

**AN ASSESSMENT OF PROCEDURES EMPLOYED IN THE SELECTION
OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE
KWAZULU DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE:
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY**

BY

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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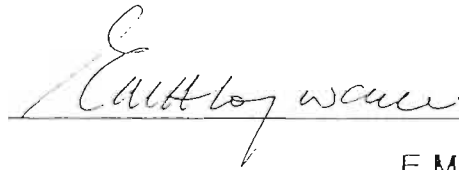
University of Natal

Durban

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that 'An Assessment of Procedures Employed in the Selection of Secondary School Principals in the KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture' is my own work and that all sources consulted and quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. The opinions expressed in this study are those of the writer and are not those of the University of Natal or the KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "E.M. Hlongwane", is written over a horizontal line.

E.M. HLONGWANE

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I praise the Almighty God for giving me strength and good health to accomplish my task.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my father and mother, Gideon Mabhoyana and Juliet Nontombi (Uma Zuma) Hlongwane, who were the source of inspiration when I started this work, but my father has turned blind before its completion.

ABSTRACT

It is widely acknowledged that the role of the principal is critical in the maintenance and enhancement of quality in schooling. It follows that, not only should principals be adequately trained for their task, but also the best possible candidates should be appointed to positions of principal. Limited available research suggests that, throughout the world, processes of selection for principalship leave much to be desired.

This dissertation examines one example of in-depth research into the process of selecting principals and draws attention to the weaknesses identified together with suggestions for improvement. This is followed by a consideration of what appears to be the characteristic process for the selection of principals in the KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture (KDEC).

The 'ideal' process operating in the KDEC is then subjected, through empirical research, to the opinions of inspectors and principals in one circuit of the KDEC. The main findings in this connection are reported.

Finally, in the light of overseas research and the products of research in the Mpumalanga Circuit of the KDEC, recommendations are offered for the possible improvement of the selection process for secondary school principals.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Republic of South Africa (RSA) and the independent states (i.e. Ciskei, Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda) and the national states (KwaZulu, Qwaqwa, Lebowa, Kangwane, KwaNdebele and Gazankulu) have altogether 19 education departments. Although the RSA is the source of all the budgets of these education departments, these departments do not function and perform equally. It is against this background that this study aims to research the extent to which KwaZulu makes selection programmes for the selection of secondary school principals as well as the effectiveness of such programmes in meeting the goals they were set up for.

Questions may be asked as to the utility of a study that focuses only on the KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture (KDEC) just before the advent of a single ministry which will more likely regionalize rather than centralize educational authority. In that sense KwaZulu (and other departments) would still exist as a regional authority. Secondly, the advent of one ministry will not make the KwaZulu educational legacy and character disappear. Future policy, even in one ministry, will have to build on past educational experiences. In the new South Africa we would still have an educational experience reminiscent of Zulu culture, history, language, beliefs and philosophy of life.

The topic of this study is: A Critical Assessment of Procedures Employed in the Selection of Secondary School Principals in the KDEC: An Exploratory Study.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The researcher has, in his educational experience, observed a number of problems in KwaZulu secondary school education, especially with regard to the selection of secondary school principals.

Anticipated educational goals are not attained as well as they should be. The failure of the KDEC selection committee to be able to predict if the selected candidate will and can perform the job of principalship in the secondary school, has caused great concern in view of the perceived and expected roles of secondary school headships in this department.

Although no research has been done on the selection of secondary school headship in South Africa, the studies done in the United States of America and England and Wales have relevance in indicating some of the causes of the selection problems in the KDEC.

The studies, among other things, recommended that the selection of secondary school principals be carried out in a number of stages as a rational selection procedure.

1. When a post of headship occurs, it should be analyzed, a job description compiled, criteria for selection determined and the post advertised.
2. That applications and structured references are assessed and a long list is produced.
3. That preliminary interviews are conducted.
4. A short list is drawn up.

5. Candidates on the short list should be accorded an opportunity to visit the school with the vacant post, analogous tests should be conducted.
6. Final interviews are held.
7. Using information gathered from applications, structured references, analogous tests and the structured interview, candidates are compared with each other and the person best matched for the job is selected, or if there is no such a person, the job should be re-advertised.
8. The successful candidate is informed (as are the unsuccessful ones), and their induction begins.

