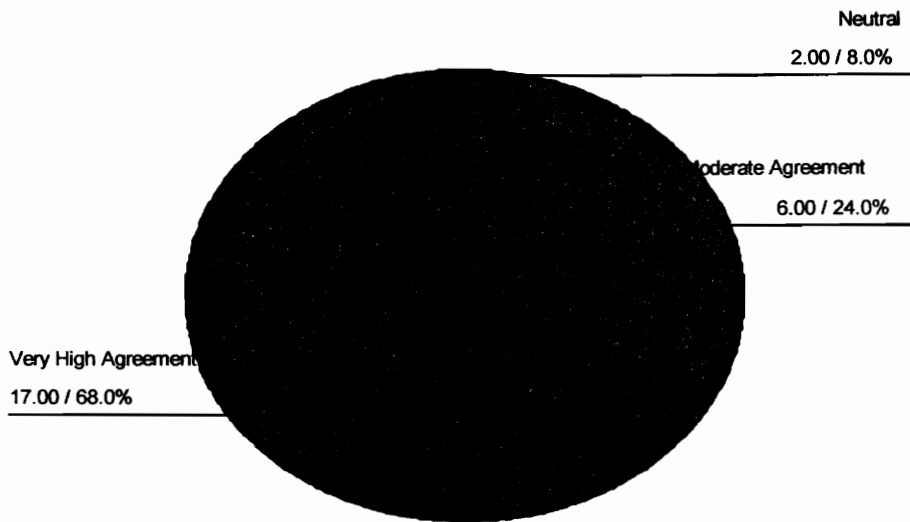


Figure 4.1. Need to Develop and Establish a Reliance Structure (N =25).

level or a moderate level of agreement, that there was a need to develop and establish a reliance structure for neophyte principals.

In order to provide further analysis the researcher examined the perceived need to develop and establish a reliance structure in relation to the respondents' distance from central office and teaching experience. The data were presented in Table 4.14. There were some moderate differences when these two variables were analyzed. In regard to location, 52% of those who were less than fifty kilometers as opposed to 40% of those further away from central office, felt a need to develop a reliance structure. Beliefs also differed somewhat on the variable of teaching experience as 52% of the more

Table 4.14

Percentage of Respondents Indicating Agree and Strongly Agree

	Location		Teaching Experience	
	<50	50+	<10	10+
10. There is a need to develop and establish a reliance structure for beginning principals.	52%	40%	40%	52%

experienced as opposed to 40% of the less experienced felt a need to develop a reliance structure for neophyte principals.

In an attempt to investigate the need to develop and establish a reliance structure for neophyte principals, participants were asked to identify ways in which they could have been better prepared and/or supported during their first year. The responses in Table 4.15 represent the areas in which principals believed that they could have been better prepared and/or supported during their first year. In order of frequency, these were mentoring programs, professional development opportunities, longer induction and orientation opportunities, knowledge of the culture, and increased administrative time.

Nineteen per cent (19%) of the total responses suggested that a “mentoring program” would assist in preparing and supporting principals during their first year. Respondents claimed that a mentorship program within their school division or even a

Table 4.15

Rank Order of Areas Needing Better Preparation and/or Support

AREAS NEEDING SUPPORT	Number and Proportion of Times Selected	
	(N=43)	%
Mentoring Programs	8	19
Professional Development Opportunities	6	14
Longer Induction and Orientation	6	14
Knowledge of the Culture	6	14
Increased Administrative Time	5	11.5
Having a Vice-Principal to Bounce Ideas Off	3	7
Developing a Principal's Guide	2	4.5
Dealing with Boards of Education	2	4.5
Conferences for Beginning Administrators	2	4.5
Other	3	7
TOTAL	43	100

provincial wide initiative would have been beneficial. The significance of a mentorship program was reflected in the following comments: "One idea that I feel carries considerable merit would be a mentoring program. Setting up regular meetings between beginning administrators and recently retired administrators would have assisted in preparing me for my first year" (Respondent # 23).

Principals identified professional development opportunities, longer induction and orientation periods, knowledge of the pre-existing culture, and increased administrative time as areas that would have assisted in their preparation as a beginning principal. A number of principals perceived that they need more education. Respondent # 14 suggested one way of providing some professional development would be for "the

university to offer more distance education opportunities". Some of the principals were not sure if any training would have helped prepare them for the principalship, but as respondent # 12 noted 'a very thorough orientation would have been very helpful and is a definite must for first year principals" (Respondent # 12).

Respondents noted that having prior knowledge of the culture of the school and in some cases the school division would have assisted beginning principals in their approaches to certain situations. One respondent claimed that they could have had more information about some of the personal problems that staff members were having. This would have assisted how they may have approached certain issues with the staff (Respondent # 8).

Increased administration time was mentioned five (11.5%) times as an area that would prepare and support first year principals. On this topic respondent # 1 suggested that:

at times I felt as if my teaching was suffering because of the need to handle administration issues. The amount of time to do the job could have been increased or better yet sharing the load with a vice-principal so that you had someone to bounce ideas off would have been great.

Two of the respondents felt it was important to have a workshop on the roles of the local and the division board. Beginning principals perceived that boards of education tend to have their own agendas which was indicative of respondent # 12 who experienced that "the division trustee used to run the school and by the time he/she wrestled it out of their control the relationship had been damaged so bad that they had to get out". To

alleviate these situations respondent # 1 “had the director conduct a short session with the local board on their role as support for the school”.

Summary

There were two important findings in this section. The first was that a large majority of respondents (92%) felt a very high or a moderate level of agreement regarding the need to develop and establish a reliance structure for beginning principals. Upon further analysis on the need for developing the reliance structure, respondents closer (52%) to central office perceived a greater need than those farther (40%) away from central office. The second important finding related to ways that respondents felt they could have been better prepared and/or supported during their first year: mentoring programs, professional development opportunities, longer induction and orientation opportunities, prior knowledge of the culture, and increased administrative time.

Question # 3: The Value of the Socialization Process

Questions in the quantitative section of the survey provided responses to the third research question. The perceptions of respondents were analyzed by examining the frequency of responses to the level of preparation that the formal and informal aspects of socialization provided at different periods of the year. Responses to this research question were presented in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16

Perceptions of Respondents Regarding the Value of Their Socialization Process (N=25)

QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONS

Survey Question #	Item	Frequency			Mean	S.D.
		(1+2)	(3)	(4+5)		
15.	The formal socialization (ie. workshops, meetings, etc.) I received prior to commencing my job, prepared me well for the role of the principal.	9	9	7	2.96	.65
16.	The formal socialization (ie. workshops, meetings, etc.) I received during the first term (from August to December) prepared me well for the role of the principal.	7	13	5	2.84	.85
17.	The formal socialization (ie. workshops, meetings, etc.) I received during the second term (from January to June) prepared me well for the role of the principal.	10	8	7	2.76	1.01
18.	The informal socialization (casual relationships with others) I received prior to commencing my job, prepared me well for the role of the principal.	8	1	16	3.48	1.12
19.	The informal socialization (casual relationships with others) I received during the first term (from August to December), prepared me well for the role of the principal.	5	6	14	3.44	.92
20.	The informal socialization (casual relationships with others) I received during the second term (from January to June), prepared me well for the role of the principal.	4	7	14	3.52	.92

Survey Data

Questions 15 through 17 represented the respondents' perceptions on how well the formal socialization prepared them for the role of the principal at different periods of

the year. Responses to question # 15 indicated with a mean of 2.96, that participants moderately disagreed with the statement that the formal socialization they received **prior to commencing the job**, prepared them well for the role of the principal. Nine (36%) of the respondents disagreed compared to seven (28%) who agreed and felt that the formal socialization they received **prior to commencing their job** prepared them well for the role of the principal. Question # 16 had a mean of 2.84, which meant that respondents moderately disagreed that the formal socialization received **during the first term (from August to December)** prepared them well for the role of the principal. Put another way, seven (28%) of the participants disagreed with the statement while five (20%) agreed that the formal socialization they received **during the first term (from August to December)** prepared them well for the role of the principal. The lowest scores were received from question # 17 with a mean of 2.76.

Once again respondents moderately disagreed with the statement that the formal socialization they received **during the second term (from January to June)** prepared them well for the role of the principal. Ten (40%) of the respondents disagreed whereas seven (28%) agreed that the formal socialization they received **during the second term (from January to June)** prepared them well for the role of the principal.

Questions 18 through 20 represented the respondents' perceptions as to how well the informal socialization prepared them for the role of the principal at different periods of the year. Responses to question # 18 indicated with a mean of 3.48 (S.D. of 1.12) that respondents moderately agreed that the informal socialization they received **prior to commencing their job** prepared them well for their role as principal. Sixteen (64%) of

the respondents agreed while eight (32%) disagreed with the statement. A mean of 3.44 represented the principals' beliefs on question # 19. Specifically, fourteen (56%) of the principals agreed while five (20%) disagreed with the statement that the informal socialization they received **during the first term (from August to December)** prepared them well for the role of the principal. The highest scores with a mean of 3.52 were received on question # 20. This indicates that principals had moderate agreement with the informal socialization received **during the second term (from January to June)** prepared them well for the role of the principal. Fourteen (56%) agreed in relation to four (16%) who disagreed with the statement.

Questions 15 through 20 were further analyzed in relation to distance from central office. Data related to this are contained in Table 4.17. The responses to question # 15 suggest that the principals who were fifty plus kilometers (42%) disagreed slightly more than those closer to central office (31%) that the formal socialization they received prior to commencing the job, prepared them well for the role of the principal. Paradoxically, in some areas of the formal socialization process those who were further away from central office perceived that they were better supported. There were some moderate differences on the items dealing with the informal socialization processes. The most notable of these was during the first term (August to December) where principals closest to central office disagreed that they were well prepared for the role of the principal.

Table 4.17

Percentage Who Disagreed That Aspects of the Socialization Process Were Valuable

QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONS		# Who Indicated Disagree or Strongly Disagree			
		Distance From Central Office			
Survey Question #	Item	<50 (N=13)		50+ (N=12)	
		N	%	N	%
15.	The formal socialization (ie. workshops, meetings, etc.) I received prior to commencing my job, prepared me well for the role of the principal.	4	31	5	42
16.	The formal socialization (ie. workshops, meetings, etc.) I received during the first term (from August to December) prepared me well for the role of the principal.	4	31	3	25
17.	The formal socialization (ie. workshops, meetings, etc.) I received during the second term (from January to June) prepared me well for the role of the principal.	6	46	4	33
18.	The informal socialization (casual relationships with others) I received prior to commencing my job, prepared me well for the role of the principal.	4	31	4	33
19.	The informal socialization (casual relationships with others) I received during the first term (from August to December), prepared me well for the role of the principal.	3	23	2	17
20.	The informal socialization (casual relationships with others) I received during the second term (from January to June), prepared me well for the role of the principal.	2	15	2	17

Summary

In summary, it appears that the **informal** socialization experiences of principals were perceived to be more effective than their **formal** socialization experiences. All three of the formal socialization statements had moderate levels of disagreement, whereas the informal socialization statements had moderate levels of agreement on being well prepared for the role of the principal during different times of the year. Paradoxically, in some areas of the formal socialization process those who were further away from central office perceived they were better supported. The most notable difference in the informal socialization process was during the first term (from August to September) where principals closest to central office disagreed that they were well prepared for the role of the principal.

Question # 4: The Nature of the Reliance Structure

In response to the nature of the reliance structure two questions were posed to the participants. The following comments were selected from the principals on their perceptions on the nature of their own reliance structure.

Survey Data

Principals were asked what information they received about the school they were going to work in prior to commencing the job in August (see Table 4.18). Respondents actively pursued information on the “size of the school”, the “staff in the school”, and the “culture of the school”. Other areas in which principals received information were: **timetabling, community involvement, previous incumbent, special needs assessments, board members, and budgets.**

Table 4.18

Information Received Prior to Commencing the Job

INFORMATION RECEIVED	Number and Proportion of Times Selected	
	(N=30)	%
The Size of the School	7	23.3
Staff in the School	6	20
The Culture of the School	4	13.3
Other	13	43.3
TOTAL	30	99.9

Interview Data

Principals in the interviews were asked (question # 3) which functions are critical for beginning principals to establish in a reliance structure. Their responses indicated that a number of functions are critical in this regard. Table 4.19 provided the responses of the participants who suggested that “developing staff relations”, “developing relationships with the Director and Central Office Staff”, “networking with other administrators”, “developing relationships with parents in the community”, “developing a relationship with the Boards of Education” and “receiving support from family” were the areas beginning principals perceived as critical in developing a reliance structure.

In developing a reliance structure, all respondents suggested that there was a need to build positive relationships with others. Respondent # 6 noted the functions that he/she felt were critical in a reliance structure:

You have to be able to rely on your staff to support you. You need central office behind you. You need assistance from other administrators that you can trust and

Table 4.19

Major Functions for Beginning Principals to Establish in a Reliance Structure

FUNCTION	Number and Proportion of Times Selected	
	(N=50)	%
Develop Staff Relations	14	28
Develop a Relationship With the Director and Other Central Office Staff	11	22
Network With Other Administrators	10	20
Develop a Relationship With Parents in the Community	7	14
Develop a Relationship With the Board	6	12
Need Family Support	2	4
TOTAL	50	100

who will give good advice. You have to rely on getting some alliances from the public. They are the people who come into the school and see what's going on. Therefore, I would say that first you need to develop a relationship with your staff, then other administrators, central office, and then eventually it develops into your public.

Some of the respondents noted that they did not realize how important the secretary, janitor, librarian, and teacher associates were. On this topic respondents made the following observations:

If I wouldn't have had my secretary who knew the business end of this job, I don't know how I could have done it. So you need somebody who knows how things run and who can answer questions whenever you have any. And I also relied on the director and other principals who were really good about – you know I would phone them and say, “this has happened what would you do” or “what do

you think about this?" So you need people who can give you advise on any problems that you run into. (Respondent # 22)

Making sure that a relationship has been established with people is really important for beginning principals. Respondent # 11 believed that relationships needed to be developed with:

Not just teaching staff, but with the secretary and caretaker. Those are the people that know more than anyone else. A lot of times the teachers are just in their classrooms. Some of these people have been here 10 to 12 years and they come and ask me where they can get a paper clip. They have been in the same place for the last 12 years. So they are more just focused on their classroom. Whereas the caretaker, the secretary deal with the community a lot. I found that very important with making relationships with the community.

In the interviews, respondent # 17 perceived that "there is a honeymoon phase where everything is just wonderful and before long little ripples of problems have to be dealt with". Principals identified that they need the support of those in a reliance structure in order to deal with things after the honeymoon is over. Respondent # 7 suggested that going through the Director was always best policy in handling situations. "Being able to get a feel or an understanding where your Director stands" is an important mechanism that will assist in supporting beginning principals (Respondent # 12). Respondent # 23 reflected back to the first year of the principalship remembering "it was critical to have the support of the local board, parents in the community, and the director".

Having other administrators involved was viewed as a critical component to develop in a reliance structure. As respondent # 7 indicated: "Other administrators provide necessary support and guidance. I have had a very good mentor and we still communicate regularly".

Summary

Respondents felt that developing staff relations, developing relationships with the director and central office staff, networking with other administrators, developing relationships with parents in the community, developing a relationship with the boards of education, and receiving support from family were the areas beginning principals perceived as critical to be developed in a reliance structure. The most frequently mentioned areas that principals were given information on prior to commencing in August was on the size of the school, the staff in the school, and the culture of the school.

Question # 5: Processes in Establishing the Reliance Structure

The principals were asked to respond to questions that related to the **processes** involved in establishing a reliance structure. Questions elicited responses from both the open-ended section and the interview section. Their responses are documented in the following section.

Survey Data

Principals were asked to list the positions of people who were involved in orienting them to their job (see Table 4.20). Just over 30% of the principals claimed that the director and/or the assistant director were involved in their orientation process. Over 26% of the respondents reported that the secretary and staff were involved in orienting them to their new position. As many as 23%, of the participants claimed that the previous incumbent was involved in their orientation. Table 4.20 illustrates that other administrators (11%) and local and/or division board members (5%) were involved in orienting new principals to their jobs.

Table 4.20

Positions Involved in the Orientation of Beginning Principals

POSITION	Number and Proportion of Times Selected	
	(N=60)	%
Director and/or Assistant Director	20	33.3
Secretary and/or Staff	16	26.7
Previous Incumbent	14	23.3
Other Administrators	7	11.7
Local and/or Division Board Member(s)	3	5
TOTAL	60	100%

Interview Data

Interview question # 9 asked principals to imagine they were the Superintendent in charge of providing professional development opportunities to beginning principals. Predominantly respondents noted the significance of mentoring opportunities, the principal's short course, and Saskatchewan School Based Administrator Modules in their preparation for the principalship. The following commentaries reflect perceptions regarding several need areas.

In Regard to Professional Development

It was felt by the respondents that a lot of the school divisions are now starting to understand the importance of professional development for beginning principals.

However, there appeared to be strong sentiments that boards of education need to fund these professional development opportunities. Respondent # 14 summarized the feelings of the group by suggesting:

I would lobby the board to pay for professional development opportunities for beginning principals in areas like mentoring, distance education and networking opportunities with other principals. As well, I would recommend to the board that new principals be given two professional development days to become involved in a new principal support program.

The two things that respondent # 16 would do as the superintendent in charge of providing support to beginning principals: "is to provide funds and to inform principals through the mail that these in-services are taking place". Respondent # 12 suggested that he/she would allow new principals to go frequently for professional development: "I would say twice a month to visit and spend a full day with a veteran administrator in the division and watch them operate".

Two principals suggested that if they were in charge of providing support for beginning principals they would do some early shoulder tapping. This method of support was described by Respondent # 23:

I would definitely go around and do some shoulder tapping and say, "I think that you might make a good administrator. We are going to need a new administrator in this school in one year or two years or whatever", depending on when people resign or move or retire, those kind of things. Or "We are looking for good administrator's, we know that in the future we are going to need a few, would you be interested?" I would identify those who are interested in being an administrator well in advance and anytime you are offering training to your administrators you would make sure these candidates also have the opportunity to attend these same supports. So that 3 or 4 years down the road if an administrative position opens up and that particular candidate is interested in that, they're not thrown into the position. It should be a smoother transition for them, rather than going in just completely blind. Recruiting from within, obviously would be nice because there

are usually excellent candidates within your own school that would be wonderful administrators.

One respondent noted the significance of seeking support from others who are working towards a Master's degree:

We had people in the graduate program from urban and rural areas. Coming from all different shapes and avenues, some had 20 years of administrative experience and some had no administrative experience. I just think that anything that you can have that is formalized so that people can relate and talk to others is beneficial for beginning principals. (Respondent # 3)

On another note, respondents noted that it becomes difficult to balance the time a new principal is in the school versus the amount of time he/she is out of the school.

Respondent # 3 reported that, "principals in their first year really don't want to leave the school either. They just feel like they are swamped by the time they come back".

Beginning a principalship is a stressful time and respondents stated that it becomes difficult to leave the school when it is apparent on their return that there is a lot of work to catch up on.

In Regard to Mentoring

Table 4.21 reveals data illustrating that just over 45% of the total responses in regard to professional development suggested that mentoring opportunities would be one of the supports they would provide for beginning principals:

I think the mentorship is the most important professional development tool for beginning administrators. I would encourage a new principal to mentor with somebody who is very approachable and similar to his/her own personality. (Respondent # 19)

Respondents believed that mentoring opportunities would provide support for beginning principals but that it needs to be a formalized process. The following comments reflect principals' perceptions on formalizing a mentoring program:

Table 4.21

Preferred Professional Development (P.D.) Areas

AREA	Number and Proportion of Times Selected	
	(N=33)	%
Mentoring	15	45.4
Principals' Short Course	9	27.3
SSBA Modules	9	27.3
TOTAL	33	100%

Mentoring would be great, but I think I would try and have some kind of system in place at the division level. At the very least having a buddy system, where people feel free to call other people without worrying about being judged, or even a whole structured thing like a true mentorship program. (Respondent # 20)

Respondents perceived that a non-judgmental approach to mentoring would be beneficial.

Some of the principals held beliefs that formalized mentoring was not practiced enough.

By formalizing the practice of mentoring principals perceived they would be more likely

to pick up the phone to ask for assistance. When mentoring is practiced informally the

assistance often comes too late or does not happen at all:

I think mentoring is something that is under-rated and probably not done enough. A lot of principals will tell you, "If you have any questions or whatever, give me a shout, or don't be afraid to." But if there is no formal process or structure set up you get busy and you get wrapped up in what you are doing and you don't ever call anyone for help. Pretty soon you are in over your head a little bit or things have festered to where there is trouble. Maybe if you would have given someone a call or if there was a formal structure in place early that could have been taken care of. I think a formal structure would be good. Something where this is your mentor for the first year and that person is going to make a point of being in your school a couple of mornings a month to meet and help you out. Otherwise it's the same as anything, you get busy and it doesn't get done. (Respondent # 20)

Principals perceived that sharing experiences with other more experienced principals would provide support for beginning principals. In fact respondent # 5 reported:

Offering mentorships so that principals can share their experiences about school climate, developing social skills in terms of teacher supervision – "How do I do this", "How do I help my teachers", and "What do I do to help my teachers". Formally setting up groups or pairs with time to meet other principals to discuss "How do you do this". (Respondent # 5)

Allowing time for visitations in a formalized mentoring relationship would allow mentors to ask the right questions. By training mentors about their role in a mentoring relationship would assist in their ability to ask the right questions. This discussion was evident in respondent # 17 comments:

I'd provide some infrequent visitations with a mentor, rather than trying to say here is a number you can call. Actually allowing mentors to come in and sit down and by providing a half-day or a day to come and sit down with the new person and just find out how things are going and give suggestions where suggestions may be needed. Or give a listening ear when a listening ear is needed. But provide that kind of support for the new person. Because the mentorship is a great idea but unless you physically allow for the mentoring to take place it doesn't mean anything. In my first year I was so bombarded with things to do that I just didn't have time to pick up a phone and say, "You know . . ." When informal mentoring takes place the mentors don't really know what to ask. Whereas, in a formal mentoring situation the mentor is right there sitting down

across from the person they can ask you, "How things going?" And then they can share their experiences. (Respondent # 17)

Once again respondent # 22 believed that time is an important consideration for providing effective mentoring opportunities:

Mentoring opportunities would be wonderful. I think you would just have to give them some time off where they could go to another school and mentor with an experienced principal. Maybe provide 2 days a year to go and spend some time with another professional. Ask them what would you like to do and suggest that I think mentoring would help a lot. You learn so much from colleagues. (Respondent # 22)

A recommendation respondent # 14 suggested about time for mentoring was "that boards of education provide and allow time for mentoring opportunities for beginning principals".

On the topic of mentoring respondent # 18 emphasized in his/her interview the significance of pairing new principals with experienced principals:

Money is always a big thing with school divisions, but if you could get new principals out for two weeks to follow a principal around, provided that you pick the right person. There are some administrators that are really sour on the job and would make the worst mentors in the world. (Respondent # 18)

A further explanation on the need for mentoring beginning principals was provided by respondent # 12:

I think the big one that is really missing is the mentoring with other principals. Even if it's an opportunity in the summer before you start your principalship to have a veteran principal come in or maybe three, four or five school divisions get together and have a workshop for young principals with veteran principals. Kind of like the Principal's Short Course but more hands on with things about the culture of small communities and what could happen. I really think visiting other schools throughout the school year would be beneficial.

Respondent # 10 noted the difficulties being a mentor and having other roles as a beginning principal:

I would try to make mentoring more of a formal thing. If I have a new English teacher coming into my school perhaps I would ask the strong English teacher from another school in our division to be a mentor. But I think you also need to have someone in your own school who would take on that mentorship, as well as the principal. Sometimes it's very difficult for a first year teacher to come and say to the principal who is writing an evaluation report, that "I am having troubles with this" when the principal is the one writing up their report. So if there could be someone else in the school to do that or the other thing that you may want to do is remove that responsibility of writing official reports from the principal, if you want them to be the person that's helping this person out. (Respondent # 10)

One suggestion that respondent # 24 reported was that the mentor also learns from the experience:

I did a lot of calling to another principal in our division, because our schools are similar and because I trust him. I would ask "What do you do about this", or "How do you handle this", or "What's the best way to do that" or "how does the division want us to do that", or "so and so is telling me this, what do you do?" That was sort of an informal mentorship thing. I kind of chuckled the other day because he called me to ask, "How do you do this?" and "Who looks after that in your school" and "What are we supposed to be doing?" I thought, well this is interesting. People often forget that the mentor learns as much as the beginner.

It appeared that just over 45% of the respondents suggested that they would offer mentoring opportunities as means of support for beginning principals.

In Regard to the Principals' Short Course and Saskatchewan School Based

Administrator Modules

Respondents frequently mentioned the Principals' Short Course (PSC) (27%) and the Saskatchewan School Based Administrator (SSBA) Modules (27%) that beginning principals need for support. The number one thing Respondent # 6 would do is sit down with the new administrators and say:

"Here are some avenues for you to grow and when you do your professional growth plan here is what we will support you in doing." Financially, time wise, that sort of thing. Listing things like the SSBA Modules, the Principals Short

Course, and some of the graduate classes that the university is offering. I think, as a Superintendent, being aware of what classes are offered at the U of S, or the U of R. and suggest, "Here's a good class for this. Here's a good one for that. This is when they are".

In offering these professional development opportunities for rural principals respondent

1 suggested: "I would send a group of administrators to conferences so they can network together when they get back. Often the car ride is the best experience".

Respondent # 5 claimed that early in the year they would have a retreat to figure out who needed support in what areas and then:

I would strongly encourage new principals to do the Principals' Short Course. I would make sure that in our principals meetings all PD pamphlets go in their binders. We would talk about which SSBA Modules are available, where they are available. We would talk about bringing one of them to our school system.

It was suggested by respondent # 3 that any little bit of networking and advice gained at the Principals' Short Course assists in formulating a beginning principals' belief system:

I would recommend the Principals' Short Course when they were first hired. The fact that you meet people with the same kind of concerns as you. They also have experienced administrators that are going to these things that can say, "Hey, here's what's worked for me, or, this might be a concern for you. This is what to watch out for"

In trying to prepare somebody for a new principalship, respondent # 22 reported:

I think I would make sure that they had the opportunity for the Principals' Short Course, even if it had to be given right in September and they had to take time off. I do think those SSBA Modules would be valuable but, right now we have had trouble getting them. So it would be nice if superintendents would get together and say we have this many principals that need this module 1, can we do it? I would like to see it on a Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

A number of the respondents noted that if they were in charge of providing opportunities for support to beginning principals that they would offer the necessary

funding to go. The following comments expressed their feelings for providing the financial support:

When you walk into a principalship, rural principals don't make that much more money than a teacher, so you don't have the financial ability to say, "Well I will just go and take this." I would make sure that I provided the support financially. (Respondent # 17).

One principal went as far to say:

I would make sure that all the funding and support for the SSBA Modules, and the Principals' Short Course are offered. (Respondent # 12).

Some of the principals stated that the Principals' Short Course should be

mandatory for beginning principals. Respondent # 20 summarized these sentiments:

I would strongly suggest that somebody take the Principals' Short Course and offer financial support to attend SSBA Modules. I may even go as far as mandating that people take the short course. That's something that Directors and Superintendents should just register their new people for and let them know when it is and that we have paid for you to go. (Respondent # 20)

It appeared that if these principals were in charge of support they would provide the necessary information and funding for beginning principals to attend the Principals' Short Course and the SSBA Modules.

Summary

The **director/assistant director, secretary/staff, previous incumbent, other administrators, and boards of education** were all people identified as people who oriented beginning principals to their jobs. In response to how people can be better prepared and/or supported during the first year, respondents frequently mentioned **mentoring opportunities, principals' short course, and SSBA Modules**. In providing these opportunities for support, respondents suggested that time and money be allotted

for beginning principals to attend these important professional development functions. It was also noted that it is was difficult to attend all the professional development activities due to the amount of time spent out of the school.

**Question # 6: The Relative Significance and Value of Each Element
in the Reliance Structure**

A number of questions from the quantitative, open-ended and interviews sections responded to the sixth research question. Data on each item question is presented in Table 4.22. The perceptions of respondents were analyzed by examining the frequency of responses to the relative significance and value of each element in the reliance structure.

Survey Data

Question 22 represented perceptions on receiving strong support from professional organizations (eg. STF, SSBA, SELU, etc.) during the principals first year. The responses to question # 22 (support from professional organizations) received the second lowest score of all the items with a mean of 2.56 in which respondents moderately disagreed with receiving strong support from professional organizations during the first year. Ten (40%) of the respondents disagreed compared to three (12%) who agreed and felt they received strong support from professional organizations during their first year.

Question # 23 (support from professional books and journals) had a mean of 2.96, that participants moderately disagreed that they received strong support from professional books and journals during their first year. Ten (40%) participants disagreed in comparison to ten (40%) who agreed with the statement.

Table 4.22

Perceptions Regarding the Relative Significance and Value of Each Element in the Reliance Structure

QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONS

Survey Question #	Item	Frequency			Mean	S.D.	N
		(1+2)	(3)	(4+5)			
22.	I received strong support from professional organizations during my first year (ie. STF, SSBA, SELU, etc.).	10	12	3	2.56	.92	25
23.	I received strong support from professional books and journals during my first year.	10	5	10	2.96	1.21	25
24.	I received strong support from my Director during my first year.	1	5	19	4.28	.94	25
25.	I received strong support from my central office personnel during my first year as principal (ie. superintendents, assistant director, etc.).	1	5	19	4.33	.92	24
26.	I received strong support from my Board of Education during my first year as principal.	4	6	14	3.68	1.18	25
27.	I received strong support from significant others during my first as principal (ie. spouse, parents, children, friends, etc.).	2	1	22	4.28	.89	25
28.	I received strong support from my community during my first as principal.	3	5	17	3.92	1.04	25
29.	I received strong support from the parents in my school community during my first as principal.	2	3	20	4.08	.91	25
30.	I received strong support from my in-school personnel during my first as principal (ie. teacher aides, secretary, janitor, etc.).	2	2	21	4.16	1.14	25
31.	I received strong support from my teachers during my first as principal.	1	4	20	4.20	1.00	25
32.	I received strong support from other school administrators during my first as principal.	2	4	19	3.96	.89	25
33.	I received strong support from university personnel during my first as principal.	18	3	3	1.87	1.30	24

The respondents' perceptions to question # 24 (support from the director) had a very high agreement, which indicated with a mean of 4.28 that they received strong support from their Director during the first year. Only one (4%) disagreed compared to nineteen (76%) who agreed that they received strong support from their Director during the first year.

The highest scores were received from question # 25 (support from central office staff) with a mean of 4.33 that respondents were in very high agreement that they received strong support from central office staff during the first year. Once again, only one (4%) of the participants disagreed whereas nineteen (76%) agreed that they received strong support from central office personnel during the first year.

Question # 26 had a mean of 3.68, which meant that respondents only moderately agreed that they received strong support from their Board of Education during the first year. Four (16%) of the principals disagreed while fourteen (56%) agreed with the statement.

Questions # 27 recorded the respondents' perceptions on receiving strong support from significant others (spouse, parents, children, and friends, etc.) during the first year as principal. Responses to question # 27 (support from significant others) indicated with a mean of 4.28 that respondents had a very high agreement in receiving strong support from significant others during their first year. An indication of this support from significant others was noted in that two (8%) disagreed while twenty-two (88%) agreed with the statement.

The responses to question # 28 (strong support from the community) had a mean of 3.92, which meant respondents moderately agreed with receiving strong support from the community. Three (12%) of the participants disagreed while seventeen (68%) agreed that they received strong support from their community during the first year.

There appeared to be a very high agreement among the participants towards question # 29 (support from the parents), which indicated with a mean of 4.08 that principals received strong support from the parents during the first year. Two (8%) disagreed compared to twenty (80%) who agreed with the statement.

Question # 30 represented the principals' perceptions on receiving strong support from in-school personnel (teacher aides, secretary, janitor, etc.). This question had a mean of 4.16, which meant that two (8%) of the participants disagreed with the statement compared to twenty-one (84%) who agreed that they received strong support from in-school personnel (teacher aides, secretary, janitor, etc.) during the first year.

Responses to question # 31 (strong support from teachers) indicated with a mean of 4.20, that participants were in very high agreement that they received strong support from teachers during their first as principal. One (4%) of the respondents disagreed while twenty (80%) agreed and felt that they received strong support from teachers during their first year.

Question # 32 (strong support from other school administrators) had a mean of 3.96, that respondents moderately agreed that they received strong support from other administrators during their first year. Two (8%) of the participants disagreed versus

nineteen (76%) who agreed that they received strong support from other school administrators during their first year as principal.

The lowest scores in all of this section were received from question # 33 (strong support from university personnel) with a mean of 1.87 that participants had a very high disagreement that they received strong support from university personnel during the first year. Eighteen (72%) of the respondents disagreed whereas three (12%) agreed that they received strong support from university personnel during their first year as principal. These data were likely related to involvement levels in post graduate programs.

There appeared to be a very high level of agreement on question # 24 (strong support from the director), # 25 (strong support from central office personnel), # 27 (strong support from significant others), # 29 (strong support from the parents), # 30 (strong support from in-school personnel), and # 31 (strong support from teachers). However, there was a very high level of disagreement from participants on receiving strong support from university personnel during the first year.

In order to provide further analysis on questions 22 through 33 the researcher performed a cross-tabulation with the items on variables location and school size. These data are presented in Table 4.23. In regard to location, principals closer to central office (<50 kilometers) agreed that they received stronger support from boards of education (57%), community (59%), parents (60%), and teachers (55%) as opposed to those principals who were further away from central office. In general, the perception from

Table 4.23

Agreement With Items on Variables Location and School Size

QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONS		Percentage Who Agree or Strongly Agree									
		Distance				School Size					
Survey Question #	Item	<50		50+		S<75		M 76-149		L>150	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
22.	I received strong support from professional organizations during my first year (ie. STF, SSBA, SELU, etc.).	1	33	2	66	2	66	0	0	1	33
23.	I received strong support from professional books and journals during my first year.	5	50	5	50	2	20	5	50	3	30
24.	I received strong support from my Director during my first year.	10	53	9	47	5	26	9	47	5	26
25.	I received strong support from my central office personnel during my first year as principal (ie. superintendents, assistant director, etc.).	10	53	9	47	4	21	9	47	6	32
26.	I received strong support from my Board of Education during my first year as principal.	8	57	6	43	5	36	5	36	4	29
27.	I received strong support from significant others during my first as principal (ie. spouse, parents, children, friends, etc.).	11	50	11	50	4	18	11	50	7	32
28.	I received strong support from my community during my first as principal.	10	59	7	41	4	24	7	41	6	35
29.	I received strong support from the parents in my school community during my first as principal.	12	60	8	40	4	20	9	45	7	35
30.	I received strong support from my in-school personnel during my first as principal (ie. teacher aides, secretary, janitor, etc.).	11	50	11	50	5	23	9	41	8	36
31.	I received strong support from my teachers during my first as principal.	11	55	9	45	4	20	10	50	6	30
32.	I received strong support from other school administrators during my first as principal.	9	50	9	50	3	17	10	56	5	28
33.	I received strong support from university personnel during my first as principal.	1	33	2	66	1	33	2	66	0	0

principals on the variable of school size was that principals in medium sized schools perceived to receive the strongest support.

In the open-ended responses, respondents identified most frequently (16%) that “staff supervision” was an area that participants lacked information and/or advice in their preparation to commence as a principal (see Table 4.24). On this issue Respondent # 21 commented “because I have not started working on any post graduate programs, I felt inadequate with things like teacher supervision”.

Equally important, the frequency of responses (12%) suggested that participants felt they need more information and/or advice in the following areas: “the culture of the school”, “budgets”, “forms that need to be filled out”, and high school course offerings”. One principal noted the importance of getting to know your school. For example, graduation rituals and how things are done around here. In the area of budgets respondents claimed to have very little working knowledge of budgets and felt inadequate with the financial record keeping procedures (Respondents # 13 and # 24). In addition to problems associated with record keeping, a number of principals reported they had difficulty filling in unfamiliar forms. Respondent # 22 felt that “prior knowledge on how to fill out these forms would have made this job a lot less stressful”. High school course offerings and registrations were an area in which respondents suggested that they lacked information and/or advice. Respondent # 3 summarized these sentiments with the following remark: “I lacked information regarding Grade 12 requirements,

Table 4.24

Areas In Which Principals Felt That They Were Lacking Information and/or Advice

AREAS	Number and Proportion of Times Selected	
	(N=50)	%
Staff Supervision	8	16
Culture of the School	6	12
Budgets	6	12
Forms That Need to be Filled Out	6	12
High School Course Offerings	6	12
Other	18	36
TOTAL	50	100%

correspondence school offerings, departmental procedures, and division and school policies and procedures for dealing with these". Other areas that participants suggested they need far more information and/or advice were in the following areas: "staffing", "conflict resolution", "policies", "role of boards of education", "timetabling", "longer orientations", and "receiving a principal's package".

Beginning principals were asked to identify the positions or roles of individuals who they felt were most valuable in their orientation and support during the first year. Table 4.25 illustrates the frequency of responses on this question. The most frequently

Table 4.25

Individuals Who Were Most Valuable in Providing Support During the First Year

POSITIONS	Number and Proportion of Times Selected	
	(N=99)	%
Other Administrators	28	28
Director	20	20
Teachers	19	19
Secretary	11	11
Other	21	21
TOTAL	99	99

mentioned position (28%) fell in the category of “other administrators”. Twenty per cent (20%) of the respondents suggested that the Director was a valuable person. Respondents suggested that teachers (19%) were valuable in orienting and supporting the principal in their first year. A noteworthy trend noted below was how valuable the secretary (11%) was in orienting and supporting the new principal. “Others” identified in providing support included: board members, spouse and/or family, assistant director, and superintendents.

Principals were asked to describe the support and advice that was most valuable during their first year. Where applicable, the researcher provided the positions of individuals who provided the support and advice that was most valuable. Principals

provided advice on bringing about change too quickly and in discussing this issue with the previous incumbent, respondent # 1 recalled:

The first year was a survival year so I did not make many changes, which was probably good, as the staff needed time to get used to the idea of someone coming in from within. The past principal told me not to worry about being on top of everything. I feel that his advice related to aspects of control, that I could not control everything. I feel that his advice related to aspects of control, that I can not control everything, but I felt that I needed to be in touch with what was going on in my school.

Keeping the director informed on key issues was valuable advice a number of principals received during their first year. It was felt by one principal that “Directors’ do not like surprises and so getting their support early on is one way to ‘cover your butt’ . The director can provide ethical advice on proper procedural protocol regarding policy implementation, suspensions, and teacher supervision” (Respondent # 4).

Having a good secretary can be a valuable resource of information according to respondent # 11 who stated:

The secretary’s information about the school and community were helpful as was her willingness to assist me in my orientation because she assisted in gaining information about the school and the community.

A number of principals suggested that they would be lost without their secretaries, but respondent # 22 is already looking to the future:

My secretary has been here for 25 years and she knows the things that have to be done and when they have to be done. She is recording all of these things down for me so that I can use them as a guide when she retires. (Respondent # 22)

Several participants shared advice they received when they commenced a new principalship. The critical advice that respondent # 19 received from a colleague was: “be sure to have a life. Be careful not to let the job consume your personal life”. The best

advice that respondent # 16 received was “I needed to remember that I can only be myself in this job. I can’t be something other than what I am”. These were representative of the verbatim comments that participants described as the support and advice that was most valuable during the first year.

Interview Data

Respondents indicated in the survey that the previous incumbent and members of the local and the division board were essential providing information regarding the issues and challenges of the school. Yet many felt these people caused the greatest stress. The following responses illustrate principals’ perceptions on this issue.

In Regard to the Previous Incumbent

Respondents noted that the previous incumbent was either helpful or not helpful in providing information regarding the issues and challenges of the school. In discussing previous incumbents who were helpful, Respondent # 11 suggested, “the previous incumbent was very helpful in just finding out things about staff members, about how things work in the town, about expectations of the community”. A number of the respondents felt that there was value in teaching in the same building as the previous incumbent:

I have watched three of the previous principals and I think in watching that many principals work in the same building, there is some good training, but it might be by negative example. This didn’t work for somebody else, so I am not going to go there unless I absolutely have to, and I know this is not going to work. I think that I learned a lot of things that way, rather than a whole bunch of positive stuff. Usually if somebody is going to do a good job, or is going to fit in, they are going to last a lot more than a year or two years in the school. I think in my case there were quite a few things that I learned by negative example from the previous incumbents (Respondent # 18).

Awkward situations arose however, when the previous incumbent remained on staff as a teacher:

In responding to the previous incumbent, I thought I had to live up to their expectations and it was a little more difficult for me because the previous principal was coming back as a teacher. So, I did feel that I had to maintain what he had started. I couldn't change anything. I was just maintaining. I guess there was some pressure to maintain what he had established even though I didn't agree with everything he was doing. I would have changed it, but felt like I couldn't because it was still his job. (Respondent # 22)

On the notion of awkward situations, even though the previous incumbent remained on staff and was a tremendous source of support, one respondent found it difficult as they felt that they constantly had to prove themselves:

Indirectly, they caused a lot of stress because she had been here for 18 years and people in the community and certainly students still saw her as the authority figure in the school. It was a very difficult and she handled it very well. Anytime someone came to her with a concern she would always say you need to talk to the principal about this, I am no longer the principal here. So that caused me a large amount of stress, because I just felt that I was constantly trying to prove myself in that school. You do that anyway, but it doesn't help when the previous incumbent still stays at the school. In my situation having the previous incumbent remain on staff can have both positive and negative side effects. (Respondent # 23)

In one situation the previous incumbent was a valuable source of information, but too much information can be overwhelming as respondent # 17 felt:

A little overwhelmed with all the information that was shared. It was too much. I think that there were some good things but to tell you the truth, the director put together a package for principals. It had a checklist of things that should be done at this time of the year. That was very beneficial. I think a checklist like that would have been more beneficial than all the time I spent listening and trying to jot down notes on things. I think that the checklist provided me with the most important information. I can remember walking in and going, "I'm moving, renovating a house while I am moving, trying to sell a house back in the other location I was in and all this stuff going on, plus trying to prepare for an upcoming school year with all these ideas that have been thrown my way." It was

not easy. Like I say it was an overwhelming feeling. It was just nice to finally get going and get at it and move on.

In another situation the previous incumbent was helpful in providing information about staff and the community but that “sometimes the incumbent can cause stress just because you have these giant shoes to fill. The previous person was here for 10 years and everybody loved them” (Respondent # 11).

It was noted by one respondent that meeting with the previous incumbent can be valuable for things like timetabling but that listening to stories about staff can lead to developing preconceived notions. On this topic respondent # 3 reported:

I had met with the previous incumbent a couple of times. Mostly for timetabling, scheduling that kind of idea. Finding out what course load I'd be teaching. He/she did all the planning for me in that aspect. I didn't really get into individual teachers with him/her and a lot of the problems because I knew for a fact that it was not a good situation to be coming into and I didn't really want to hear the stories. I just wanted to put it in the past. Yes, they had concerns, both sides did, and I listened to some of those concerns and I just tried to formulate an action plan from those. But again, when you are talking about people that you don't know and you haven't seen before it's kind of tough to understand what is going on anyway. I think it can be a valuable experience but you don't want to go in with preconceived notions either.