1.3 AIM AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim and purpose of this study is to draw attention to the nature of the problem in the KDEC and to initiate debate on the need for the restructuring of effective selection procedures. This debate should lead to further research on this topic/study in KwaZulu-Natal Education Department. The researcher hopes that through further research the following may then happen:

- 1) The improvement of the existing selection procedure in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture and the introduction of new selection procedures where necessary;
- 2) The promotion of principals of secondary schools could be made more meaningful, worthwhile and exciting; and it could be motivating to work and make the best use of educational opportunities and facilities.
- 3) Some, or all, of the problems facing the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture may be reduced.

- 4) Pupils, teachers and parents may be helped to get a more profitable educational investment which will yield dividends in the form of maximum personal, educational, vocational, professional, organisational, administrative and pastoral care.

More relevantly, the aim and purpose of this study is to examine what goes on in KDEC and assess this against what has been suggested to be a good practice in the United Kingdom study. In particular, in this study, the following issues will be examined:

The characteristics of the selection procedure in the KDEC, including:

- how a post of secondary headship occurs;
- how the selection committee is composed;
- how the job description of secondary headship is compiled;
- how criteria for selection are determined;
- how the post of secondary headship is advertised;
- how application forms and references are assessed;
- how long-listing and short-listing are conducted;
- whether candidates on the short list do visit schools before a final interview;
- whether analogous tests are conducted and how final interviews are conducted;
- using information gathered from application forms, references, analogous tests and structured interviews;

- how candidates are compared with each other;
- how the best person matched for the job is selected, or if there is no such person, what happens to the job;
- how successful and unsuccessful candidates are informed of the outcome of the selection process; and lastly,
- how induction of the newly selected principals is carried out.

In Chapter 2, a study conducted by Morgan, Hall and Mackay (1983) will be used to indicate the reality of the problem; because the factors they investigated will also be investigated in this study. Therefore, the review of this study will indicate what knowledge exists in the field of selection process.

1.4 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

In undertaking the research project, the writer acknowledges that:

- there is general shortage of relevant material relating to the selection process of secondary headship within the KDEC and other education departments.
- the study is narrowed by limiting it to Mpumalanga Circuit where the writer works and has limited resources.
- the study is limited to the opinions of inspectors, because inspectors are involved in the selection process, and principals of secondary schools, because principals of secondary schools have experience of the selection process when they were selected themselves.
- The study is also limited since the research focuses on the KDEC and excludes the other education departments in the Republic of South Africa.

1.5 METHOD OF STUDY

The method employed in examining the subject matter and to gather, analyze and interpret relevant data on the procedures employed in the selection of secondary school principals in the KDEC included:

- a review of literature on secondary school headship, a study conducted in the United Kingdom;
- use of questionnaires to elicit information relevant to the study from the Mpumalanga Secondary School principals.
- Interviews to endorse or disagree with the findings of the study and the responses of local inspectors to interviews with the researcher.

However, the method of study will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

1.6 DEFINITION OF MAIN TERMS

It is necessary to define the concepts subsumed in the topic and terms of this study and those appearing in the literature review. In the process, the definition of these concepts and terms and the theme of the study will become clear. For the purposes of this study, the following definitions have been established.

1.6.1 Critical assessment

Critical assessment refers to critical evaluation. Critical evaluation refers to a judgement of merit which is sometimes based on measurements, but more frequently involves the synthesis of various measurements, critical incidents, subjective impressions and other kinds of evidence weighed in the process of carefully appraising the effects of any educational experience.

1.6.2 Selection procedure

Van der Westhuizen (1991: 119) defined 'selection procedure' as a "process of filling the post". 'Selection procedure' in this study will mean and involve three phases, i.e. recruitment, selection, appointment or placement.

1.6.3 Secondary school

The Education and Training Act (Act No. 90 of 1979) defines 'secondary school' as follows:

"'Secondary school' means a school for education up to a standard higher than the fifth standard but not higher than the tenth standard."

According to the KDEC Annual Report (1982: 10), KwaZulu also adopts the above mentioned definition of 'secondary school', i.e. a school ranging from Standard 6 to 10, for the purpose of this study, 'school' shall mean 'secondary school', unless the context otherwise indicates.