Ten respondents in the interviews noted that the previous incumbent was not very helpful in providing pertinent information. Perceptions on this suggested that several of the incumbents left on “different circumstances” or “bad terms”. Under these circumstances respondent # 12 reported that:

The previous incumbent was terrible. I spent one day in the school with him/her and all I got out of them was a little bit of dirt on each teacher, which turned out to be quite inaccurate in my opinion. Sounded like he/she was grinding an axe more than anything. He/she had absolutely no clue about the difficulties within the school, its culture or how it operates.

There appeared to be mixed feelings on the previous incumbent's ability to provide valuable information. Some found the previous incumbent to be very helpful, while others felt that the previous incumbent was not helpful and was perhaps even detrimental. This seemed to depend on the terms of departure for the previous incumbent. More specifically, respondents felt that the previous incumbent who left their position on good terms were helpful, whereas those who left on bad circumstances were not as helpful. In some helpful situations, the previous incumbent still caused some stress because they remained on staff as teachers and their presence was difficult to overcome.

In Regard to Members of the Local and Division Board

Similar to the responses for the previous incumbent, respondents suggested that members of the local and the division board were either helpful or not helpful in providing information regarding the issues and challenges of the school. Some of the respondents found members of the board to be very helpful. For example respondent # 17 reported that:

The division board trustee provided me with just some ideas in terms of how to handle council meetings and what to be prepared to share at the meeting. This helped as I went into the first meeting not even having my school budget with me. Then at the first meeting they asked, "What's in our special levy account" and I said, "I don't know". So we sat down after and he debriefed me and that happened after the fact mind you, but never the less that was a beneficial discussion that we had. I wanted to be prepared and having things done as professionally as possible is vital. If you walk into a situation and you're prepared for the worst then you're able to handle it. You don't walk out feeling, "That didn't go very well." So that helped me a lot.

Getting board members involved was key for respondent # 20:

I think you have to get your people involved. Our division board chairman is from our school and he's been a huge help. He is not somebody who's always got his

nose in what's going on but he's certainly a good source of information. The local board – it depends on the members – there is some members who you can trust and you can have those kinds of discussions with and there are some you can't. Especially with the local board you really need to feel your way through some of that stuff. I think with the local board you listen a lot more than you talk initially until you know who you can trust and what their opinions on things are. But you have to take in the information and process it and file it where you may need it.

Respondent # 18 suggested that the local board be utilized as a sounding board:

I run stuff past them that they need to know. So if there is a problem that is brewing in the community somewhere, rather than letting it fester until it gets to a head, I will find out about it from the local board saying "Hey, this looks like it might be going south on you, deal with it" and it works out great.

Not all the respondents were as confident in saying that their board members were helpful. A number of the respondents felt that some of the board members were unclear as to what their roles were. In discussing this issue respondent # 23 suggested:

It's a small rural community, and you are under the scrutiny, they're elected members of that community and as such they represent the interests and the opinions of everyone that lives in that particular community. Sometimes that's good, sometimes that's bad. I look at my local board; the role of the local board in my eyes is one of an advisory capacity. They're my eyes and ears out in the community. So I use them to let me know what people are thinking about certain policies or certain procedures that we have adopted at this school. And they give me feedback on that. Often times however, you end up getting local boards that don't really know their boundaries and they overstep them. They go from being an advisory committee to almost being a directory committee. Where they feel that their role is to provide direction for the school. This is what you should do. It's not that. Local boards are called local advisory committees in some communities and that's the extent of it. It's not up to them to make these decisions, which should be made by trustees at the division board level. But certainly when it came to a lot of administrative decisions that were made I just felt that I didn't have the support that I wish I would have had from my local board. I think it has to do with the sign of the times. I mean the farm crisis is at a peak; they are caught right in the middle of that. You have a lot of frustrated families. They look at the school and the fact that the taxes were being raised and we were charging more for student fees to offer the same programs. What leaves as a breeze comes back as a hurricane. These issues were apparent at many of the

local board meetings. It is difficult. As a principal you have to accept these criticisms positively, knowing that their intent is good. They do want the best for their kids. But realizing that deep down I was thinking as a first year principal that if this is what I have to go through for the rest of my life as an administrator, I don't want to do that.

Respondent # 1 described his/her perception on the roles of the two boards as: "division board members are further away from the issues and tend not to get involved. Local board members are closer to the action and therefore are more involved and at times this can cause some tension". In dealing with this tension he/she had the director come in and conduct an in-service on the roles of the local board.

It was felt from a number of respondents that board members do not always have the necessary knowledge to carry out their roles. As respondent # 3 found that:

Your division board is the ultimate source of power in the school division. Your local board basically has no power, yet they are probably the most influential people, but the most inexperienced. I don't think they have enough knowledge of what happens within the school to make those informed decisions. Yes, they do cause a lot of stress. A lot of our board members got on the board so they could have a say in who was hired. I wouldn't want to hire a nuclear physicist because I know nothing about the position. I don't think they have given me a lot of advice either or background knowledge and what I do get from them I take with a grain of salt. (Respondent # 3)

It was perceived by a number of respondents that principals often run into problems with board members who have their own agenda. In two cases respondent # 12 and # 16 reported that their greatest stress has come from the interaction between a local board member and a division board member. In sharing his/her experience respondent # 12 noted that:

Ninety-eight per cent (98%) of all my difficulties that I have encountered have come from my division board member and my local trustee member. I don't know what to say, they cause all my difficulties.

Respondents indicated that members of the board were helpful in some cases and were not helpful in other situations in providing information regarding the issues and challenges of their school. It appeared from a number of the interviews that respondents wanted the roles of the board to be clarified. One principal had the director conduct an in-service on the roles of the board.

Principals' Perceptions of the Role of the Previous Incumbent

Respondents were asked to provide comments based on their own experiences on what they would do to assist a new principal. Respondent # 23 reflected back to the difficulties in starting a new position:

It would have been very difficult. I can't even imagine what it would be like for a first year principal who has no administrative experience, who's new to that community and school. Now it might be a little different if you were a teacher in that school and you were moved up. Because you know the students, you know what has been done in the past in that school. But for first year principals in a new community, new school, its got to be tough. I can't imagine a bigger stress in a person's life. There is no training or course for a principal will cover all the responsibilities that are now under your authority.

In coping with these difficulties of commencing a principalship, several respondents suggested that they would keep a checklist or develop a principal's handbook or manual to assist a new principal. Respondent # 1 described what they would do:

I would keep a journal or diary and pass it on. There needs to be a handbook/checklist developed on what things to do and when. I would also make myself available to answer questions.

On the topic of developing a checklist to assist new principals respondent # 17 reported that they would:

take some time, to make up a list of things that needed to be done or whatever the case and then go over the list with them. "Here's what you need to do. You need to have a half dozen fire drills in September/October, so make sure that you plan for those". Just set up some suggestive ideas in terms of how to deal with things to get started.

Making a list and starting a folder were ways that respondent # 6 wanted to share information with the incoming principal:

What I am doing right now is putting aside some of the important mail that is coming in. By writing notes on it with suggestions like "You'll need to look after this or that". I have got a folder started where I am making a list of "Remember to discuss these things with him/her". I am just sort of keeping an ongoing list as I am thinking of things to do. To write down, to discuss and then he/she will be coming out here. I have invited him/her for the kindergarten orientation meeting, he's/she's come to one local board meeting and he/she will be to another one here right away and I'll be inviting him/her out to discuss other things before the end of the year.

Many of the respondents suggested that they would make sure that the files were in order and that the timetabling was done. Respondent # 15 stated that they would "be there to answer questions and go over things like budgets, timetabling, and staffing.

Another important thing Respondent # 9 suggested was that they would go through the school year calendar with the new principal. I would suggest that the new principal visit and meet the staff. It is important that they assess things on their own as it is unfair to prejudge.

A number of respondents acknowledged that they needed to be aware of passing their biases on to the incoming principal. This was evident in respondent # 11 experience with his/her previous incumbent:

He/She said to me "I don't know if you are a morning person, but try and be here by 8:00 or the community will have something to say". Little things were so helpful because you can end up being on the wrong side of people without even

knowing why. I think he/she went a little too far in telling me some things about staff members. I would think twice about doing that. One has to be careful of forwarding information based on your own bias or misconceived perception. Someone you do not get along with may get along with them just fine and it would never come up. If you tell them they're going to be thinking this person is going to give me trouble. Maybe they don't need to be hearing that. I don't know if I would volunteer a whole lot of information unless they asked for it.

Several principals were in the situation of having a new principal replace them in the upcoming year. Respondent # 5 summarized the areas that they would attempt to provide assistance for a new principal's orientation:

The new principal is actually going to spend a day with me. I am going to go through some of the things I did my first year. I am going to give them my year plans and go over things like the SRC, intramurals, and school stuff. I will show them some of the binders I have put together with graduation and talk about the teachers, what their responsibilities are, some of the things that I have done that have worked and some of the things that I have done that haven't worked. I guess I would show them where to find things like the education act, the division policy, and any other pertinent paper work. I would hope that the secretary would stay so she could help with the paper work. Those are the things I will be talking to them about. (Respondent # 5)

In summary, principals favored the use of a checklist in orienting a new hire to their position. It appeared that a professional approach needed to be taken when providing information on staff members.

Summary

There were varying levels of agreement depending on the item. In the quantitative section the highest mean (4.33) supported that there was a **very high level of agreement** among participants with receiving strong support from central office personnel. Whereas, there were very **high levels of disagreement** from participants who received strong support from university personnel during the first year.

In the open-ended section of the survey, respondents identified **most frequently (16%) that “staff supervision”** was an area that participants lacked information and/or advice in their preparation to commence a principalship. Again, in the open-ended section of the survey, beginning principals were asked to identify the positions or roles of individuals who they felt were most valuable in their orientation and support during the first year. The **most frequently mentioned position (28%) fell in the category of other administrators**. Principals suggested **that new principals had to be careful not to bring about change too quickly** when they were asked to describe the support and advice that was most valuable during their first year.

In the interviews, respondents were varied about the value of the previous incumbent and members of the local and division board in providing information regarding the issues and challenges of the school. It was also suggested that members be alerted to their roles on the Board. In regard to location, principals closer to central office perceived they received stronger support from boards of education, communities, parents, and teachers as opposed to those principals who were farther away from central office.

Question # 7: The Role of the Principal in Establishing and Maintaining the Reliance Structure

A number of questions were posed to elicit responses on the role of the principal in establishing and maintaining the reliance structure. The perceptions of respondents were analyzed by examining quantitative data, responses to open-ended questions, and from interviews.

Survey Data

Responses to question # 21 (strong support in role during the first year) indicated with a mean of 3.72, that participants moderately agreed that they received strong support in their role during the first year as principal. For example, two (8%) disagreed with the statement, compared to fifteen (60%) who agreed with the statement (see Table 4.26).

Table 4.26

Perceptions of Respondents Regarding the Role of the Principal in Establishing and Maintaining the Reliance Structure (N=25)

QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONS

Survey Question #	Item	Frequency			Mean	S.D.
		(1+2)	(3)	(4+5)		
21.	I received strong support in my role during my first year as principal.	2	7	15	3.72	1.02

In order to provide further analysis on question # 21 the researcher examined the perceived support received according to the variables of gender, school size, and location of the school in relation to central office (see Table 4.27). In regard to gender, eleven (69%) of the male principals perceived they received strong support during the first year. In comparison five (56%) of the female principals perceived receiving strong support during the first year. The school size variable suggests that the larger the school the more support principals received. Three (60%) of the principals in small schools as opposed to five (71%) of the principals in large schools, perceived they received strong support. The data suggests strong support decreased the further the schools were from central office.

Table 4.27

Perceptions on Receiving Strong Support: According to Gender, School Size, and Location

% Agreed or Strongly Agreed		
I Received Strong Support in My Role During the First Year		
	N	%
Gender:		
Male	11	69
Female	5	56
School Size:		
Small <75	3	60
Medium 76-149	8	62
Large >150	5	71
Location:		
<50	9	36
50+	7	28

A number of verbatim questions pertain to their involvement in establishing and maintaining assistance for the reliance structure. These responses are discussed in the next section.

Establishing and Maintaining Assistance

In the open-ended section of the survey, respondents were asked to reflect and provide responses about their involvement in establishing and maintaining the assistance they received during their first year. On this question, respondent # 11 noted that there

was a need to be proactive in order to establish a network with a variety of people. Table 4.28 illustrates the frequency of responses on people that participants wanted to establish and maintain assistance with. Respondents claimed they were involved in establishing and maintaining relationships with a number of people including: administrators,

Table 4.28

People Whom Respondents Became Involved With In Establishing and Maintaining the Assistance They Received

POSITIONS	Number and Proportion of Times Selected	
	(N=41)	%
Other Administrators	15	37
Director	10	24
Teachers	7	17
Friends	4	10
Other	5	12
TOTAL	41	100%

directors, teachers, friends, and others (members of the board, parents, and professors).

Two respondents openly felt it was their responsibility to seek and ask for assistance when they required it. Respondent # 5 summarized these feelings suggesting that “it was my job to call whenever I had a question or concern. I found it valuable to have the support people come to the school to visit and share openly the questions or concerns I had”. A key, suggested by respondent # 12, to establishing and maintaining assistance was “to initiate relationships with a few good friends in the profession like the

director and other administrators in the field. In one area in rural Saskatchewan, respondent # 1 reported establishing a network with a group of female administrators in the area that could meet informally throughout the year.

As part of their involvement, respondents established and maintained contact with people by utilizing the telephone or meeting with people in-person. On utilizing the telephone as a means of maintaining contact with people, respondent # 3 claimed "I made a lot of phone calls to ask a lot of questions to old friends, professors, teachers, and administrators". Another respondent maintained his/her assistance by "calling fellow administrators who were available for advice" (Respondent # 4). In meeting with people in-person, respondent # 7 recalled, "I met collaboratively with parents, teachers, and the director in-person to discuss issues".

Respondents noted that as part of their involvement in establishing and maintaining the assistance they required was keeping people up to date. On this issue, respondent # 23 suggested that he/she "tried to make sure that the support networks were aware of the challenges being faced. Being open enough to accept constructive criticism from other more experienced administrators helped a lot". In keeping people in the network up to date, respondent # 21 suggested "when in doubt ask? People are always willing to give advice or to just listen". It appeared that the respondents were all involved in establishing and maintaining the assistance they received.

Visiting the School

The next question examined the participants' responses on whether they visited the school prior to commencing their job. If respondents had visited the school prior to commencing their job they were asked how often and for what reasons they visited the school. Principals who taught in their school immediately prior to commencing their position were asked to skip this question and proceed with the directions in the survey. The responses from the survey indicated that fourteen (56%) of the principals visited their school prior to commencing their job.

Participants provided a number of reasons as to why they visited the school prior to becoming the principal as: to get a "feel" for the school, to meet staff, to get to know the community, to get to know students, to meet the outgoing principal, to attend a local board meeting, to do timetabling, to attend awards night, and to attend the kindergarten orientation. On a number of occasions incoming principals wanted to visit their new school more but the distance between it and the old school was too great. Respondent # 8 noted that he/she would have liked to visit the school more than they did but the distance from the two schools was over 900 kilometers.

In discussing the visit with the school, respondents were asked if they would do it differently if they had the opportunity to do it again. A number of participants shared that they would do some things differently. One example noted by respondent # 24 was that he/she may not come during school time:

It was busy as they were getting ready for graduation and it was really difficult to ask some of the questions that you would have. The next time I would have prepared a list of questions on details about the budget. I would have sat down

and gone over the policy manual with the principal and got some of his perceptions on why they had certain things or what things were issues and that kind of stuff. I would have gone over some of the paper work.

On this same topic of doing things differently, respondent # 4 reported feeling that they were in the way:

I visited the school in June before the end of the last year. It was helpful in a way and it also wasn't helpful in a way. I felt like I was getting in the way, people were buzzing all around and it was getting too close to the end of the year. So I felt I was in the way. If I did it again, I would really try to structure some 5 to 10 minute interviews with certain staff members. Just a very informal discussion in their classroom, where I can talk to them one on one and then I would probably ask for a 10 to 15 minute meeting with the whole staff so I could just go over some of the expectations. I guess I would try to put some of the fears or concerns they might have with a new person coming in to rest. I think that would help with collegiality.

If respondent # 12 had the opportunity to revisit the school again they:

Would have been a lot more prepared in asking different and better questions with regard to the community, the make-up, the town. I probably would have contacted other principals within the division and other teachers or people I know within the division and got a little bit more background information about where I was going.

Furthermore, in regard to changing a few things with the visit to the school respondent # 17 suggested:

I would have asked for a checklist of things that they felt needed to be done during a period of time. It would have been nice to have a list and even for somebody to sit down and say, "Well here's what you should make sure that you have at the local council meetings because the way I dealt with local council meetings at the very beginning to the way I deal with them now is at the opposite ends of a spectrum.

On principal went as far to say that if they had the opportunity to do it again that they would "have preferred that the previous incumbent were not there" (Respondent # 14).

Previous Incumbent Providing Information

Principals were asked for their perception on how valuable they found the previous incumbent to be at providing information regarding the issues and problems of the school prior to commencing the principalship. Just over half or 53% of the respondents felt the previous incumbent was valuable compared to 47% who felt that the previous incumbent was not valuable in providing the information regarding the issues and problems associated with the school.

On one hand, participants found the incumbent to be valuable in providing information about the issues and problems within the school. Respondent # 11 found the previous incumbent was “quite valuable in providing informal information about ‘community expectations’, ‘the local board’, and ‘staff issues’. These are things that someone may have to learn the hard way otherwise” (Respondent # 11). Other areas that respondents appreciated receiving information on were “individual teachers”, “community expectations”, and “issues and interferences from and local division board members”.

On the other hand, a number of respondents felt that the previous incumbent was not valuable because they left on bad terms, which meant the in-coming principal was left to do things like “mark changes” and “timetabling”. One principal went as far to say that the previous incumbent “left me nothing but an empty room and threw me the keys on their way out” (Respondent # 2). There were feelings from some of the principals that the information they received was inaccurate and that there were too many oversights and ignored issues.

Interview Data

In the interviews, question # 13 dealt with the advice that respondents would give to a new principal in establishing and maintaining the assistance they will need. These comments provided some further elaboration for the research question.

Advice for New Principals

In providing advice to a new principal in establishing and maintaining the assistance they will need, respondents suggested not being afraid to ask for help.

Interviewee # 5 provided advice in asking for help:

If you have any concerns ask early rather than late. If something feels funny, I always think it is funny and ask about it early. A lot of times it's just a small problem that if you deal with it or figure it out in the beginning it's a lot easier than fixing it later. You just have to ask. I don't think any one has a problem helping you at the early stages. It's more a problem if you hold it in and try and fix it quietly.

Along these lines of asking for help, respondent # 17 suggested that asking for help is not an indication that you are not able to handle the job:

Don't be afraid to pick up a phone and ask for help. Don't be afraid to network with and discuss things with people. It doesn't say anything about how you are doing or what you are doing or whatever the case is, because it doesn't matter if we have one year or ten years of experience, we can all learn from others in terms of what to do, or how to deal with a situation. As far as I am concerned that's why those people are out there. The Director, the Assistants, the mentors, the other principals in the division with more or less experience than yourself, they are available for you to use them.

Respondents suggested to new principals that they should not be afraid of asking for help.

However, respondent # 11 has seen some people ask for too much help:

I would say don't be afraid to ask questions, but I have seen some people ask for too much help. You have to know that you can live through some stuff and get through it. You will come out stronger on the other side and feel better than if you

ask for help all the time. Try to have confidence in what you think and what you believe. But don't hesitate to get advice from the people that would know. Don't be shy to ask questions or ask for help if you need it before you get into a fix.

In providing advice to beginning principals, respondent # 23 advised developing

rapport locally:

I would say develop a rapport locally with your parents, local board, and teachers. You want to make sure that you have a good rapport with all those that have an interest in your well being and the school's well being. If you do that – if you can go into a school – I can quite accurately predict, that it doesn't matter what your education level is or what your gender is, or how many years teaching experience you've had, if you develop that rapport and take the time to do that – indicates to these people that “hey, this person is going out of their way to be a part of our community. He/she has taken the time to listen to the parents, he/she has taken the time to listen to the board, he/she has taken the time to set up meetings with the teachers” and just say “What can I do for you? I am here to make you a better teacher. What do you need to do that”? My family and I made a conscious decision that it would be best for the first year or two that we show the community that we are not just here for a job and to receive a paycheck, that we are here to contribute and help make this community a better place. That's a big one. You want to make sure you do those things. So attending garage sales, going to dances, playing on the sports teams or belonging to the bridge club. Things like that. They go a long, long way. Like I say, you don't have to be the best administrator. You don't have to have worlds of experience. You don't have to have a master's or a doctorate. You just have to convince the community that you care about their kids and their community. They could care less if it's Dr. Jones or Mr. or Mrs. Jones. As a matter of fact, communities would rather have a Mr. or Mrs. Jones that referees their kids or coaches their local minor hockey team or attends the dances or socializes with the community rather than have a Dr. Jones that has credentials coming out of his ying yang. That doesn't mean anything in a rural community, maybe at a larger school where you have 800 or 900 students that might mean more. But, in a rural community I don't think that means as much.

In providing advice to new principals, respondent # 20 suggested the significance of getting support:

Certainly, fairly early, make the connections that are going to help you in the future and search out for people that you can trust and that are going to be good resource people to lean on. They will be good support people for you if you let

them. Don't be too proud to lean on those people. To involve them in what you are doing from an early stage. Don't always call people when, "I have got this ready to explode on me, I need some help. What's your advice?" Involve people early in the process. "I have got something that I foresee could be a problem. Do you have any suggestions?" In a school our size as well, our whole division, we have no vice-principals. So you don't have anyone in your school to bounce ideas off of, those kinds of things and it's important to be able to do that. Call people to bounce ideas off of, to let know what you're doing. How things are going in your school. Find out what's going on in other people's schools.

Respondent # 18 provided advice to beginning principals coming into a new school and community:

I think that the #1 thing is that if a person comes in from outside, and is new to the community, is getting to know the lay of the land. Get to know your parents in your community. Join a club or fire department or something where people get to see you other than as the school administrator or the school principal. Be a human being and find out what kind of things are going to be acceptable with staff. Get to know your staff and their personalities first. We have had principals come in here and just lay the law down the law, this is the way it's going to be. You're here at 8:30 in the morning; you don't leave until 4:00 in the afternoon. Well, anytime you tell somebody they have to do something, what happens? The hair on the back of your neck comes up and they say "I'll figure out a way to get around it" and you start out on the wrong foot right away. There are some good reasons to be at school at 8:30 in the morning. Sit down, have a coffee with your colleagues, get your head together for the day, get to your classroom a little early in the morning, meet your kids, those kind of things. But after school and the kids are all gone and the buses are all gone is there really any point sitting in the staff room with your coat on waiting for the extra fifteen minutes to go by on the clock before you leave, what's the point? If you are going to institute change as a new administrator, make sure that you have got some pretty logical reasons that you can sell those changes to your staff first of all and to your community with a minimum of disturbance and say "Yeah, this looks like a logical thing to do, this looks like it is going to be good for kids and good for our school". If we are looking at anything else as administrators, then we shouldn't be here.

It appeared that in giving advice, respondents felt that asking for help and developing a rapport with people were areas that a new principal needs to establish and maintain assistance for.

Summary

In summarizing the role of the principal in establishing and maintaining their reliance structure, responses indicated that **respondents felt they received support** in their role during the first year. The school size variable suggests that the larger schools receive more support than the other schools. The data also suggests that strong support decreased the farther the school was from central office. Most support came from the sources of **other administrators, directors, teachers, friends, and others**. Participants provided a number of reasons for visiting the school prior to becoming the principal: **to get a “feel” for the school, to meet staff, and to get to know the community**.

Fifty-three per cent (53%) of the respondents felt the previous incumbent was valuable, compared to 47% who felt that the previous incumbent was not valuable in providing the information regarding the issues and problems associated with the school. It appeared that some of the previous incumbents were not valuable in providing information due to leaving their position under difficult circumstances. It appeared that the advice given to new principals was that they should not be afraid to ask for help.

Question # 8: The Impact of Contextual Factors Upon the Reliance Structure

(Location, School Size, Education, Experience, Gender)

Questions from the quantitative section of the survey and interview questions were used to gain an understanding of the impact of contextual factors upon the reliance structure.

Survey Data

A number of contextual factors were considered as having a potential influence on the reliance structure for beginning principals. Table 4.29 illustrates the responses of respondents on the influence of contextual factors on their reliance structure. Question # 34 (location of the school), indicated with a mean of 3.92, suggests that respondents

Table 4.29

Perceptions of Respondents Regarding the Influence of Contextual Factors on the Reliance Structure

QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONS

Survey Question #	Item	Frequency			Mean	S.D.	N
		(1+2)	(3)	(4+5)			
34.	The location of my school influenced how I could develop my reliance structure.	0	6	19	3.92	.64	25
35.	The size of my school influenced how I could develop my reliance structure.	3	6	16	3.64	1.11	25
36.	The size of my school system influenced how I could develop my reliance structure.	4	7	14	3.40	1.15	25
37.	My educational background influenced how I could develop my reliance structure.	5	5	15	3.36	1.15	25
38.	My experiences as an educator influenced how I could develop reliance structure.	1	5	19	3.96	.79	25
39.	My gender influenced how I could develop my reliance structure.	9	5	11	2.88	1.48	25

moderately agreed that **the location of the school influenced** how they could develop their reliance structure. Interestingly, not one person disagreed compared to nineteen (76%) who agreed with the statement.

Responses to question # 35 reported a mean of 3.64. Once again respondents moderately agreed that the **size of the school influenced** how they could develop a reliance structure. Put another way, three (12%) disagreed while sixteen (64%) agreed that the size of the school influenced their ability to develop a reliance structure.

A mean of 3.40 represents the principals perspective on question # 36. In response to this question, respondents moderately agreed that the **size of the school system influenced** the reliance structure. More specifically, four (16%) disagreed while fourteen (56%) agreed that the size of their school system influenced their ability to develop a reliance structure.

Once again responses to question # 37 indicated with a mean of 3.36 that respondents moderately agreed that their **educational background influenced** developing a reliance structure. Put another way, five (20%) disagreed compared to fifteen (60%) who agreed that their educational background had an influence on developing a reliance structure.

The highest scores with a mean of 3.96 were received on question # 38. This indicates that principals had a moderate level of agreement that their **experiences as an educator influenced** developing a reliance structure. One (4%) of the participants disagreed compared to nineteen (76%) who agreed that their experiences as an educator influenced their development of a reliance structure.

The lowest scores were received on question # 39 with a mean of 2.88. Respondents moderately disagreed with the statement that their **gender influenced** developing a reliance structure. Nine (36%) of the respondents disagreed whereas eleven

(44%) agreed that their gender influenced their developing of a reliance structure. The researcher further analyzed the perceptions of each gender on the basis of their responses to question # 39. On the five-point scale, males had a mean of 2.81 that suggests respondents moderately disagreed that their gender influenced their ability to develop a reliance structure. Six males disagreed compared to 8 that agreed that their gender influenced their development of a reliance structure. Females had a similar opinion with a mean of 2.88 that they moderately disagreed that their gender influenced their ability to develop a reliance structure. Put another way, 3 females disagreed while 3 agreed with the statement.

When data were analyzed further, two points worthy of note became apparent: 1) four of the five principals who disagreed that their educational background influenced how they developed their reliance structure had **only undergraduate training**. 2) in regard to gender influencing their ability to develop the reliance structure, 6 male and 3 female respondents disagreed with the statement.

Interview Data

One question (# 12) from the interview section asked respondents to consider the impact of contextual factors on their ability to get assistance. More specifically, contextual things like location, school size, system size, education, experience, and gender. The following comments illustrate the perceptions of respondents on the impact of contextual factors on their ability to get assistance.

In Regard to Location

Fifteen (60%) noted that location was a problem. In discussing this, Respondent # 23 reported that his/her school was over one hour away from central office and this left him/her feeling isolated. Being located near a big center was a problem for respondent # 2 in getting assistance:

The school was very close to a large center and the school was not necessary in the public's mind other than the last few in the town. The big community threat often had parents threatening to move their child out whenever there was a problem. For example, parents would threaten "I will take my child down the road if this isn't worked out". I didn't let it affect me, I just said, "Okay, if we can't work it out then – I actually had more kids come than go by the end of the year".

Location was also a problem for respondent # 10 as he/she suggested not being able to sit down and actually talk to the director all of the time. This problem has since been alleviated because the director is now the principal's next-door neighbor.

Nine (36%) of the participants' perceived that location was a contextual problem for receiving assistance in the reliance structure. For a number of the respondents this was so because they were in the same location as the division office. Others like respondent # 20 perceived that they were in the center of the division and that location was not a problem because:

We are in the center of the school division so we kind of have everything. Our division office is not in our town, but a lot of stuff comes through here. A lot of the division meetings are here. So, as opposed to being on the periphery, a lot of stuff filters through our school.

Location from the central office was not a problem for respondent # 6 because if he/she needs the director or one of the superintendents they come out: "There is no question

about it if they are needed they are here. But, I can certainly see in other schools where they are further away from their division office this could be a real problem”.

In Regard to School Size

Nine (36%) respondents perceived that school size had an impact on their ability to get assistance compared to five (20%) that felt it did not have an impact. Ten of the respondents did not make a comment in regard to the size of the school in their interview.

In discussing the impact of his/her school size respondent # 20 reported that there are some things a small school can do that a large school can not and vice-versa.

In a small school we struggle when it comes to course loads and course offerings and those kinds of things. But there are also some things we can do that larger schools can't. We know all our parents and kids. There are some relationships built there. If there is anything we need in the school, we've got resource people in the community who are parents who will be in as soon as we need them. The local board is very active in our school and I think bigger schools miss out on that.

Two principals explained that their small schools are perceived by people in the division office as being not very important. Respondent # 19 provided the following example:

When you have guidance type people, they spend very little time in your school, because you don't have the numbers, you may only have two kids going to university in your grade twelve class. So they tend to put you at the bottom of the barrel a little bit. That definitely happens. I think sometimes directors if they think in the next 5 to 6 years that your school is going to be closing they almost let it run its course. Kind of like a retiring teacher the last 1 or 2 years they coast. I think that we sometimes get put on coast.

There was a concern expressed by participants toward the declining numbers of students and its impact on school size. School size issue was summarized by respondent #

6 as:

We have declining enrolments and there has been a lot of stress this year on the potential school closure and that the school just remain open for one more year. It creates strain here, because there is strain on the teachers and they are concerned. So as the administrator you have to deal with pressures and concerns of the local board and the community as it all gets directed this way. The community wants to know what can the school do to help this situation out. Trying to work hand in hand with people in the community adds a whole different dimension to what my job is. I am looking at community promotion and that sort of thing. I never expected that would be a part of my job. I looked at my role as running the school and being involved in the community, but not in the same way that I am involved with trying to sell homes and that sort of thing. So that is a problem from being in a small sized school, the funding that you get is a major problem.

The principals who perceived school size was not a problem felt they had sufficient numbers in the school to get the assistance they needed. Respondent # 24 explained in the interview that school size was not an issue, “because we have a big enough school. There are twelve of us on staff. It’s not huge, but it’s enough people so that if you need someone to talk to there is someone there”. On this topic, respondent # 10 reported that school size was not a problem because most of the high schools in the division were the same size.

In Regard to System Size

Eleven (44%) of the participants felt that the small size of their enrolment in their school system had an impact on their ability to get assistance. The two areas that respondents suggested impacted their ability to get assistance were: the size and area of some school divisions and the declining enrolments in some of the small school divisions.

The size and area of some school divisions meant that not only was it difficult to access someone from central office, but that money for professional development was not available either. On this issue respondent # 23 reported:

We had a large school division in area, but small in enrolment. There was central office staff, but accessing or having them come to the school was difficult and because we had such a low pupil population we didn't have a lot of money. So travel was kept to a minimum. Even phone calls were certainly not encouraged between school to school because of costs. Costs were the underlying factor.

Similar sentiments in getting a hold of the director in a school division that covers a large area were expressed by respondent # 17: "our school division is big and that sometimes means that it's tougher to get a hold of the director or assistant director when you need to". Not all of the participants felt it was difficult to get assistance in a school division that covered large areas:

Our school division is small enough, maybe not in miles, but we interact a lot. We all know each other so we phone one another. If somebody's having a program in another school they'll phone and say do you want to come or we had a really good speaker do you want their name? I think that helps a lot. You're not just a faceless person, everybody knows who you are and they kind of know what your needs are. (Respondent # 22)

On the second issue of declining enrolments and being in a small school system, respondent # 3 noted that "our system is so small our numbers are drastically decreasing across the whole division and it looks like about 15 students per school each over the past 3 or 4 years have left". Respondent # 2 recognized that his/her school division had a steep declining enrolment that affected professional development opportunities. Also, because of the declining enrolments, there was no money which meant that there was very little assistance to physically meet with other administrators.

In one situation a respondent noted the challenge in getting assistance from a school system that has a high turn over of administrators every year:

It's been a bit of a struggle in that I'm coming to being a system that has a number of beginning administrators and has a reputation for turning over a lot of

administrators. Our director is also new which has been a bit of a struggle for me. (Respondent # 11)

The issues faced by principals in large rural area school divisions with low enrolments were different than those that came from large rural school systems with large enrolments. Respondent # 6 summarizes the sentiments of three (12%) principals who reported that their larger enrolments in the school system assisted their ability to get assistance:

We have one of the larger, wealthier, rural school divisions and it certainly helps a lot in getting support. When we had a behaviourally challenged student, we had not trouble getting any kind of support that we needed from central office. I think in being in a larger rural school division, we are able to have the kind of money it takes to attract quality personnel. Being close to a larger center allows our school division to have a lot of selection in who they hire. Whereas, other rural school divisions that have lower enrolments are experiencing trouble in getting staff. That alone makes a huge difference in services you can provide.

In Regard to Education

Thirty-two percent suggested that their education has assisted them in getting assistance. As one who felt that their education assisted, Respondent # 22 acknowledged that:

It really helped to have some graduate studies because it made me realize that there are a lot of different ways to do things. It is important to see that there is a broader spectrum than what exists here and also the interaction with others and hearing what they have to say about their schools and experiences gives me a broader perspective on the whole job. Having taken some graduate classes has also made me realize that you don't always have to keep things as status quo; there are lots of options out there and I'm no longer scared to take those.

Taking graduate classes assisted respondent # 3 in formulating his/her beliefs:

At first when I went through my master's classes I thought, "Would I have ever liked to had a couple years of experience before I came in", because I didn't understand some of the things that they were talking about or didn't have the

experience to comment or anything like that, and after a while I felt that was an invaluable experience. Because the issues popped up we talked about them and we had a whole bunch of different areas that people were coming from. Some had different backgrounds which brings with it different ideas. I just found that if you had talked about it in that context that you could formulate your own opinions. I think that helped out immensely. It was just having that knowledge that assists in formulating your beliefs. Some people don't believe in out of school suspensions others do - What is your belief and how will you carry through with it? Along with education there are personal and professional scopes that assisted me in understanding my strengths and weaknesses through certain tests that we had done in master's classes. Those really helped me to understand a little bit more about myself. For example, I didn't want to be wishy washy on certain issues. For example, with suspensions do you give them a three day in school or a three day out of school. I think that my master's classes helped formulate my beliefs so that I knew this was the right decision.

On this issue of education having an impact on their ability to get assistance, respondent

6 felt that it lends support and confidence to the decisions that are made:

The fact that I have done other work before this that were – I worked in Corrections, I was a prison guard. I worked with the RCMP, that sort of thing. I have a couple degrees and have been working on a master's. I think that that just helps with maybe some of the confidence in my decision making and has lended itself to receiving more support. There is maybe some trust there. "He's dealt with difficult situations before. He's worked with people in these things. So he probably knows what he is talking about. He's educated, so let's give him the benefit of the doubt." I think there is more trust when you can demonstrate that you understand some of the research and philosophy behind doing things.

It appeared that respondents felt that their graduate training assisted with realizing there is a broader spectrum to work from formulating beliefs around certain issues, and in gaining confidence in making decisions. Some of the principals who were living far away from a university would have appreciated taking graduate courses through distance education opportunities.

Twenty percent of the respondents felt that education has not had an impact on their ability to get assistance. Respondent # 17 noted that he/she did not feel that education has ever been a factor in their ability to receive assistance:

I don't think that necessarily having a Master's degree in Educational Administration would make me a better principal. I think that I was prepared because I am a personable person. I was talking about education and the fact that I don't believe that education makes a principal. I have never thought that having a Ph. D would necessarily make you a better teacher than somebody who has a bachelor's degree, so I don't see that as a big deal. That's not to say that we can't use education to learn and to grow in our profession. Eventually my goal is to become a Director one day and I understand that to be out of scope I need a Master's degree and that will be something that I do go back and get. But on the other hand, that's never even been raised as an issue in receiving assistance. We have two staff members that have a Master's degree and I know for a fact that they wouldn't survive a principalship. So education for me isn't an issue.

One principal felt that education has not been an issue because of some of the professional development opportunities that exist:

My education has not been an issue in receiving assistance because a lot of the modules that I have taken and the principal's short course have helped in those areas. As well, I think I have got a lot of experience in a lot of different areas in a short time because of the people I have worked with. That's certainly been critical. (Respondent # 20)

It was perceived by some of the participants that experience and professional development opportunities had a bigger impact than education on ability to get assistance.

In Regard to Experience

Two principals shared that their experience has had an impact on their ability to get assistance. Experience is a really important thing as respondent # 24 explained:

I have all kinds of experience in this division and have all kinds of contacts with a lot of people. I know who I might call about various things, which is a real asset. I

feel sorry for some – we had a young principal from out of province, and he had nobody to talk to, nobody to tap into, nobody. That would be a real problem. I feel fortunate that I am well grounded in this province. I know a lot of people throughout the province that I can get assistance from.

Respondent # 10 reported the benefits of getting assistance after teaching in the same school system for a long period of time:

I guess the fact that I have taught in the same division all this time I am very comfortable with some of the people that I do need to talk to in order to get that assistance. So that has helped. I guess I am not scared to go and ask for help after having taught that length of time.

It appeared that having some teaching experience in the school division prior to becoming the principal assisted these principals in getting assistance.

This was not the case for other principals who felt that their lack of teaching experience was a detriment to their ability to get assistance. Respondent # 23 felt that there was a perception that he/she was too young to be the principal:

I think some parents and local board members look at a younger person like me and think to themselves, “You know what is this person doing being the principal. He’s way too young to be the principal. I have heard that many times”.

Another principal found that earning the staffs respect as an inexperienced teacher and principal made it difficult to get their assistance:

The experience of people around me was a hindrance because most people had more experience than I did as a teacher and as a principal. That automatically made me some kind of a wonder boy plant. As a result, I was consistently challenged at every turn by older staff until I earned their respect. (Respondent # 2)

Inexperience for the younger principals appears to have had an impact on their ability to get assistance.

Two principals reported feeling that they had enough experience dealing with curricula and students so that was not an issue in getting assistance. These sentiments on experience were summarized by respondent # 17:

I felt I had enough experience that some people were able to look to me for advice. Even if someone had more experience than me it was not a problem because I was able to provide a suggestion about the problem.

There appeared to be a feeling from participants that having some prior long-term teaching experiences had an impact on their ability to get assistance.

In Regard to Gender

Forty-eight per cent of the respondents felt that gender had an impact on their ability to get assistance. Of these, five (48%) suggested that people still hold the view that the principal's role has stereotypically been a male's position. A number of principals shared their experiences with gender and its impact to receive assistance. In one situation, respondent # 12 claimed that in his situation the board was definitely looking to hire a male. "I was told they wanted a male as it's a very traditional community". Another principal reported that some of the professional development needs of female principals were not being looked after in his school division:

I know the old boys club still exists and I think it does have an impact on how one receives assistance. I think being male in this position has probably been easier for me to be heard from what I have observed from our female administrators in the division. We don't have many female administrators, but the ones we do have I don't know if they are always heard about what they need for professional development. I don't know if the female needs are looked after as well as maybe say some of the males needs. There is still a gender difference in my mind.
(Respondent # 6)

Two female principals perceived that gender is still a bit of an issue in terms of getting assistance. One reason for this is that there is only one female administrator in the division. Respondent # 24 noted this in her experience:

When we go to workshops and things like that if you are the only female administrator in the division we have to pay full price for our own rooms, whereas the other male administrators were paying half of that because they double up on a room. It ends up being a money issue.

A second respondent perceived that in being a female you feel like you are going to be judged differently than a male:

As a female you feel that if you ask a question you are going to be deemed incompetent by the male counterparts. If you have a problem with a student maybe they may think that you just can't handle it, whereas if a male had the same problem it would be the kids fault and so sometimes I think women hesitate to ask for help when they might need with some things. Also, I think that a lot of the times women have to prove themselves more than a man. (Respondent # 11)

A number of issues arose in the context of gender having an impact on a principals ability to get assistance. The gender issues dealt with stereotypical roles of principals, professional development needs of female administrators, and being treated as equals in the position of principal.

Summary

In summarizing the data on contextual factors, respondents felt that the location of the school, the size of the school, the size of the school system, their education background, the experiences of educators had an impact on their ability to get assistance in developing a reliance structure. When reviewed further, the data suggests that 4 of the 5 principals who disagreed that their educational background influenced how they

developed their reliance structure, had only undergraduate training. Respondents did not agree that gender had an influence on their ability to develop a reliance structure.

**Question # 9: The Extent to Which Self-Reflection and Professional Development
Related to the Reliance Structure**

Respondents were asked a question to describe the professional development and self-reflection activities they were involved in during the first year. The responses below are indicative of the perceptions gained from the survey.

Survey Data

In total, participants produced seventy-six responses shown in Table 4.30.

Twenty-five (33%) of the responses suggested that conferences and workshops were utilized as a means of seeking professional development and self-reflection. Some of these included the Western Canadian Educational Leadership Conference (WCELC), regional administrator conferences, Saskatchewan Council of Educational Administrators (SCEA) conference, Rural Educational conference, and workshops on the Beginning Principalship. The Saskatchewan School Based Administrator's (SSBA) group organizes a principal training program that fifteen (20%) times as a professional development and self-reflection activity during their first year. Ten (13%) responses related to involvement in the annual principals' short course. Some of the participants attended the short course before commencing their jobs while others attended it after their first year.

Table 4.30

Professional Development and Self Reflection Activities for Neophyte Principals

ACTIVITIES	Number and Proportion of Times Selected	
	(N=76)	%
Conferences and Workshops	25	33
SSBA Modules	15	20
Principal's Short Course	10	13
Administrators Meetings	9	12
Post Graduate Classes	6	8
Others	11	14
TOTAL	76	100%

Nine (12%) of the responses suggested that they had opportunities for professional development and self-reflection with other principals at monthly administrators meetings. Respondent # 16 pointed out that they had regular meetings in the morning between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. with their vice-principal. Another principal reported that his/her administrators group went golfing on a regular basis as a self-reflection activity. Six (8%) responses stated that they were taking post-graduate classes as a means of professional development and self-reflection. Eleven (14%) of the responses indicated that they participated in other professional development and self-

reflection activities like personal professional planning, professional reading, mentorship activities, and keeping a journal.