1.6.4 Principal

According to KDEC (1982: 10), a principal will refer to the incumbent of the highest rank and designation within the secondary school level which is considered to be the representative of the Executive Director/Secretary for KDEC, but also accountable to him. His/her roles therefore involve professional, organisational, administrative and pastoral duties.

In view of the above definition and roles of a secondary school principal, it becomes clear that on the whole, the process of selecting and interviewing people for a post of secondary school headship, means that selection should be tied to occupational

performance, past and expected, rather than on qualities approved for wider social purposes.

1.6.5 KwaZulu

Saunders (1983: 96) states that when KwaZulu became 'self-governing' in 1977, it consisted of over 40 blocks of land in Zululand and Natal - separated from each other by patches of white-owned land, and it stretched from Mozambique and Swaziland in the north to the Transkei in the south. Potgieter (1975: 603) lists districts that make up KwaZulu as follows:

Ingwavuma, Simdlangentsha, Ubombo, Nongoma, Hlabisa, Mahlabathini, Enseleni, Madadeni, Nquthu, Nkandla, Msinga, Emnambithi, Inkanyezi, Ongoye, KwaMaphumulo, Ndwedwe, Empumalanga, Ntuzuma, Mlazi, Umbumbulu, Vulindlela, Hlanganani, Vulamehlo, Umzumbe and Ezingolweni.

The Bureau for Information (1988-1989: 175) states that the total area of KwaZulu is slightly more than 3 175 000 hectares. The population which actually resided within the territory in 1991 was 4 200 000. The territory has been self-governing since 1 February 1977. The seat of government is at Ulundi. The land units have been reduced from 44 to 10. In 1993, KwaZulu had 3 489 educational institutions, 35 472 teachers and lecturers, and approximately two million students and pupils.

The above is mainly a geopolitical description of KwaZulu. For the purpose of this study, reference to KwaZulu will be administrative rather than geopolitical.

Refer to Appendix A for a map of the circuit districts and offices of the KDEC.

1.6.6 Exploratory study

This study is intended to be exploratory. This means it is an initial investigation which is intended to serve as a preliminary study to further research. The study intends to explore, analyze and project selection procedures in KDEC for the selection of secondary school principals in order to open the way for further study, debate or research into the significance of these procedures for the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education as a whole.

1.7 THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The first part of the study is concerned with introducing the need, aim and purpose of the study. These aspects are situated within the ambit of the problem as stated already. The introduction discusses the scope of the study as well as outlining methods of study and the limitations of the study. In Chapter Two, a review of selected literature will centre on the selection process.

The third chapter will focus on the review of procedures for the selection of secondary school principals in the KDEC, and the fourth chapter will present an outline of the method and procedures used in the investigation.

The responses to questionnaires and interviews will be collated and analyzed in Chapter Five. This will be done to draw comparisons, identify similarities and present as objectively as possible some discussion of the research conducted.

Finally, the findings of the study will be set out and this will be followed by an assessment of the implications of the investigation. Conclusions and recommendations for the reform of selection procedures in the KDEC and the KwaZulu-Natal DEC will be made in Chapter Six.

1.8 CONCLUSION

While this chapter has provided an overview of the study, the next will examine a research study on selection practices for secondary school headships in England and Wales (POST). The major stages, procedures and recommendations will be examined in respect of implications for the reform of selection procedures in the KDEC and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture.

CHAPTER TWO

A REVIEW OF THE PROJECT ON THE SELECTION OF SECONDARY HEADTEACHERS (POST)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is devoted to the review of literature that contains information relating to the problem, which is: Which are the best predictors in the selection process for secondary school headship?

To arrive at the partial or tentative solution of the problem, this chapter will be devoted to the review of a relevant study on the "selection procedures" for secondary school headships in England and Wales. The main focus will, however, be on the review of the selection procedures in secondary schools. The review of the selection procedure and previous achievement will be made with the purpose of putting aptitude for selection in perspective.