Summary

All twenty-five participants in this study reported that they were involved in some aspect of professional development or self-reflection activity. Thirty-three per cent of the respondents perceived that they attended a variety of conferences and workshops related to professional development and self-reflection activities.

Question # 10: The Sense of Self-Efficacy Perceived During the First Year

The principals were asked two questions in relation to their sense of self-efficacy perceived as a school leader during the first year. The respondents' elaborations are discussed below.

Survey Data

Question # 40 represented perceptions of respondents on their feelings of self-efficacy as a school leader during the first year. Table 4.31 represents data on principals' abilities to sense their feelings of self-efficacy during the first year. This question had a mean of 3.75, which meant that participants moderately agreed that as a school leader they were able to sense a strong feeling of self-efficacy during the first year.

Interestingly, not one person disagreed compared to sixteen (67%) who agreed with the statement.

In order to provide further analysis a cross tabulation was performed on those who agreed on the question of attaining self-efficacy, with the variables of educational

Table 4.31

Neophyte Self-Efficacy During the First Year N=24)

QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONS

Survey Question #	Item	Frequency			Mean	S.D.
		(1+2)	(3)	(4+5)		
40.	As a school leader, I was able to sense a strong feeling of self-efficacy during the course of the first year.	0	8	16	3.75	.61

background and gender. These data are represented in Table 4.32. Seven (78%) of the respondents who had graduate training (GT) agreed that they attained a strong level of self- efficacy during the course of the first year. In comparison, nine (56%) of the respondents who had no graduate training (NGT) perceived that they had attained a strong level of self-efficacy during the course of the first year. Sixty-seven per cent of female respondents compared to 63% of male respondents agreed that they were able to attain a strong level of self-efficacy during the first year.

Interview Data

Question # 14 from the interview asked respondents about their perception on the degree of self-efficacy they were able to attain as a school leader during the first year. The researcher would like to remind the reader of the working definition of self-efficacy: the principals' ability to feel good about what they were able to accomplish in their first year. The majority of over 83% reported that they were able to "feel good" about what

Table 4.32

Number and Percentage of Respondents Indicating Agree or Strongly Agree

	Number and Percentage of Respondents Indicating Agree or Strongly Agree							
	Education Background				Gender			
	GT		NGT		Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
10. There is a need to develop and establish a reliance structure for beginning principals.	7	78	9	56	10	63	6	67

they had accomplished in their first year. On the other hand, 17% of the respondents claimed that they had some “doubt” in their ability to attain a sense of self-efficacy during their first year.

Respondents reported a number of ways that they felt measured the degree of self-efficacy they were able to attain. In most situations, respondents measured their ability to attain self-efficacy by the responses they received from a variety of stakeholders in education. Table 4.33 illustrates the various vehicles that helped participants understand they were doing a good job. When asked to elaborate on the notion of self-efficacy respondent # 19 explained that he/she had attained a high sense of self-efficacy and described how students and staff were utilized in measuring the outcome:

I am actually very happy with the first year and how things went. I am following somebody in here who things weren't going so well in their two-year stint. The kids weren't happy, the staff wasn't happy. During the previous principals last

Table 4.33

As a School Leader the Degree of Self-Efficacy Attained

PEOPLE	Number and Proportion of Times Selected	
	(N=50)	%
Parents	13	26
Students	11	22
Staff	11	22
Director	11	22
Board	3	6
Other Administrators Meetings	1	2
TOTAL	50	100%

year there were a number of staff members that applied out and didn't get anything. That attitude has changed. The kids are happier and the staff have been very positive and supportive. A couple of the more solid members of the staff who were interested in leaving aren't interested in leaving anymore. So that's good. We have put some programs in for kids, and I think kids are generally happy to come here and enjoy being in the school. Our school had a huge year in the athletics department and that's something that hasn't happened here in a long time. I think part of that is just helping the kids feel like they are a part of things and they get along and it's their school and take some ownership in it. That's something that certainly I take a little pride in. Because kids were not happy before they weren't putting a lot back into the school. Our drama program won a bunch of awards this year. We have kids participating in everything and some kids that haven't in the past. I think that is your best ruler, that's your best way to measure what's happening in the school is what kids are putting back into programs outside the classroom. Kids that are happy, and kids that are involved outside of the classroom are the kids you are going to get the most out of in the classroom. We are really seeing that spill over. We have had a lot of real good

things happen in our school last year. It certainly comes from the students first but as a staff, and as an administrator, you have to provide them with the opportunity and the structure to do that with them. The kids here have been wonderful this year and I hear stories about how awful some of these kids were last year towards the end of the year. I have suspension letters in the file on 3 or 4 of our kids here that were suspended a couple of times last year. We haven't had one suspension. There hasn't been any trouble and they are the same kids.

Another respondent measured their ability to attain self-efficacy by looking at a number of different groups to measure their level of self-efficacy. It also appeared that the end of the school year was when principals evaluated their ability to attain a high degree of self-efficacy.

Looking at the end of the year as to where we are with staff satisfaction, community satisfaction, board satisfaction, and most importantly director approval. With this I take a look at the job that I am doing and I know that there are some glaring weaknesses, but I am smart enough to know what those are. I then look at how the staff feels about our strengths and weaknesses and if we are all on the same page then I think we are headed in the right direction (Respondent # 19).

Some of the respondents turned to staff while others turned to their Director for feedback in understanding the level of self-efficacy that was being attained. As the first year went on respondent # 17 felt pretty good about what they were doing:

I felt good about the job I was doing. I received some feedback about that from the Director, from people around me who said, "You know you are doing a good job here, keep it up". You are going to battle through some tough times and I did battle through some tough times. Sometimes you wonder, "Why am I doing this. Is this really for me". But there has been a lot more good days than there have been bad. There's never a time when I wake up in the morning and say, "I have got to go to school again." I have been fortunate that way. I feel pretty good about where things are at and where things are going and I feel good about the fact that the people out there who provide support are saying to me that, "You are doing a good job, so keep it up". I was asked privately to take on a position in a larger school setting in this division. I didn't want to leave this place because I have put a lot of blood, sweat and tears – and it's not where I want it yet. But on the other hand it's slowly but surely getting to a point where I am

comfortable with how things are going. Like I say, I think that after the first year, even after this year I know that I am going to feel pretty good about how things are going. There's some ways that I will try and improve on things. But definitely you know – I think that one thing that would be a suggestion to new principals would be to say; no matter what, in your role as a principal, people look for somebody who is organized and it doesn't matter how good or poor of a job you are doing with the public or whatever, if you are organized and you're prepared and you're making sure that everything is done properly and so on, they appreciate that part of it. That has helped me feel good about being organized. It's not to say that I wouldn't work to improve still on what I can do to make things more organized. That has helped me to maintain a pretty good sense of self-efficacy.

This principal's level of self-efficacy was associated more with staff perceptions of his/her ability to be prepared and organized in the school. Regardless of the relationship with the public, his/her perception as principal was that people appreciated someone being well prepared and organized.

Becoming an administrator was a really good move for one participant as they had taught senior English since 1978 and felt they were getting to the point of becoming stagnant. As for reflecting on the first year of becoming the school leader and the degree of self-efficacy attained, respondent # 18 responded:

On the whole the staff is pretty satisfied with the way the school is running. I don't have a lot of administrative experience as this is my second year as principal, but I am having fun with what I am doing and it's really easy to get up in the morning to come to work. It's okay to stay late if you have to because it just feels good to be where I am. I am happy to be a principal.

It appeared that respondents # 17 and # 18 found that coming to work as principal was a fun experience.

This was not the case for 17% of the respondents who felt they doubted the degree of self-efficacy they were able to attain after the first year. In reflecting back to the first year respondent # 10 reported:

I don't know if I felt that great about the first year. I had made the comment to a few people that if things continued on in the way that they had, with some of the difficulties with staff members and the classes they were teaching, I probably wouldn't have been doing this job much longer as I didn't need the headache.

The situation turned around in the second year to the point where respondent # 10 explained that parents were coming to parent teacher interviews saying "My kid isn't coming home grumbling about being at school anymore, and they are happy to be in school".

Respondent # 6 had a lot of doubts about the first year and as a result the degree of self-efficacy was not high:

I had a lot of doubts. I felt that I did a lot of good things, but I think that a few parents and the way that they questioned things really filled me with doubt. Did I make the best decision or handle that in the best way. I have always been a very confident person. But certainly that first year of the principalship I found very difficult to manage. By the end of the first year I was filled with doubt about whether I wanted to continue being an administrator. I think a big part of that was, as a teacher I felt highly successful, I had never had any problems before, as I always received a lot of praise as a teacher. As an administrator I was left to deal with conflict a lot and just wondering, "Well, am I the guy to deal with conflict everyday. Am I the best conflict manager." That seemed to be what the job was largely about. Whereas I was hoping it was more about professional development of teachers and leading in that direction, improvement of schools, that sort of thing. Which I found didn't have much time for. So certainly by the end of that first year I thought, "Well I am not sure if I want to do this much longer. I'll give it another year and see how it goes." Certainly, one of the things that have been in my mind, and maybe you have heard this before – the kind of life I was living, how much I was away from my kids, the conflict I had to manage all the time and I looked at how much I was getting paid. I can't see much of a difference on the pay cheque to be living the kind of life I am living. That certainly had an impact. It really made me stop and think.

In one situation a principal felt it was difficult to measure the degree of self-efficacy because of the isolation and separation from staff:

At times it is a tough road to feel good about. It really is. At times you are definitely left feeling alone and away from the teachers. There are also times of

isolation when you have to shield the teachers from criticism that is being directed at them. I have developed a hard outer shell as I am able to take things more with a grain of salt. Sometimes there is some truth in the public criticisms but as a staff we talk about ways for improvement. (Respondent # 3)

For respondent # 11 the doubt arose from uncertainty around being too hard on themselves and around the school closing:

That's a tough one because I am very hard on myself and sometimes I don't know how satisfied I am. I think that's a problem us women have is that we take things too personally and too much to heart. All too often we are more than happy to take the blame for everything that goes wrong. The first year was a really tough year because the way the division was set up. In the past two years there have been two new directors and our school is slated to close at the end of this year. The board has not been supportive either. I find being the principal here with the school closing and the way the board has handled things is really horrible. It was kind of inevitable that the school would be closing but the board could have done it in a way that didn't kill people. It was just plain rude the lying and total disrespect to the school and the community.

Summary

In summary, for those principals who felt positive about their ability to attain a high degree of self-efficacy it appeared they received some recognition for their work. These principals also appeared to have some sort of technique from which to measure the degree of self-efficacy they were able to attain. For example, using students' involvement in school programs as was the case with one principal. For the principals who had some doubt as to their ability to attain a high degree of self-efficacy, there appeared to be some mixed messages being sent to these people. The data suggests that seven principals with graduate training (78%) attained higher percentages of self-efficacy as opposed to nine principals with Bachelor Degrees (56%).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the survey and interview analyses are discussed in relation to the thematic map in the following sections. The first section reviews the major findings of the study. The second section discusses these findings within the context of rural schools, the reliance structure, the socialization processes of beginning principals, and degree of self-efficacy beginning principals were able to attain during their first year. The final section includes implications for research, theory, principal preparation and professional development, policy, and school system leadership.

Discussion of Major Findings

The findings are presented as they relate to the four major headings in the thematic map.

School Context

A number of factors were seen to influence neophyte principals' development of a reliance structure. These included: **the location of the school, the size of the school, the size of the school system, educational background, and the prior experiences of the principal as an educator.** This finding lends credence to the position that these contextual factors affect a rural neophyte principal's ability to develop a reliance structure and yet very little has been written about their impact or effect on rural beginning principals.

School Location

In relation to location, isolation appeared to be a factor. A number of recent studies seemed to verify that isolation is a challenge for many principals in rural settings (Din, 1997; Evans, 1996; Lam & Cormier, 1998; Merrill & Pounder, 1999; Renihan, 1999; Samier, 2000). Location made principals in this study feel isolated. Being close to a large center did not necessarily alleviate the problem of isolation, but indeed brought about other problems. For one respondent this meant that the school was not needed in the public's mind. The big community threat had parents threatening to move their child whenever something controversial arose. Location also appeared to be a problem for principals that were actually hoping to sit down and discuss things with the director.

School Size

While not a problem for everybody, most felt that school size had an influence. The most frequently mentioned concerns were around declining enrolments and school closures and the perceived lack of concern over small schools by central office. Schools with small enrolments were seen as a detriment as they were not able to offer courses that large schools could and as a result, this affected the school's ability to attract student services like speech and language pathologists and school guidance counselors. The realities being that these services were offered on a per pupil basis and without the enrolment these small schools were not granted a significant amount of student services time. This finding was supported in Renihan's (1999) study, which explains that declining enrollments in small schools have had an impact of reducing the support they receive.

There appeared to be high levels of stress around schools that had declining enrolments and a related possibility of school closure. A considerable amount of strain came from teachers who were worried about whether they would have a job or not the following year. For one principal, this meant extra pressure to coordinate the stresses and concerns of teachers along with the local school board and the community. In one particular community, the principal was involved in promoting the community by trying to sell homes so that the school could remain open. All of this appeared to add a whole different dimension to what the principal's role really is. Studies have shown that the proliferation of expectations being placed on principals today often includes the challenges of having to generate resources and funding (Lawson, 1999; Renihan, 1999).

One of the principals perceived that central office was not concerned with his/her small school because of the declining enrolments. The director's reaction to this small school made the principal feel like a retiring teacher who was allowed to coast in the last two years of their career. The feeling was that if a director knows that a school will be closing in the next several years that they will just let it run its course.

School System Size

The smaller the size of the school system seemed to be related to the amount of assistance that was available to beginning principals. School divisions that covered large areas and had low student enrolments made it difficult for principals to get a hold of the director or assistant director. This is consistent with Renihan's (1999) findings in which declining enrollments, combined with the down-sizing of division office staff has had the impact of reducing support by providing less contact with senior administration. Boards

of education in these circumstances may have to look at amalgamation opportunities with other school division in order to remain viable.

Some principals felt that the sheer size and area that their school divisions covered made it difficult for them to access someone from central office. In smaller school divisions with declining enrolments this also meant that there was no money for professional development opportunities. One principal noted that even phone calls to other administrators were discouraged because of the costs. Others felt that with no money there was very little assistance to physically meet with other administrators. Paradoxically, in this study, respondents identified other administrators as the most valuable people in their orientation. School systems need to provide opportunities for these people to meet. This may also mean that boards of education will have to become more creative in ways that allow beginning principals to develop and establish their supports within the reliance structure. Otherwise, as one principal suggested, small school systems will have high turnovers of administrators every year.

Educational Background

Working towards a post-graduate degree was a factor for those who were enrolled. Principals in the post graduate program seemed to gain a perspective that there were a variety of ways to approach problems from and that these different approaches gave them confidence in trying other problem-solving techniques. One principal commented that his/her graduate program assisted them in formulating their beliefs system. It was perceived that because people in the graduate program came from different

backgrounds, that this allowed opportunities for principals to bounce ideas off of other people.

For those who were not working towards a post-graduate degree they did not see it as a factor influencing their ability to develop the reliance structure. One respondent made the observation that having a Master's degree did not necessarily make them a better principal and that it was more about being personable. The feeling was that other professional development opportunities were more oriented to the actual practice and thus were found to be more valuable. This finding was surprising considering that most advertisements for the principalship want aspiring principals who are either working on, or have completed, a Master's Degree. From the findings of the study, universities may have to find more practical modes of delivery for their programs and make these programs more readily accessible. Other research has agreed with the finding that preparation practices for new principals have not adapted to the complex realities and that more effective approaches for preparing and supporting candidates for school leadership is a necessity (Casavant, 2001; Sergiovanni, 1995).

Teaching Experience

Two issues arose that proved to be factors having some influence on the principal's ability to get assistance. The first was in relation to principals in the study who had taught in the same school system prior to becoming the principal, and the second was dealing with issues that arose from being an inexperienced teacher. Principals who had taught in their school divisions prior to becoming the principal felt quite comfortable with

asking people for help. Others who had even more teaching experience knew people in other school districts that they could rely on.

Some of the principals felt that their lack of teaching experience was a detriment to their ability to get assistance, especially when parents and members of the local board perceived that they were too young to be the principal. Another inexperienced teacher and principal felt that until he/she earned the staff's respect they could not get assistance to develop their reliance structure. This was not a surprise considering the earlier findings in this study. The first finding revealed that the attitudes of staff were a major surprise for respondents when they were commencing the principalship. The second finding found that respondents felt that the most critical relationship that needed to be developed in a reliance structure were with their own school staffs. Therefore, it appears eminent that one component of a beginning principal's reliance structure needs to be spending time developing relationships with their staffs.

Gender

Respondents, regardless of their gender, moderately disagreed with the statement that their gender influenced their ability to develop their reliance structure. This came as a surprise to the researcher, and it ran counter to what Russel and Wright (1990) found in their study, e.g. that women tend to not have access to the same range of socialization processes as men. Other research findings suggested that many women administrators feel that they work in isolation and that there is a glaring lack of networking/socialization opportunities for women (Garber, 1992; Hurley, 1994). The women surveyed in the

present study were all experienced educators (>6 years). Perhaps this was a consideration in their responses to the question. It would seem to merit further study.

A number of respondents perceived that the principal's role is still stereotypically male. Research (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1991; Morie & Wilson, 1996) supports this claim and suggests that the number one barrier for women in administration is sex-role stereotyping. The literature is replete with claims of sex-role stereotyping being the major barrier for women who want support in positions of educational administration.

One of the most ironic personal barriers women face in administration is the denial that there actually exist barriers for women in administration (Baudaux, 1995). Baudaux's study supported this claim and revealed that the strategies employed by women facing this climate of exclusion were also examined and were found to fall into two categories, those employed by women who accepted the status quo and those employed by women who wanted to alter the status quo. Those who accepted the status quo tended to deny any access problem, either by refusing to recognize a problem or by denying that problems applied to them as individuals. This finding may suggest why women in this study were not speaking out about gender influencing their ability to develop the reliance structure.

A small number of female principals perceived they were going to be judged differently than their male counterparts. It was felt (by one male interviewee) that the males were forthright in asking for support where women were either reluctant to ask or their opinions were not taken seriously. This finding was supported by an attitudinal study, which showed a bias against women when compared with men in administrative

positions (Ortiz & Marshall, 1988). In one context, it was perceived that the old boys club still exists and that the female administrative needs are not always heard. This lack of networking and socialization goes hand in hand with research that suggests that there is a lack of sponsorship and mentorship for females within educational administration (Gupton & Slick, 1996; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Scott, 1997). The literature emphasizes the importance of having both personal and professional advocates as one proceeds towards leadership goals. Female administrators and aspirants experience a number of difficulties that men tend not to experience.

Challenges and Issues

An investigation of the contexts of these schools outlined the challenges and issues that beginning principals were confronted with during the first year. A finding in this area was that the principals in this study were not well prepared for dealing with the **stress** associated with the principalship during the first year. The finding with regard to stress was directly related to replacing the incumbent and the messes that were left behind. Some of these messes included poor discipline structures and a lack of staff supervision and accountability. This finding was not surprising considering that research in the United Kingdom found the most pressing problem facing new heads were concerns over the practice and style of their predecessor (Bolam et al., 1995). Similar findings related to stress have been noted in other studies of beginning principals (Ferrandino, 2000; Lam & Cormier, 1998; Merrill & Pounder, 1999; NASSP, 1998; Renihan, 1999; Williams & Portin, 1997). This may require that directors educate and train in-coming

principals with the skills they will need to handle the stress associated with the issues and challenges within the school context.

Surprises

Principals were surprised at the **attitudes of staff and the lack of professionalism** displayed in the transition from being a teacher to becoming the principal. The majority of the principals specifically referred to the transition from being a teacher to becoming the principal. Principals expressed feeling isolated in their new position, as they were no longer able to discuss issues with colleagues. Being isolated made principals in the study feel as if they were living on an island unto themselves, which strengthens the argument that these people need to be assisted with developing and establishing a reliance structure. This feeling echoed the findings of a number of studies that suggest that the feeling of isolation was experienced by many principals in rural settings (Din, 1997; Evans, 1996; Lam & Cormier, 1998; Merrill & Pounder, 1999; Renihan, 1999; Samier, 2000). In regard to being better prepared for working with the attitudes of staff, this writer finds it noteworthy that principals felt that staff needed to be educated on the role of the principal and that principals needed to seek training on communication and developing relationships.

Professional Development

In general, the **supervision of instruction** emerged as the most important professional development need for the beginning principals in this study. There were concerns raised about how little administrative time was provided for supervision and that perhaps substitute teachers should be hired to allow time for instructional

supervision. It was noted that the supervision of instruction is a time-consuming process and that it is difficult to do when there is no administrative time to do it. If principals are going to continue conducting instructional supervision, time and training needs to be provided from central office.

This study did agree with the findings of other research, that principals do not have the sufficient time to perform all of the critical tasks (Renihan, 1999). It should be noted that not only is supervision of instruction an important area of professional development, but that beginning principals need some experience in performing the function. A number of principals felt it would be difficult to conduct supervision in the first year when little trust has been built and when they have less teaching experience than the teacher being supervised.

Findings from other studies (Ferrandino, 2000; Renihan, 1999) indicated that principals were responsible for staff improvement and development, but the literature did not indicate that this was the most important professional development need for rural neophyte principals. In making better provisions for instructional supervision, the writer is not surprised that respondents felt that they needed some **training, necessary release time, checklists, and mentoring opportunities**. It was perceived that supervision **needs to be in policy** and that **teachers need to be aware of the expectations, procedures, and the instruments that are going to be used**.

Preparation and Support

A number of findings from this study related to being better prepared and/or supported **during the first term** (August to December). Principals perceived that having

access to mentoring programs and knowledge of important dates would have better prepared and/or supported them. Data from Restine's (1997) study supports the notion of mentoring programs and suggests that there is a striking difference between principals prepared in non-traditional programs versus those who were prepared in traditional programs. Non-traditional programs were utilizing mentorship's, cohorts, release time internships, partnerships, and the integration of course work and experiential activities. Central offices need to be aware of the concerns that beginning principals in this study had over wanting prior knowledge of important dates.

Another important finding was that respondents felt that budgets, timetabling, and graduation were areas that presented unexpected events and/or surprises experienced **during the second term** (January to June). Developing mechanisms like a principal's planner and having other administrators to talk to would have assisted in preparing and supporting principals with the issues and challenges of the second term. It was a little surprising to find that the principals had different needs from the first term when compared to the second term. These time periods will have to be considered in principal preparation programs when considering their needs during the course of the year. This "periodization" perspective in the socialization of neophyte principals would seem to deserve more research attention.

Establishing The Reliance Structure

Overwhelmingly, the perception of the principals in this study was that there was a need to establish a reliance structure for beginning principals. The finding on the need to establish a reliance structure was evident in a number of studies (Daresh & Palyko;

1992; Ferrandino, 2000; Renihan, 1999). These studies found that the principal's job is more complex and with more responsibility than ever before. With this in mind, principals at different time periods during the year, may need more or less assistance depending on the location of the school, the size of the school, the size of the school system, their educational background, and their experiences as an educator. These contextual factors are important in determining the support that rural based beginning principals may need.

Over half (15) of the principals taught in their school divisions prior to becoming the principal, ten of the principals had no prior teaching experience in their school system before becoming the principal. The researcher's inclination going into the study was that people coming in from outside of the school system might need more formal socialization than those who are being hired from inside the same school system. This belief was reinforced by a number of respondents who voiced their preference for having taught in the system first, before assuming the principalship.

Functions to Establish

On the question of establishing the reliance structure, participants identified (in order of frequency of mention) **mentoring programs, professional development opportunities, longer induction and orientation opportunities, knowledge of the culture, and increased administration time** as ways by which neophyte principals could have been better prepared and/or supported during the first year. These functions identified by respondents need to be formalized in a manner in which they can be **accessible** to beginning principals.

Knowledge of important information was another area that beginning principals wanted to have developed in a reliance structure. Respondents noted that they received information on **the size of the school, the staff in the school, and the culture of the school** prior to commencing the job. Directors may need to find ways to disseminate this information so that it is communicated in a professional but effective manner.

Critical Relationships to Establish

One component identified by respondents as critical for beginning principals to establish in a reliance structure was to develop relationships with others. The most critical relationship appeared to be with **school staff**. Others (in order of frequency) were **the director and central office staff, and in-school administrators**. It appeared from a school context perspective that developing a relationship with school staff was critical. Opportunities for teambuilding and relationship building are critical elements of a reliance structure that should be formalized in a socialization process. The data also indicated that principals wanted training in effective communication so that they could develop positive relationships such as those identified above.

Value of the previous incumbent.

It appeared that there were “mixed feelings” on the value of the previous incumbent’s ability to provide information on the issues and challenges of the school. On one hand, some felt that the previous incumbent was valuable in providing information on community expectations, the local board, and staff issues. On the other hand, it was perceived that the previous incumbent was not valuable in providing information about the issues and challenges of the school when leaving on bad terms. These findings

provide some elaboration on research (Hart, 1993; Schein, 1971) into the role changes that occur due to environmental or societal problems and role succession where the individual has a different style than the predecessor.

Processes to Establish: Visiting the School

The majority of the principals visited their schools more than once before commencing the principalship. The reasons for the visits to the school were **to get a feel for the school, to meet staff, to get to know the community, to meet the outgoing principal, and to attend a local board meeting**. Given the opportunity to visit the school again, principals perceived that they would do it differently. They would not have gone during school hours, they would have been more prepared with a list of questions, they would have met informally with each staff member for 10 to 15 minutes, and with the previous incumbent, depending on their circumstances. Many of the principals perceived that they were in the way when they visited the school. June appeared to be a busy time in many of the schools as staffs were busy with graduation and report cards. If June is too busy a month, central offices may need to make arrangements so that incoming principals can see the school and staff at a preferred time.

Most of the principals felt that preparing a list of questions would alleviate being burdened with too much information. Participants recommended that they would only meet with the previous incumbent if they were leaving on good terms. It was perceived that the incumbents who were leaving on bad terms gave out inaccurate information regarding the issues and challenges of the school. When previous incumbents are leaving

on bad terms the Director may need to appoint someone else to assist with the in-coming principal's orientation.

Processes to Establish: Opportunities for Self-Reflection and Professional

Development

Respondents felt that conferences and workshops were utilized as a means of seeking professional development and self-reflection. Some of these included the Western Canadian Educational Leadership Conference (WCELC), regional administrator conferences, Saskatchewan Council of Educational Administrators (SCEA) conference, Rural Educational conference, and workshops on the Beginning Principalship. It was mentioned a number of times that the Saskatchewan School Based Administrator's (SSBA) group puts on a number of modules (1-4) that the majority reported being involved in as professional development and self-reflection activities during the first year. In taking the Principals' Short Course, some of the participants attended the short course before commencing their jobs while others attended it after their first year.

Processes to Establish: Advice to New Principals

When asked what advice they would give to a new principal on establishing and maintaining assistance within the reliance structure, the overwhelming response was that beginning principals should **not be afraid to ask for help**. For some of the principals this was not a problem as they were close enough to the school division office to get assistance. However, for others who worked in school divisions that were small in student population but were large geographically, there was less money for assistance and in some cases principals were discouraged from using the telephone to get assistance. In

these cases boards of education have to find creative ways of allowing beginning principals to receive assistance.

The Formal and Informal Socialization Process

Beginning principals indicated that the **informal socialization processes** (casual relationships with others) were more effective than the **formal socialization processes**. Sigford's (1998) finding supported this by suggesting that in-school administrators are typically ill-prepared and ill-trained to handle the socio-emotional facets of their jobs. It appeared that a formalized socialization process would assist in not only preparing but training principals as well. This finding was echoed in other research (Peterson, 1986) which found that most of the assistance beginning principals receive comes in anecdotal, informal ways, through technical expertise, and emotional support. This leads the writer to believe that formal socialization processes need to be developed within the organizational socialization processes.

Most formal socialization programs would be improved by implementing non-traditional methods like internships and mentorship practices that are designed so that substantial support is given during the first two years of a principalship. It may seem worthy of further investigations that policy be developed so that school districts have the professional and ethical responsibility to provide formal training opportunities for aspiring administrators.

People Involved

The **director and the assistant director** were identified as the most frequently involved in orienting beginning principals to their jobs. This is not to say these people

were viewed as being the most valuable in orienting and providing support to beginning principals during the first year. It was **other administrators** who were identified as being the most valuable people in orienting and providing support during the first year. If other administrators were the most valuable in orienting and providing support, there needs to be opportunities to establish and develop these critical relationships within the reliance structure. If the director and assistant director were the most prevalent people involved in orienting a beginning principal, perhaps their role is to find compatible people or mentors for new principals with whom to establish relationships.

Support and Advice

In describing the support and advice that was most valuable, principals perceived that they would advise a beginning principal to not bring about change too quickly and to keeping the director informed. The most frequently identified area in which most principals perceived they were lacking information and/or advice was **instructional supervision**.

Principals in the study perceived that **mentoring opportunities** were needed to prepare new principals for the principalship and that boards of education should fund and inform principals of these opportunities. Principals felt that mentoring needs to be formalized so that mentors can be trained to ask the right questions, so that effective pairings can be established, and so that time can be allotted for mentoring to take place. The participants also felt that the mentor also benefits from being involved in a mentoring relationship.

It was with no surprise that the findings relating to mentoring were consistent with those of other research. In educational administration, mentors act as role models, counselors, supporters, guides, friends (Kram, 1988), coaches (Daresh, 1997), advisors (Peddy, 1998), teachers, sponsors, encouragers, and befrienders (English, 1998) for the neophyte administrator. Examining mentoring from the theoretical perspective of socialization clarifies the goal of mentoring as aiding professional learning. Mentoring becomes a means of socialization to assist individuals in acquiring the knowledge, skills, behaviours, and values necessary to perform the role of an effective school administrator (Crow & Mathews, 1998).

Principals in this study were concerned that there was a need to **formalize** mentoring practices. This finding was consistent with Playko(1995) who suggested that informal mentoring results in a lack of clear focus and commitment from the district, inadequate preparation and training of mentors, and ineffective matching procedures used to pair mentors and their protégés. When formalized mentoring becomes a socialization method (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) that utilizes an experienced in-school leader to share his/her knowledge and expertise with a less experienced individual (Crow & Mathews, 1998; Peddy, 1998). Daresh & Playko's (1992) research proposes that formal mentoring programs have proven to be effective in helping new administrators develop professionally. Research conducted by Restine (1997) suggests that traditional preparation programs are not meeting the needs of new administrators; and that mentoring programs are beneficial to mentors, protégés and organizations (Bolam et al.,

1995; Boon, 1998; Caruso, 1992; Daloz, 1991; Daresh & Playko, 1992; Rosenbach, 1993; Wicks, 2000).

Writers (Crow & Mathews, 1998; Daresh & Playko, 1994; Rosenbach, 1993) propose that formal mentoring programs have proven to be effective in helping new administrators develop professionally. Principals in this study agreed and felt that a formalized administrative mentorship would assist mentors with asking the right questions. They also believed that mentors benefit from the relationship as well. Myers and Humphreys' (1985) study indicates that many organizations utilize mentoring to reduce turnover and to build loyalty among the newcomers. They suggest that a mentoring relationship integrates the neophyte more effectively into the organization, so that they do not get lost in the system (pp. 9-14).

Some of the benefits that researchers have found for administrators who serve as mentors include: improved job satisfaction, increased peer recognition, and potential career advancement (Bolam et al., 1995; Boon, 1998; Caruso, 1992; Daloz, 1991; Daresh & Playko, 1992; Daresh & Playko, 1994; Rosenbach, 1993; Wicks, 2000). Boon suggests that the greatest reward for mentors seems to be the improvement in overall job satisfaction. A similar finding in this study was when a mentor acknowledged that he /she was benefiting from the questions that were being asked by the protégé. The questions that were being asked appeared to alert the mentor to areas that he/she was overlooking in their school.

Researchers (Daresh & Playko, 1990; Fagan & Walter, 1982; Playko, 1990; Rosenbach, 1993) noted that protégés develop confidence, competence, and better

communication skills in the mentoring practice. Overwhelmingly, the principals in this study perceived that mentoring opportunities were the best way to prepare and support them during the first year. The protégés' perception is that contact with someone who is actually performing the job to which they aspire is a critical dimension of principal preparation (Daloz, 1991). It is well known that mentors and protégés are not the only ones who benefit from a mentoring practice. Indeed, school districts as a whole are beneficiaries.

People Who Provided Strong Support

The level of support received was strongest from (in order of frequency of mention) **central office personnel, the director, and significant others** (eg. spouses, family, and friends). Principals perceived that they received the strongest support from people at central office (eg. Superintendents, assistant directors,). If the strongest support received is coming from central office, provisions may need to be taken so that these people are accessible to all beginning principals regardless of their contextual situation.

It was perceived that the support was not as strong from professional organizations, professional books and journals, and university personnel. This finding may have been due to the relatively small number of respondents who were actually enrolled in graduate programs. By not being enrolled in graduate classes they may not have developed the relationships to access professional books and journals, and university personnel. At the same time, a number of respondents felt that universities should be offering more distance education opportunities for those who live farther away.

As part of the reliance structure boards of education need to encourage and assist aspiring principals to enroll in graduate courses.

People Who Caused the Greatest Stress

Respondents perceived that the previous incumbent and members of the local and the division board were essential in providing information, yet many felt that these people caused the greatest stress. Awkward situations arose when the previous incumbent remained on staff as a teacher. This meant that the in-coming principal was put in situations where they felt they always had to prove themselves. As for the board members, it was perceived that they do not always possess the necessary knowledge and that they have personal agendas for being on the board of education.

Suggestions for Neophyte Principals

Principals in the study made a number of suggestions as to how they would help a new principal coming in. The findings revealed that they would: keep a checklist, develop a handbook or manual, keep a journal and pass it on, and start a folder, as processes to assist a new principal with their socialization. A principal's handbook with reminders of important dates appears to be an important asset to any beginning principal. Principals perceived that conferences and workshops were ways of assisting them with their self-reflection and professional development needs. For those who had a vice-principal, regular morning meetings were another way to reflect back on past decisions and events. This luxury was not available for the majority of principals in this study, as the position does not exist. A similar gap was found in Renihan's (1999) study where he found that removing the vice-principal has had the impact of reducing support and much-

needed collegial support from those who truly need it. It should be noted that a formalized administrative mentorship program may be able to be utilized in situations where a vice-principal's position is just not feasible.

Neophyte Principal Self-Efficacy

The majority of principals perceived they were able to feel good about what they had accomplished during the first year. This level of effectiveness was often measured by comments from **parents, students, staff, and the director** who provided feedback to them. There was a small minority who claimed that they had some doubt in their ability to feel good about what they were able to accomplish during the first year. This sense of doubt came from parents who questioned every decision, and from disgruntled staff. These findings are comparable to Duke's (1988) findings, which suggest that the first year as an administrator is full of self-doubt. Recent research (Daresh & Male, 2000; Griffith, 1999; Gunraj & Rutherford, 1999; Lawson, 1999; Renihan, 1999) identifies the challenges for a first year principal causes new principals to doubt their ability to attain a high degree of self-efficacy.

Implications

In this section the implications for research, theory, principal preparation and professional development, policy, and school system leadership are discussed.

Implications for Research

The findings of this research provided valuable insights into the reliance structures that neophyte principals establish and develop during their first year. Future researchers may consider examining a number of areas in relation to the impact that the

contextual factors in this study have on developing a reliance structure for neophyte principals. This research might include a number of case studies which investigate the nature of a neophyte principal's ability to develop a reliance structure in different size school systems. It would be interesting to delve into a contextual study which examined the neophyte's reliance structure from the basis of their education. For example, taking a number of beginning principals who are enrolled in a graduate program and some who are not in order to compare and analyze the differences in the people and processes they chose to develop in the reliance structure. As another recommendation for further study, it would be of benefit to those interested to replicate the portion of the study on gender in order to verify or to negate the finding that suggests gender was not a factor in their ability to develop the reliance structure.

It would be interesting to conduct a study of neophyte principals who work in different contexts. This might include studying a neophyte principal in a school with a high percentage of Indian and Metis students, or a federally-operated band school context, as the ability to develop a reliance structure would perhaps be substantially different in those contexts. Yet another research possibility would be to study neophyte principals within private schools of specific religious affiliation, or within Hutterite colonies, or within schools of racial mixes. New principals in each of these scenarios might require markedly different reliance structures.

From the finding on periodization, and the areas in which neophyte principals would like more preparation and support, further research should be conducted in order to fully comprehend the needs of beginning principals at different periods during the year.

The whole concept of periodization is a dynamic mechanism that could be utilized to further investigate the needs of beginning principals. In regard to preparation and support, it would be intriguing to examine reliance structures that neophyte principals developed from traditional programs versus those developed in non-traditional programs.

One area that principals in this study felt needed to be established in a reliance structure was a formalized mentoring program. It would be interesting to conduct an action research study on the implementation of a school system's formalized mentoring program with regard to the pairings of mentors and protégés, to providing time allotments, and to the training that mentors need in asking the right questions and providing the appropriate support.

In regard to the previous incumbent being involved in the neophyte's orientation and socialization, it might be of benefit to conduct further research on their role in this process. This study might include the extent to which the previous incumbent determines how the reliance structure is established.

From the finding on self-efficacy, it might be interesting to conduct a quantitative study that consists of variables which measure a neophyte principal's level of self-efficacy. In a qualitative study on determining the principals level of self-efficacy, interviews with teaching staff, parents, students, directors, and others could be utilized to assist the neophyte with his/her own level of self-efficacy.

Implications for Theory

The findings from this study provided further evidence that rural-based neophyte principals need to establish and develop their own reliance structure (Ferrandino, 2000;

Merrill & Pounder, 1999; Renihan, 1999). Although this finding may not be new, consideration needs to be given to the people and the processes that were identified in the reliance structure. Thus, the thematic map that was developed in chapter two needs to be reconceptualized to reflect the findings from this study.

Based on the findings, there were a number of contextual factors (location of the school, size of the school, size of the school system, educational background, and the prior experiences of the principal as an educator) that need to be considered when school systems formalize the socialization processes in a beginning principals' reliance structure. Figure 5.1 captures the essence of these factors and their ability to influence the reliance structure.

In the reconceptualization of the thematic map, consideration needs to be given to how reliance structures are established. From the findings in this study, establishing the reliance structure consists of three considerations: **functions**, **critical relationships**, and **processes**. Figure 5.2 depicts the **functions** that respondents wanted to establish in a reliance structure. These were: mentoring programs, professional development opportunities, induction and orientation opportunities, knowledge of the culture, administrative time, and knowledge of important information. The **critical relationships** to establish were: (in order of frequency of mention) school staff, directors, central office personnel, and in-school administrators. The **processes** that principals felt needed to be established in the reliance structure were: visiting the school, meeting staff, getting to know the community, meeting the out-going principal, and attending a local board meeting.

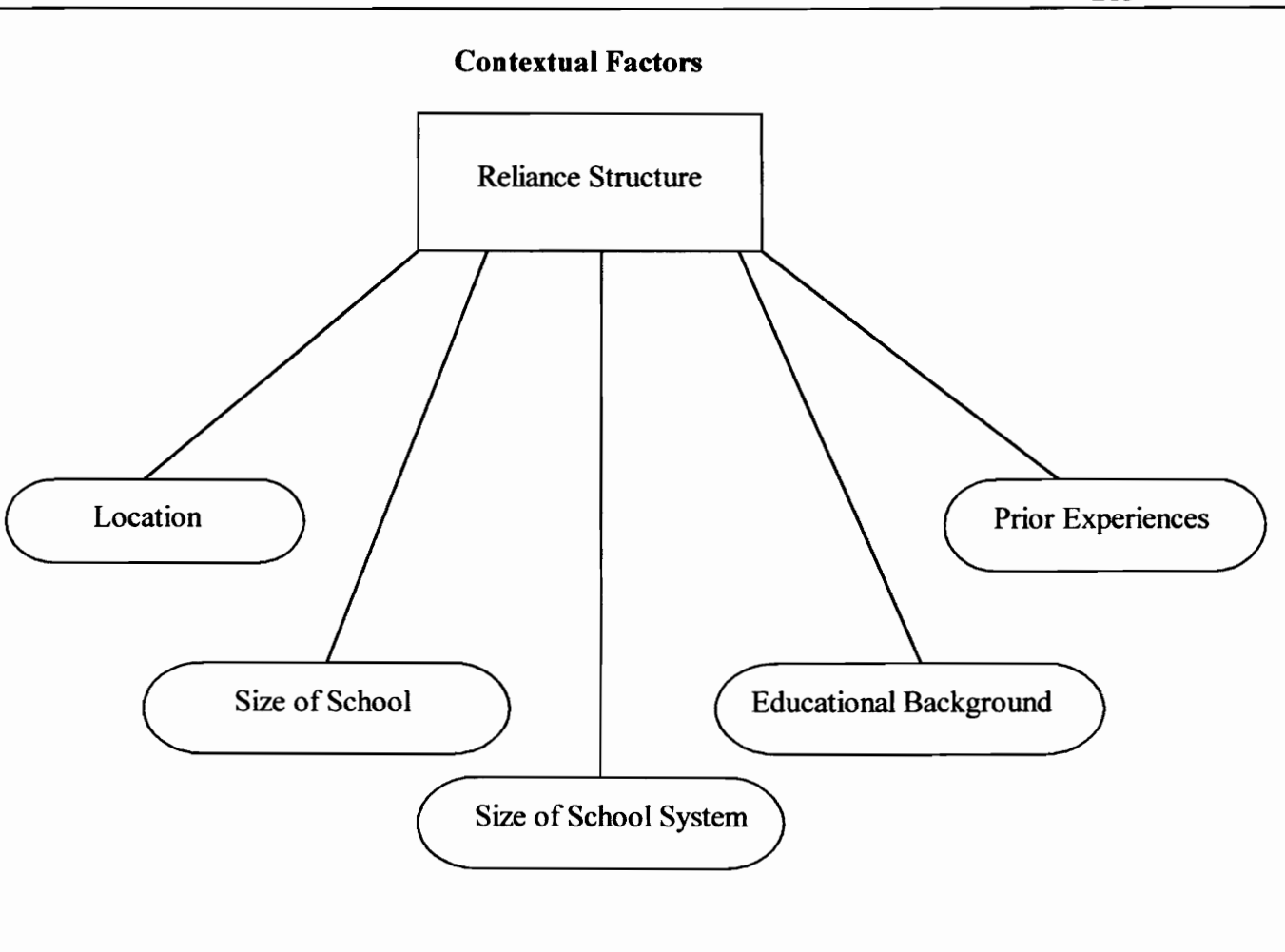


Figure 5.1. Contextual Factors that Influence the Reliance Structure

In regard to utilizing the relationship constellation in an educational context, there were a number of people that neophyte principals need to consider developing relationships with in the reliance structure. In this study, the director and/or the assistant director were influential people involved in assisting principals in the development of the reliance structure. Other administrators were the most valuable resource and should be recruited to act as mentors for neophyte principals. Central office personnel (eg. superintendents, assistant directors) provided strong support to neophyte principals