2.2 RESEARCH CONDUCTED IN ENGLAND AND WALES

In 1980, the Department of Education and Science made funds available for the Open University to survey and evaluate current selection practices for secondary school headships in England and Wales. This project known as the POST project looked at headship, but also examined the selection procedures employed in other occupational spheres such as Civil Service, the National Health Service and Industry and Commerce. The selection procedure in England and Wales will be reviewed in paragraph 2.2; what happens when a post of headship occurs in paragraph 2.2.1; post analysis, completion of job description, criteria for selection are determined and the post is advertised in paragraph 2.2.2; application and structured references are

assessed and a long list is produced in paragraph 2.2.3; preliminary interviews are conducted in paragraph 2.2.4; a short list is compiled in paragraph 2.2.5; candidates on short list visit the school, analogous tests are conducted and final interviews are conducted in paragraph 2.2.6; using information gathered from applications, structured references, analogous tests and structured interview, candidates are compared with each other, and the person best matched for the job is selected (or if there is no such person the job is re-advertised) in paragraph 2.2.7; and the successful candidate is informed (as are the unsuccessful ones) and their induction begins in paragraph 2.2.8.

In South Africa (House of Assembly) and England and Wales, the system of selection and appointment of headships in schools have a lot of features in common. In both cases posts are advertised, candidates complete application forms, and a panel of lay interviewers select successful applicants on the basis of the largely inadequate information provided in the application form, references and a generally unstructured interview. This process has been shown by research to be unlikely to be better than chance in predicting subsequent successful performance, as the interview is "all too rarely validated as a selection tool, in spite of its very widespread use" (Morgan *et al.*, 1983: 4). Once appointed, these senior staff members can remain in that post for life, unless they choose to move or are, in rare cases, dismissed. It is estimated that the average duration of a headship in England is 17 years (Morgan *et al.*, 1983: 1). It is absolutely crucial that the correct candidate is chosen for each post within the senior ranks of the school staff, i.e. a candidate who can do the job the best and continue to do it the best even if the job description changes (as it does in today's climate of constant change).

Morgan *et al.* (1983: 92) investigated the procedure for headteacher selection in use in England and Wales in the early 1980s. They found the main defect in current procedures to be their inadequacy in revealing which candidates were able to do the job. They used the process of action research to determine a set of "rational

procedures" which could be used to ensure that the best candidate was selected and appointed to the job, i.e. that the predictive value of who could do the job best was maximised. They recommended that procedure be carried out in a number of stages as set out below:

The stages of a rational selection procedure (as recommended by Morgan *et al.*, 1983).

1. What happens when a post of headship occurs. Research by Morgan *et al.* (1983) recommended that it should be analyzed, a job description is compiled, criteria for selection are determined and the post is advertised.
2. Research further recommended that applications and structured references are assessed, and a long list is produced.
3. They further recommended that preliminary interviews are conducted.
4. A short list is compiled.
5. Candidates on the short list visit the school; analogous tests are conducted.
6. Final interviews are held.
7. Using information gathered from applications, structured references, analogous tests and the structured interview, candidates are compared with each other and the person best matched for the job is selected, or if there is no such person, the job is re-advertised.
8. The successful candidate is informed (as are the unsuccessful ones), and their induction begins.

However, these steps will now be elaborated upon by the writer of this research, i.e. more detail and the rationale behind each step will be given.

2.2.1 The selection committee and its composition

As soon as the vacancy in senior staff occurs, it is essential that the core of the selection panel plus all other relevant people to be involved in selection, e.g. the outgoing Principal, Superintendent of Education, (Inspectorate), and even subject advisers (in the case of a Head of Department) are brought together. This ensures that they are all involved right from the very start of determining exactly what steps they will follow, what the job description is, the criteria they will use to select the applicant and how the final decision will be made. This will go a long way towards ensuring that the correct person is chosen for the job (Morgan *et al.*, 1983: 25).

In England and Wales, the Selection Committee is comprised of Local Education Authority (LEA) officers and members, and school governors. In South Africa in the Natal Education Department, the initial short listing is carried out by Natal Education Department officials and the final selection by the management council of the school advertising the post. This composition of the selectors has been found to have disadvantages for a number of reasons. Generally, both amongst the LEA officers in England and Wales, and in the selection committees in South Africa, no one person is in charge throughout the whole procedure, guiding it to its conclusion, and thus the process often lacks clarity or purpose and cohesiveness and there is often a tension over the appointment between officers and advisers in LEA (Morgan *et al.*, 1983: 27) as well as a confusion about the role each individual must play in the process. The mixed and changing composition also means that few of the selectors have time allocated to the process of selection, and simply try and fit it in after hours or between their other tasks at work. One of the most obvious aspects identified by Morgan *et al.* (1983) in their research on the selection of senior staff was that if the process is to be effective, it is time consuming, and ongoing. All the selectors must, from the start of the process, have adequate time set aside (time-tabled) on agreed dates to handle the procedures necessary.