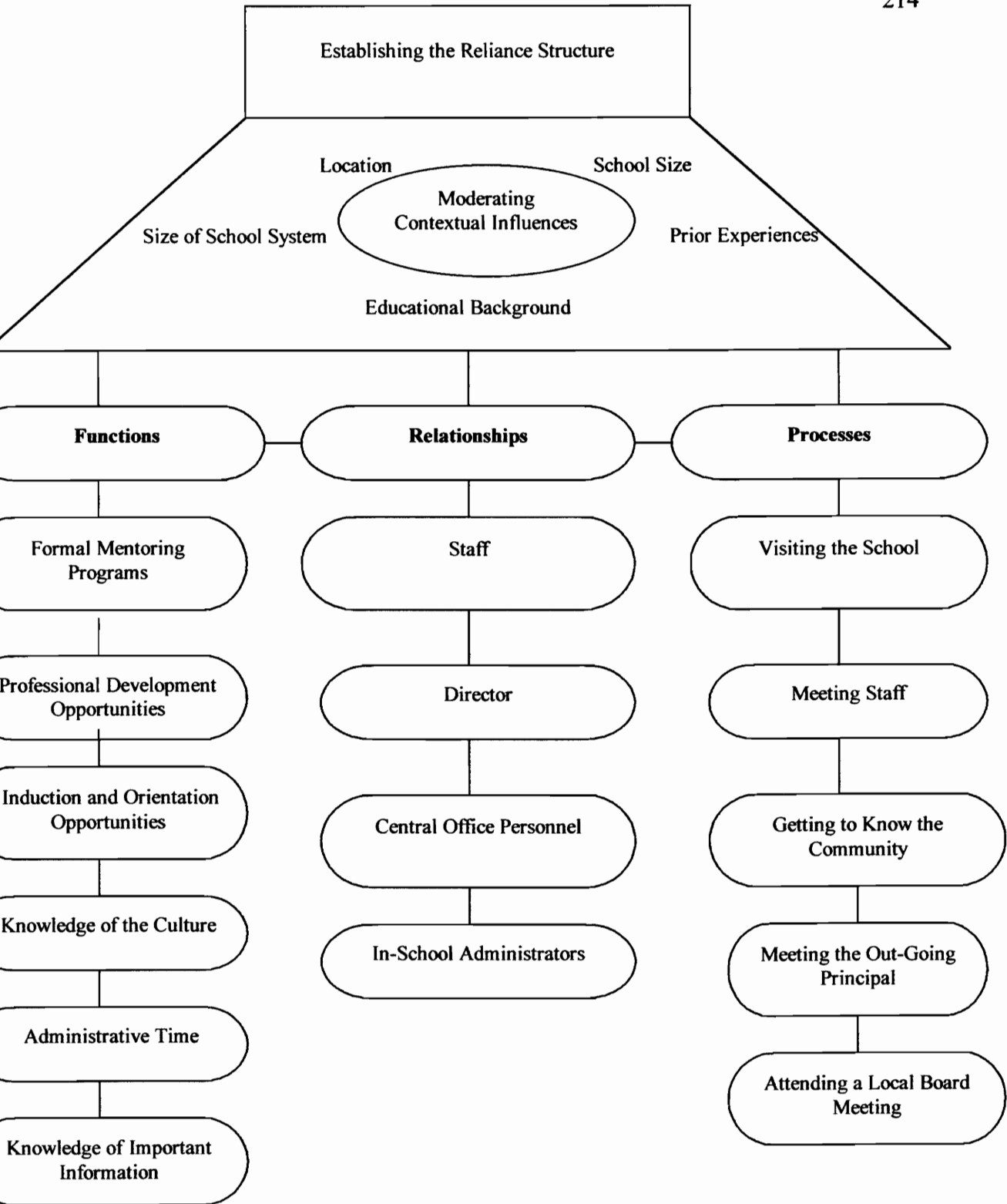


Figure 5.2. The Functions, Relationships, and Processes to Establish in a Reliance Structure

valuable in providing information about the issues and challenges of their school.

Another consideration for the relationship constellation coming from the findings of this study is that neophyte principals need to develop relationships and associations with the universities, professional organizations, and professional books and journals.

From the finding on periodization (see Figure 5.3), consideration needs to be

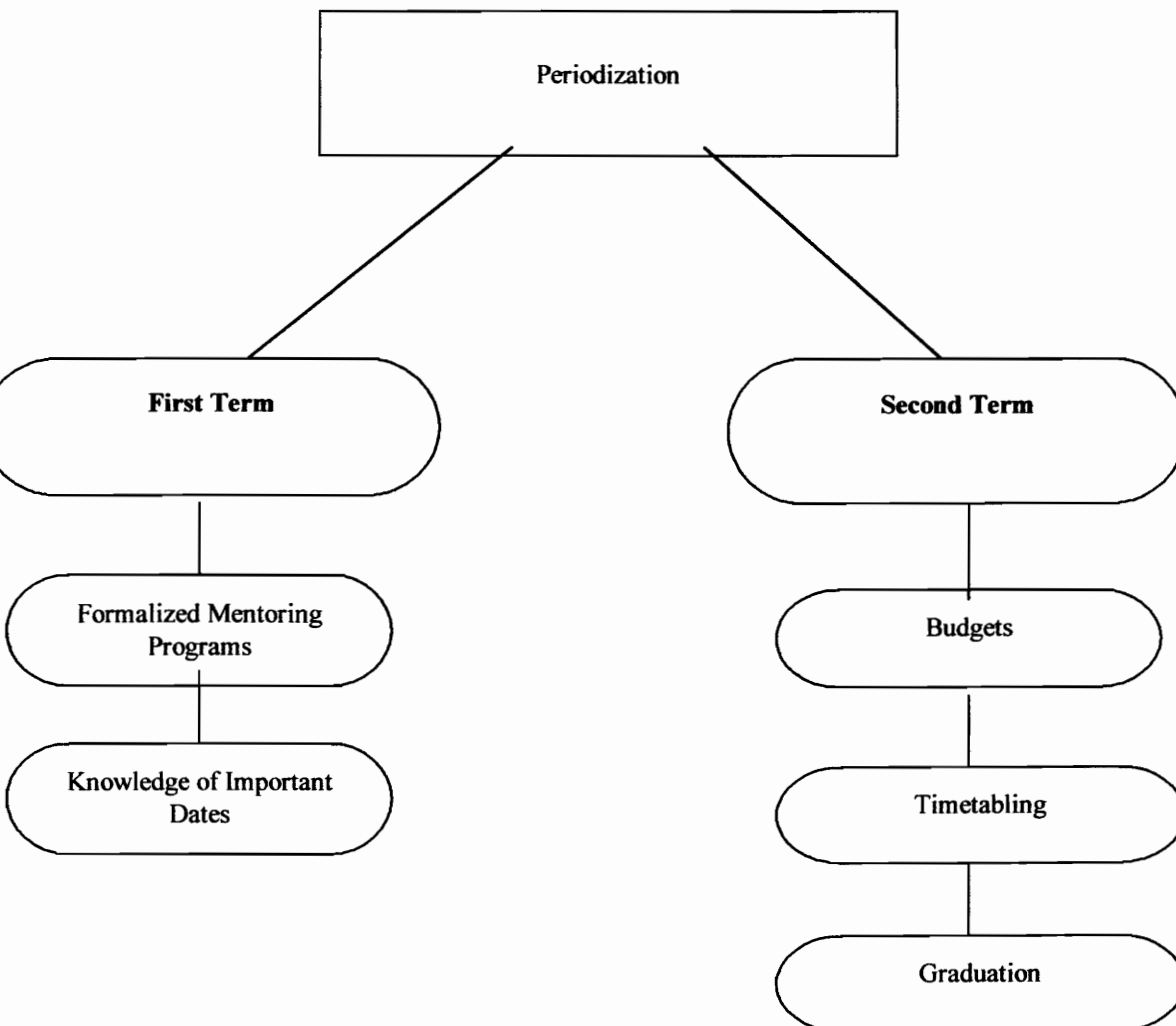


Figure 5.3. Needs of Neophyte Principals at Different Periods During the First Year

given to beginning principal's needs **at different periods during the first year**. In comparing the first term with the second term, principals had very different needs at different times. In finding ways to be better prepared and/or supported during the first term (August to December), principals in this study wanted formalized mentoring programs and knowledge of important dates. As for the second term, (January to June) principals felt they could be better prepared and/or supported in dealing with budgets, timetables, and graduation ceremonies. These time periods have to be considered when neophyte principals are attempting to establish and develop the reliance structure.

There were markedly different relationships established in the **informal** socialization process as opposed to those established in the **formal** socialization process. The similarities in the socialization processes were relationships established with the director, central office personnel, and in-school administrators. The differences existed in how relationships were established with the previous incumbent, members of the board of education, vice-principal (where applicable), and significant others (eg. spouses, family, and friends). In regard to the findings on the socialization processes, school systems need to become responsible for formalizing some of the socialization processes (see Figure 5.4) regarded by participants as informal. Non-traditional programs like mentoring and internships need to be considered in assisting neophyte principals with developing more relationships in the formal socialization process.

On the finding of self-efficacy, neophyte principals need to consider some mechanism of self-reflection that will determine their ability to know and feel good about

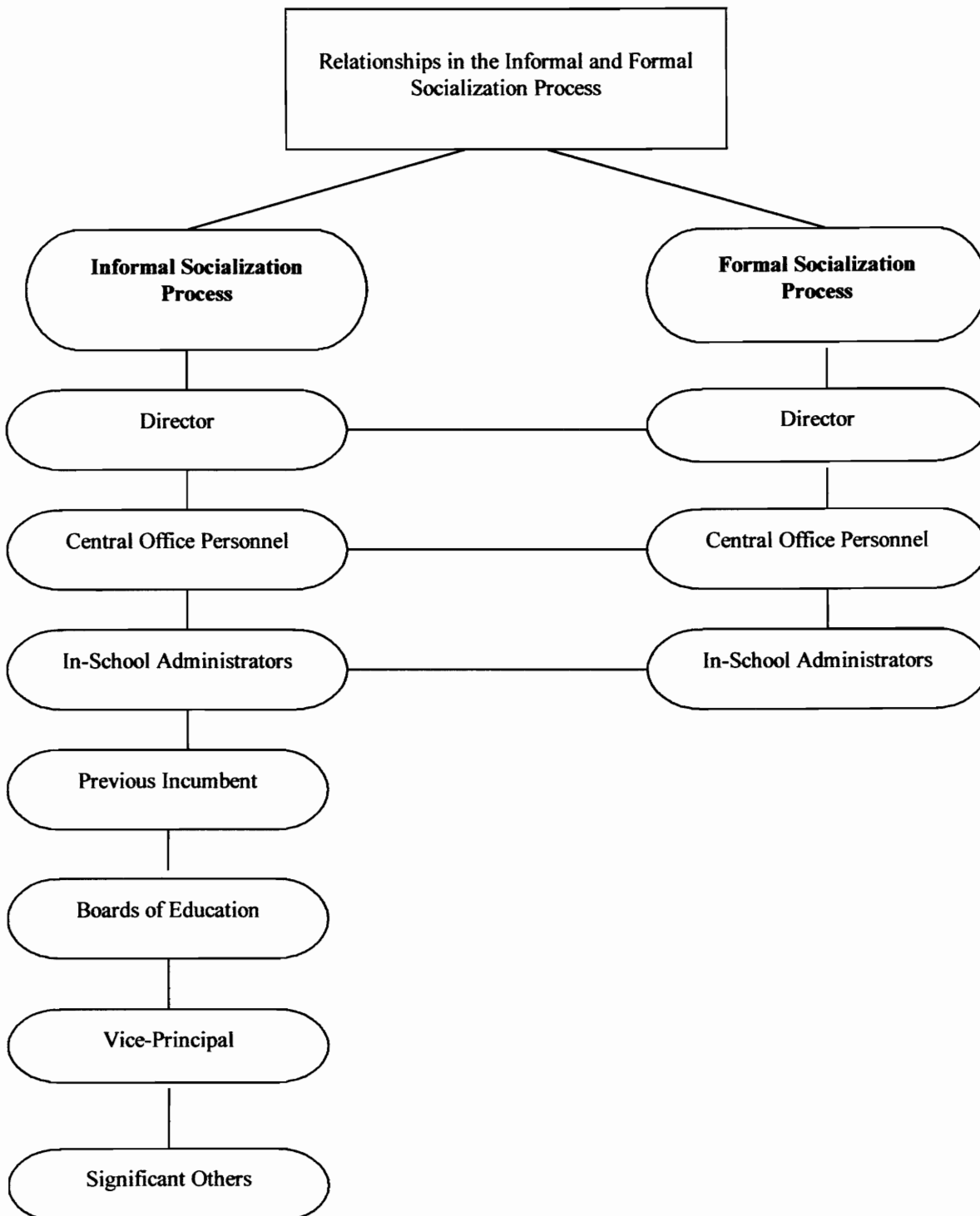


Figure 5.4. The Similarities and Differences in Relationships Established Between the Informal and Formal Socialization Processes

what they accomplished during the first year (see Figure 5.5). Principals in this study felt that parents, students, school staff, and the Director all provided feedback that allowed neophyte principals to feel good about they were able to accomplish during the first year. These perceptions from people need to be involved in a formal process that provides beginning principals with a measure of attaining a high degree of self-efficacy. This may be incorporated into some form of an evaluation for beginning principals and at the same time assist in removing self-doubt.

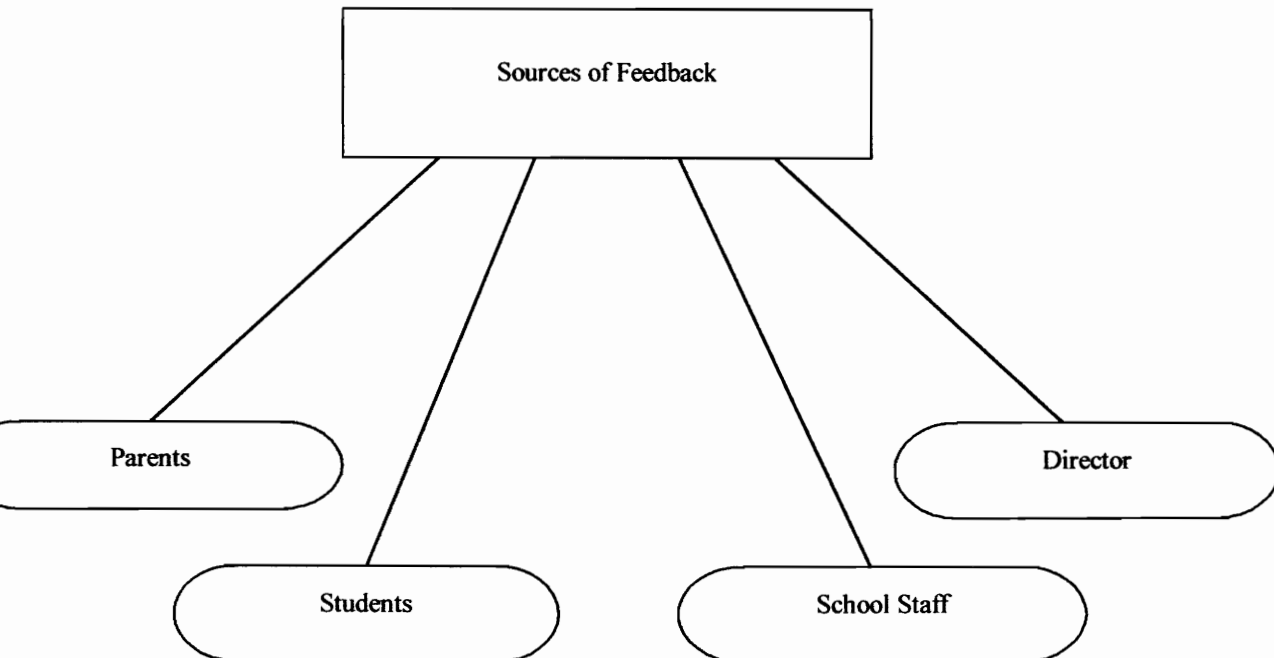


Figure 5.5. People Who Provided Comments that Determined the Level of Self-Efficacy

Implications for Principal Preparation Programs and Professional Development

On the finding in relation to the number of people enrolled in graduate programs, universities will need to look at making principal preparation programs more accessible

and practical, especially for principals who are inexperienced as teachers. With regard to accessibility in rural areas, universities need to provide more opportunities for: distance education, internships, administrative mentorships, conferences, modules, and technological learning opportunities.

Principal preparation programs need to provide professional development opportunities for beginning principals on instructional supervision, as many of the new principals are inexperienced teachers. Checklists need to be developed so that teachers and novice principals are aware of the instruments being utilized during a supervisory visit. As well, these programs need to ease the transition from being a teacher to becoming the principal. Beginning principals in the transition of teacher to principal need assistance in dealing with the attitudes of staff and their lack of professionalism. In addition, neophyte principals perceived they could benefit from receiving information on the role of members who sit on boards of education.

Principal preparation practices need to move away from traditional programs and move into non-traditional programs. Non-traditional programs utilize longer induction and orientation methods such as: mentorships, cohorts, release time internships, partnerships, and the integration of course work and experiential activities.

Implications for Policy

From the finding on stress, it appears that the importance of developing policy, which is congruent with the formal socialization literature and the school system's intent and beliefs, potentially could relieve some of the stress that is felt by rural neophyte principals who are taking over from their previous incumbent and at the same time

provide a higher more effective quality of socialization. Therefore it would be valuable for policy to be congruent with and reflect the intent of formal socialization so that critical relationships can be established within the reliance structure.

School divisions need to develop policy in the area of instructional supervision so that new principals and their teachers are aware of the expectations, procedures, and the instruments to be used. As well, there is a need for policy so that school divisions allow beginning principals the time that is needed for instructional supervision to take place.

From the finding on the reliance structure, it would be valuable for school divisions to articulate policy on areas that principals might need to develop in a reliance structure. For example, the number of professional development opportunities that will be available, the number of visits allowed with a mentor, and other situations involving the induction and orientation of neophyte principals during the first year. Neophyte principals in this study wanted to be reminded of important information. It would therefore appear that there is a need to develop policy and procedures to ensure that they receive this pertinent information.

In relation to the finding on the prior experiences of the principal as an educator, it appeared that there were a number of neophyte principals who had never taught in their school systems before becoming the principal. With this in mind, it seems that procedures need to be developed to ensure that these individuals have adequate time and resources to be able to develop and establish their reliance structure. This may include making provisions for the in-coming principal to visit the school when it is not busy. It also might be valuable to incorporate the evaluation of principals in a policy that is congruent with

the neophyte's ability to feel good about what they were able to accomplish in the establishment and development of their reliance structure during the first year.

On the finding relating to the previous incumbent and members of the board of education causing the greatest stress, there needs to be some clarification of roles for these individuals during the socialization process. As well, policy needs to be developed which reflects that boards of education are committed to supporting beginning principals with the development of the reliance structure. In terms of the finding on the people involved in the orientation of neophyte principals to their jobs, it may be valuable for the development of policy to reflect that these individuals be afforded the necessary time and resources for becoming involved in their development of the reliance structure.

Implications for School System Leadership

From the finding on the location of the school, school systems need to be reminded that the location of the school is a factor in the beginning principal's ability to develop the reliance structure. In relation to the size of the school and more specifically schools with low enrolments, school systems need to genuinely exhibit a concern for that school while it is still open.

Principals in this study wanted school systems to provide leadership by formalizing mentoring opportunities and by developing a principal's planner. Principals felt there was a need to formalize mentoring programs so that mentors could be trained to ask the right questions, so that effective pairings could be established, and so that time could be allotted for mentoring to take place. Important information and dates need to be highlighted in the principal's planner.

On the finding of critical relationships to establish in a reliance structure, school systems will need to provide leadership by providing training on communication skills that will enhance the development of relationships with school staff. Another area that beginning principals would like some school system leadership with is instructional supervision. New principals would like training, release time, a checklist, and an opportunity to be mentored. School systems need to develop policy in the area so that teachers are aware of the expectations, procedures, and the instruments that are going to be used. Special consideration and attention in performing instructional supervision needs to be given to those principals who have very little teaching experience.

Coming from the finding on the prior experiences of the principal as an educator, school systems might have to allow longer induction and orientation periods for those principals who have no prior teaching experience in the school system. In regard to the findings on the previous incumbent and members of the board of education, school systems need to consider whether the out-going principal will be involved with the neophyte's orientation, and members of the board need in-service on their roles. It seems that principals in the study received information on the size of the school, the staff in the school, and the culture of the school prior to commencing their jobs. School divisions might want to deliver this information themselves or, depending on the previous incumbents departing circumstances, the incumbent could become involved.

There were two findings related specifically to people who were involved in orienting and providing support to neophyte principals. The first is that the director and assistant director were the most prevalent people involved in orienting neophyte

principals. The second is that other administrators were identified as the most valuable in orienting a neophyte principal. This would lead the writer to believe that school systems should have the director and assistant director find other principals to act as mentors for the novice principals to become involved in a mentoring relationship.

Considering that the support principals received was weaker in some areas than others, school systems might need to improve opportunities for neophyte principals to establish and develop relationships with professional organizations, professional books and journals, and with university personnel.

Concluding Comments

This has been a study of the neophyte principalship in context. It was a study that included rurality, smallness, isolation, and all of the constraints and potentials that go with it. If we can better understand the constraints and potentials we can better provide the services that are required for excellence in the education of our rural educational leaders.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Consent Letter and the
Reliance Structure Questionnaire

Consent Form – The reliance structures that neophyte principals establish during their first year.

February 2001

Dear Principal:

This is a request for your assistance in a research project, which I am presently completing for my Doctor of Philosophy degree in Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan. This project will begin in April 2001, and will conclude in August 2001. The results of this study will be shared with the faculty of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan, may be published in referred journals of educational research, and will be utilized in conference presentations.

My dissertation topic concerns the perceptions among rural principals regarding **The Reliance Structures that Neophyte Principals Establish During Their First Year**. The purpose of the study is to investigate the reliance structures among rural-based neophyte principals during their first year as principal. This investigation will provide insight into the increasingly complex role of the principal and facilitate the practices of future administrator preparation programs.

It is hoped that the benefits of this study to the educational community will include the following: (a) the heightened awareness of preparation practices for neophyte principals, (b) the increased understanding of the dynamics of reliance structures, (c) the ability of theorists and practitioners to incorporate the concept of relationship constellations into their models of leadership preparation, and (d) the development of policy in facilitating preparation practices for beginning principals in rural Saskatchewan.

This study will incorporate survey questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and documentary analysis. In selecting the respondents for this study, sixty-two rural school districts directors, were contacted by telephone seeking second year principals who qualified for the study. The telephone survey produced a population of twenty-six individuals. Questionnaires will be sent to all twenty-six principals in order to gather initial data concerning the issues and challenges associated with the principalship, and the reliance structure that was established during the first year. Completion of the survey will indicate your consent to participate; it will take approximately 20-25 minutes of your time.

During the interviews, participants will be presented with a standard semi-structured interview protocol. Open-ended questions will give participants a chance to explore their experiences as rural neophyte principals. It is anticipated that the taped interviews will last from 60 to 90 minutes. Participants will be asked to describe their perceptions relating to the establishment of a reliance structure. Each respondent will have the right to not answer any questions, or to turn off the tape recorder if he/she does not wish to have some responses recorded.

Please be assured that all responses will be afforded anonymity. Your name will not appear anywhere on the survey or in the results. Pseudonyms will be used when reporting research data and when sharing the verbatim transcripts. These transcripts will then be

verified and checked by the participants. The data will be stored for a minimum of five years by Dr. Pat Renihan in the Department of Educational Administration (as required by the University of Saskatchewan guidelines), and will not allow for the identification of any individual.

All those who participate in the survey questionnaire will have access to the finished dissertation at the University of Saskatchewan's educational library. Should you choose to participate in the interview, an executive summary of the results of the study will be mailed to you.

Your participation in the survey and interview is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, please discard the information. As a participant, you may withdraw from the study at any time. As well, if you choose to withdraw from the study, all collected data will be destroyed. You will be advised of any new information that may have a bearing on your decision to continue in the study. Completed questionnaires and consent should be either faxed to Marc D. Casavant at (306) 966-7020 or mailed to Marc D. Casavant, Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan, 28 Campus Drive, Saskatoon SK., S7N 0X1. A copy of this letter has been provided to you for your records.

This study has been approved by Dr. Pat Renihan at the Department of Educational Administration University of Saskatchewan, and by the University of Saskatchewan Ethics Committee. If you have any questions regarding the research, or the rights of participants in a research study, please contact me, Marc D. Casavant at (306) 966-7613, Dr. Pat Renihan at (306) 966-7620, or the Office of Research Services at (306) 966-4053.

I look forward to hearing from you. I sincerely wish to thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Sincerely,

Marc D. Casavant B.Ed., M.Ed., Ph.D. Candidate

Signature of Participant: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____

Dated: _____

The Questionnaire on Developing a Reliance Structure for Beginning Principals

This questionnaire is designed to investigate your perceptions of the reliance structure you established during your first year as a principal. **A reliance structure is a mechanism comprised of a number of people and processes that a principal utilizes for support during his/her first year.** The questionnaire is made up of three parts: Part I asks for some general demographic information; Part II requires responses to quantitative data; and Part III elicits responses to open-ended questions. It should take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete. For the open-ended questions, use the space allotted and if you need additional space, please use the back of the page.

If you have chosen to participate in this study, please complete the following information, and send it back in the small stamped envelope provided. All answers from this questionnaire will remain confidential and anonymous.

Thank-you for your anticipated cooperation.

A. Demographic Information

The information requested below will assist in ascertaining data that are highly pertinent to the overall questionnaire. Please place an "X" in the appropriate box or fill in the blank for your response to each of the following questions. Thank you for your assistance in this area.

1. What is the grade structure of your school?

K - 12

10 - 12

7 - 12

K - 9

K - 6

Other (please specify) _____

2. What is the approximate student population of your school? _____

3. What is the approximate size of your school community (ie. local village or town)?

4. Gender:

Male

Female

5. Do you have a Vice Principal?

Yes

No

6. Level of professional training (Check off all that are applicable)

Bachelor's Degree

Post-Graduate Diploma

Master's Degree

Doctoral Degree

Currently Working on Post-Graduate Diploma

Currently Working on Master's Degree

Currently Working on Doctoral Degree

Other: _____

7. How many years of experience have you had in teaching? _____

8. How long had you taught in this school division before becoming principal?

_____.

9. What is the approximate distance of your school from the school division office? (in

kilometres) _____.

II. Questionnaire Information

Based upon your perceptions and experiences, indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by checking the appropriate space. Note: **A reliance structure is a mechanism comprised of a number of people and processes that a principal utilizes for support during his/her first year.**

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

	1	2	3	4	5
10. There is a need to develop and establish a reliance structure for beginning principals.					
11. I was well prepared for the challenges of present day rural schools during my first year as principal.					
12. I was well prepared for dealing with the value conflicts between teachers, students, and parents during my first year as principal.					
13. I was well prepared for dealing with the stress that is associated with the principalship during my first year.					
14. I was well prepared for dealing with the responsibilities associated with in-school leadership during my first year.					
15. The formal socialization (eg. workshops, meetings, etc.) I received prior to commencing my job , prepared me well for the role of the principal.					
16. The formal socialization (eg. workshops, meetings, etc.) I received during the first term (from August to December) prepared me well for the role of the principal.					
17. The formal socialization (eg. workshops, meetings, etc.) I received during the second term (from January to June) prepared me well for the role of the principal.					
18. The informal socialization (casual relationships with others) I received prior to commencing my job , prepared me well for the role of the principal.					
19. The informal socialization (casual relationships with others) I received during the first term (from August to December), prepared me well for the role of the principal.					

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

20. The informal socialization (casual relationships with others) I received **during the second term** (from January to June) prepared.

21. I received strong support in my role during my first year as principal.

22. I received strong support from professional organizations during my first year (eg. STF, SSBA, SELU, etc.)

23. I received strong support from professional books and journals during my first year.

24. I received strong support from my Director during my first year.

25. I received strong support from my central office personnel during my first year as principal (ie. superintendents, assistant director, etc).

26. I received strong support from my Board of Education during my first year as principal.

27. I received strong support from significant others during my first year as principal (ie. spouse, parents, children, friends, etc).

28. I received strong support from my community during my first year as principal.

29. I received strong support from the parents in my school community during my first year as principal.

30. I received strong support from my in-school personnel during my first year as principal (ie. teacher aides, secretary, janitor, etc).

31. I received strong support from my teachers during my first year as principal.

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

	1	2	3	4	5
32. I received strong support from other school administrators during my first year as principal.					
33. I received strong support from university personnel during my first year as principal.					
34. The location of my school influenced how I could develop my reliance structure.					
35. The size of my school influenced how I could develop my reliance structure.					
36. The size of my school system influenced how I could develop my reliance structure.					
37. My educational background influenced how I could develop my reliance structure.					
38. My experiences as an educator influenced how I could develop my reliance structure.					
39. My gender influenced how I could develop my reliance structure.					
40. As a school leader, I was able to sense a strong feeling of self-efficacy during the course of my first year.					

Section III. Open Ended Questions

This section of the questionnaire asks you to respond to some general questions and then to reflect back to two specific periods of time during your first year as principal. **(1) general questions, (2) the period of time between being hired and commencing the job, (3) the period of time between August and June.**

45. What information did you receive about the school you were going to work in prior to commencing your job in August? If you had been working at this school immediately prior to your principalship please go to question # 48.
46. Did you visit the school prior to the commencement of your job? If yes, how often and for what reasons?
47. How valuable was the previous incumbent in providing you with the information regarding the issues and problems of the school prior to the commencement of your job?
48. Identify the areas in which you lacked information and/or advice in your preparation on commencement of your job.

C. During the first year (August and June)

49. Who was most valuable in your orientation and support during your first year (list positions or roles, not names of individuals)?

50. Describe the support and advice that was most valuable during your first year?

51. Were there any surprises that you experienced during your first year? If yes, what were the unexpected events?

52. Identify ways that you could have been better prepared and/or supported during the first year of your principalship?

APPENDIX B

The Interview Guide

THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

The purpose of the interview is to get your opinion about some of the data from the survey on establishing a reliance structure during your first year as a principal. **A reliance structure is a mechanism comprised of a number of people and processes that a principal utilizes during his/her first year.** The following questions will aim to elicit this information:

1. Could you describe and provide some background about yourself in the following areas:
 - How were you recruited for the position of the principalship?
 - What kind of administrative training did you receive prior to the principalship? (ie. Principal's Short Course, STF, SSBA Modules, Graduate Courses)
 - What do you perceive to be some important qualities of a rural school principal?
2. During the course of the survey the transition in roles from being a teacher to becoming a principal came up as an issue? Why do you believe this to be the case?
3. In reflecting on your first year, what areas are critical for beginning principals to establish in a reliance structure?
4. Respondents indicated that the previous incumbent and members of the Local Board and the Division Board are essential in providing you with information regarding the issues and challenges of the school. Yet many feel that these individuals cause the greatest stress. What are your perceptions on this issue?
5. Before commencing your job, did you visit the school? Why or why not? Would you do it differently if you had the opportunity to do it again?
6. If you were leaving this school and a new principal were coming in, based on your own experiences what would you do to help this person?
7. Identify ways that you could have been better prepared and/or supported to deal with the issues and challenges of your first term (from August to December)?
8. Respondents identified frequently that the attitudes of staff were a surprise to them when they were commencing the principalship. Was it a surprise? How can people be better supported in working with staff?

9. In response to how people can be better prepared and/or supported, respondents frequently mentioned mentoring opportunities, principals short course, and SSBA modules. If you were the Superintendent how would you provide these opportunities for support?
10. The new principals in this study suggested that supervision of staff emerged as the most important professional development need for beginning principals. Do you agree? What can be done to make better provisions for this?
11. (a) Were there any unexpected events or surprises that you experienced during your second term (from January to June)? (b) Identify ways that you could have been better prepared and/or supported to deal with the issues and challenges of your second term (from January to June)?
12. What impact did contextual factors have on your ability to get assistance (location, school size, system size, education, experience, gender, etc.)?
13. What advice would you give to a new principal in establishing and maintaining the assistance they need?
14. In reflecting on your first year as a school leader, elaborate on the degree of self-efficacy you believe you were able to attain?

APPENDIX C
TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

Telephone Interviews

The criteria set for participants to be selected in this study were the following:

1. Participants must be in their second year of a principalship.
2. Participants must not have had any prior educational administration experience.

In the case of principals who met the above criteria, a series of questions were posed to the

Director to gather more data. The following questions were utilized:

3. What is the location of the school in relation to the school division office?
4. What is the grade structure of the school?
5. What is the size of the school?
6. What is the size of the community where the principal works?
7. What is the principals gender?
8. Does the principal have graduate training?
9. How many years of teaching experience does the teacher have?
10. What is the size of the school division?

APPENDIX D

ETHICS PROPOSAL

CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS

RELEASE FORM FOR INTERVIEWS

Application for Approval for Research Protocol

1. Name of researcher and supervisors.

- 1a. Marc D. Casavant (Doctor of Philosophy candidate)
Dr. P. J. Renihan (Advisor)
- 1b. Phase I: Anticipated start date of the research study: May, 2001
Phase II: Expected completion date of study: October, 2001

2. Title of study.

Perspectives on Self-Efficacy: Developing a Reliance Structure for Neophyte Principals in Southern Saskatchewan

3. Abstract.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the nature of the reliance structure among rural-based neophyte principals during their first year. The primary research question guiding this investigation will be: **What are the perspectives and reflections of rural based second year principals concerning the nature of their own reliance structures during their neophyte year?** Several specific areas will be explored. These will include perceptions of participants as to:

1. The challenges and issues that confronted principals during their first year.
2. The level of need for a reliance structure.
3. The value of the socialization process.
4. The nature of the reliance structure.
5. The processes in establishing the reliance structure.
6. The relative significance and value of each element in the reliance structure.
7. The role of the principal in establishing and maintaining the reliance structure.
8. The impact of contextual factors upon the reliance structure (location, school size, system size, education, experience, gender).
9. The extent to which self-reflection and professional development related to the reliance structure.
10. The leader's level of self-efficacy attained during the first year.

4. Funding.

The research is self-funded.

5. Participants.

In selection of the sample for this study, sixty-two rural school district directors' in Saskatchewan will be contacted by telephone seeking second year principals that qualified to enter into the study. The criteria set for the participants to enter the study will be the following:

1. Interviewees must be in their second year of a principalship.
2. Interviewees must not have other administrative experience prior to their second year in another school division as a principal or vice principal.

If the Director identifies a principal(s) who meets the above criteria, a series of questions will be posed to gather more data. The following questions will be utilized:

3. What is the location of the school in relation to the school division office?
4. What is the grade structure of the school?
5. Does the principal have any graduate training?

Questionnaires will be sent to all principals who meet the study's criteria. From this all participants will be either interviewed in person or over the telephone.

6. Consent.

Principals will be invited to participate (completely voluntary) and their completion and return of the surveys will be indication of willingness to participate. In accord with accepted ethical standards, participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time, without consequences. Participants will have the opportunity to review the typescript from their interview and give consent for it to be used in the study. The letter of consent will detail their rights to confidentiality and the right to withdraw from the study at any time (See attachment). If a participant withdraws, they will be able to take their interview data with them, including audiotapes and transcripts.

7. Methods/Procedures.

This study will utilize three instruments of data collection: survey questionnaires; semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. Questionnaires will be sent to all 26 individuals who qualified for the study, in order to gather initial data concerning the issues and challenges that rural neophyte administrators perceive to be barriers in the establishment of a reliance structure. After the surveys have been returned, all participants will have the opportunity to be interviewed in order to gain a greater understanding of the reliance structures that neophyte administrators establish in their first year.

During the interviews, participants will be presented with a standard semi-structured interview protocol using open-ended questions that focus on the interviewees' experiences as rural public school administrators. Open-ended questions allow the participants to explore their own experiences without direction from the researcher. It is anticipated that the taped interviews will last from 60 to 90 minutes. The principals will be asked to describe their experiences in regard to establishing a reliance structure in their first year. Principals will be asked to begin by thinking of a specific situation or experience within their particular rural context that assisted in developing their reliance structure and then to explain the experience fully. Naturally, other questions related to the research questions will follow. Draft copies of both the survey and the interview are attached.

Policies and other pertinent documents will be utilized as a source of analysis for this study. This documentation serves to provide an organizational perspective into the significance that is placed upon the reliance structures of neophyte principals. Specifically, documentation from policies with regard to a neophyte's reliance structure will be valuable in developing an understanding of the process that neophyte principals receive and assists to identify similarities and dissimilarities in the procedure and the identification and resolution of concerns regarding the establishment of a reliance structure.

8. Storage of Data.

Data will be securely stored at the University of Saskatchewan for the required five years upon completion of the study. In this case, Dr. P. J. Renihan, Professor of Educational Administration, will have responsibility for the secure storage of the data.

9. Dissemination of Results.

The results of this study will be shared with the faculty of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan. They will be used to complete requirements for a dissertation in the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan. As well, results may be used in the writing of journal articles, and conference presentations.

10. Risk or deception.

Participation in this study is voluntary and anonymity of those who choose to participate will be assured. Participants may withdraw from the study at any point without penalty such as the loss of services or other such benefits.

11. Confidentiality.

The participants will be assured that all responses are anonymous; the names of participants will not appear anywhere in the results. The data will be securely stored on computer file for a period of five years as is required by the University of Saskatchewan guidelines and will not allow for any identification of the individual participants involved in the study. After this time, all data will be destroyed. Researchers will use pseudonyms, change locale and circumstances where necessary, and make certain that principals referred to in the interviews remain anonymous.

12. Data/Transcript Release.

Data/transcript release forms will be utilized for those participating in the personal interviews. Each form will be signed after the participant has had the opportunity to read and revise his/her transcript and acknowledge its accurate portrayal of what has been said. The data/transcript release form utilized in this study will be the same as that given as a sample by the University of Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioural Sciences Research, 2001.

(See attachment)

13. Debriefing and feedback.

All those who participate in the survey questionnaire will be made aware of public access to the finished dissertation at the University of Saskatchewan's educational library. The researcher will make arrangements to individually contact participants of the interviews to provide an executive summary of the results of the study.

14. Signatures.

Advisor: Dr. Patrick Renihan _____

Applicant: _____

Department Head: _____

Consent Form – The reliance structures that neophyte principals establish during their first year.

February 2001

Dear Principal:

This is a request for your assistance in a research project which I am presently completing for my Doctor of Philosophy degree in Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan. This project will begin in March 2001, and will conclude in August, 2001. The results of this study will be shared with the faculty of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan, may be published in referred journals of educational research, and will be utilized in conference presentations.

My dissertation topic concerns the perceptions among rural principals regarding **The Reliance Structures that Neophyte Principals Establish During Their First Year.** The purpose of the study is to investigate the reliance structures among rural-based neophyte principals during their first year as principal. This investigation will provide insight into the increasingly complex role of the principal and facilitate the practices of future administrator preparation programs.

It is hoped that the benefits of this study to the educational community will include the following: (a) the heightened awareness of preparation practices for neophyte principals, (b) the increased understanding of the dynamics of reliance structures, (c) the ability of theorists and practitioners to incorporate the concept of relationship constellations into their models of leadership preparation, and (d) the development of policy in facilitating preparation practices for beginning principals in rural Saskatchewan.

This study will incorporate survey questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and documentary analysis. In selecting the sample for this study, sixty-two rural school districts directors, were contacted by telephone seeking second year principals who qualified for the study. The telephone survey produced a population of twenty-six qualified individuals. Questionnaires will be sent to all twenty-six principals in order to gather initial data concerning the issues and challenges associated with the principalship, and the reliance structure that was established during the first year. Completion of the survey will indicate your consent to participate; it will take approximately 15-20 minutes of your time. A purposeful sample produced eleven individuals to interview in order to gain a greater understanding of the reliance structures that neophyte principals establish during their first year.

During the interviews, participants will be presented with a standard semi-structured interview protocol. Open-ended questions will give participants a chance to explore their experiences as rural neophyte principals. It is anticipated that the taped interviews will last from 60 to 90 minutes. Participants will be asked to describe their perceptions relating to the establishment of a reliance structure. Each respondent will have the right to not answer any questions, or to turn off the tape recorder if he/she does not wish to have some responses recorded.

Please be assured that all responses will be afforded anonymity. Your name will not appear anywhere on the survey or in the results. Pseudonyms will be used when reporting research data and when sharing the verbatim transcripts. These transcripts will then be verified and checked by the participants. The data will be stored for a minimum of five years by Dr. Pat Renihan in the Department of Educational Administration (as required by the University of Saskatchewan guidelines), and will not allow for the identification of any individual.

All those who participate in the survey questionnaire will have access to the finished dissertation at the University of Saskatchewan's educational library. Should you choose to participate in the interview, an executive summary of the results of the study will be mailed to you.

Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, please discard the information. As a participant, you may withdraw from the study at any time. As well, if you choose to withdraw from the study, all collected data will be destroyed. You will be advised of any new information that may have a bearing on your decision to continue in the study. Completed questionnaires and consent should be either faxed to Marc D. Casavant at (306) 966-7020 or mailed to Marc D. Casavant, Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan, 28 Campus Drive, Saskatoon SK., S7N 0X1. A copy of this letter has been provided to you for your records.

This study has been approved by Dr. Pat Renihan at the Department of Educational Administration University of Saskatchewan, and by the University of Saskatchewan Ethics Committee. If you have any questions regarding the research, or the rights of participants in a research study, please contact me, Marc D. Casavant at (306) 966-7613, or Dr. Pat Renihan at (306) 966-7620, or the Office of Research Services at (306) 966-4053.

I look forward to hearing from you. I sincerely wish to thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Sincerely,

Marc D. Casavant B.Ed., M.Ed., Ph.D. Candidate

Signature of Participant: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____

Dated: _____

Data/Transcript Release Form

I, _____, have read my transcripts and agree to release them. I have had the opportunity to read the transcripts to clarify, add or delete information so it will accurately represent my words. The procedure and its possible risks have been explained to me by Marc Casavant, and I understand them. I understand that my participation is completely voluntary, that I may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. I also understand that although the data from this study may be published, and/or presented at seminars and/or conferences, and that my identity will be kept completely confidential. I _____ have received a copy of this TRANSCRIPT/DATA RELEASE FORM for my own records.

APPENDIX E
INSTRUMENT VARIABLES

Table 1
A Depiction of the Research Questions in Relation to the Survey Questions, Interview Questions, Themes from the Literature, and Corresponding Page Numbers

Research Questions	Survey	Interviews	Themes	Page #'s
1. The challenges and issues that confronted principals during their first year.	11-14, 41,51	2,7,8, 10,11	Context of Contemporary Rural Schools	13-29
2. The level of need for a reliance structure.	10,52		Reliance Structure	13-29, 40
3. The value of the socialization process.	15-20		The Socialization Process	30-44
4. The nature of the reliance structure.	45	3	Reliance Structure	30-52
5. The processes in establishing the reliance structure.	44	9	The Socialization Process	30
6. The relative significance and value of each element in the reliance structure.	22-33, 48-50	4,6	The Socialization Process	46-50
7. The role of the principal in establishing and maintaining the reliance structure.	21,42, 46,47	5,13	Reliance Structure	26-29
8. The impact of contextual factors upon the reliance structure (location, school size, system size, education, experience, gender).	34-39	12	Context of Contemporary Rural Schools	13-29
9. The extent to which self-reflection and professional development related to the reliance structure.	43		The Socialization Process	13, 39, 50
10. The sense of self-efficacy perceived during the first year.	40	14	Leader Efficacy	48-52