The composition of selection committees as outlined above is also inadequate as it does not include people who have an adequate understanding of the job at hand. The job of a principal (and of other senior staff members) contains a number of components, and is changing all the time. Typically, the role of principal used to be that of a "leading professional" the person who is a leader by "professional teaching expertise and cosmopolitan educational knowledge" (Morgan, 1983: 10). However more and more the leading professional role has become combined with the role of "the chief executive" - the person who runs the school as a complex organisation which is affected by and which affects its external environment. This is especially so in "white" South African schools today as they change over to "The new model C" style. Suddenly the role of the principal has changed almost completely and a very large part of the job will be that of the chief executive.

Research (Morgan *et al.*, 1983) has shown that selectors tend to have preconceived stereotypes of who is best suited to a job. Often this stereotype is based on their experience of someone they knew who did the job effectively. If the job and its character and demands have changed since the selector knew the stereotypical role model, then obviously that type of person is not necessarily going to be effective in the new type of job. For this reason, the selection committee, and all of those involved in the selection, should be people who either have a detailed knowledge of what the job involves, or have an open mind and are prepared to investigate and learn about all aspects of the job. Morgan *et al.* (1983) and Southworth (1990) recommend that other headteachers who are familiar with the job should help in the selection process (1983: 39, 152; 1990: 11). Morgan *et al.* (1983) also made mention of one LEA in which there existed a formal arrangement for the representation of staff interests in the selection process. "Candidates selected for the preliminary interviews were asked to address and answer questions at a staff meeting". It is the staff who will have to work closely with the senior staff member selected, and thus it is appropriate that they, in a structured way, are able to have input into who is selected for the job.

Research reports an andocentric bias in the management of education (Shakeshaft and Hanson, 1986). They say, as selectors have been proven to choose candidates who fit their stereotypes of what the job incumbent should be like, it is essential that some women are involved in the selection process (and that all selectors are briefed on sex bias in such a way as to eliminate such bias in the selection process).

2.2.2 The analysis of the vacancy

Southworth (1990) recommended a number of steps in this procedure. He emphasises that as schools change, and as no one person is a clone of another, the selectors should avoid trying to recreate the existing post, but should rather always treat each post as a new one, and that in order to obtain a complete picture of this post, the selectors should:

- assess the present situation in the school;
- look at the opportunities the new post may afford;
- talk with others (e.g. deputy, teachers, advisers);
- talk with the person who is leaving;
- ask the person leaving to write down all the jobs he currently does.

(Southworth, 1990: 21-23)

He goes further to say that the selectors should look at where the school as a whole is going, and assess its needs. With all this information they can create the new post, hold discussions and reach consensus on what the school needs. From here they can work out a detailed job description, using those aspects of the previous job they wish to retain and also new aspects they wish to include in the job. They can work out the core duties and the additional duties the incumbent will have to perform. This job

description is especially important in jobs where there are contradictory expectations of the incumbent by different interest groups.

Once a job description has been compiled, the details of the person who can fill this job description can be determined, i.e. a list of their qualifications, experience, knowledge, skills, interests and motivation (amongst other characteristics) can be compiled, the profile of the ideal applicant. Only once this step has been completed can the post be advertised, together with all the necessary details. To advertise the post before the job description has been determined could result in applicants without the necessary requirements applying for the job. This obviously does not apply to Principal and Deputy posts advertised by the Natal Education Department (as these are advertised with no details of the job other than the name of the school and the level of the post), whereas in the KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture (KDEC) candidates without necessary requirements do apply and are in some cases considered, especially in remote areas where promotional posts cannot attract those with necessary requirements.

Application forms, in preference to general application forms (to be accompanied by a letter of application), should be compiled at this stage, as can personal assessment forms. Both should be structured in such a way as to obtain as much relevant information as possible. Non-job-specific application forms, such as those used by the Natal Education Department and the KDEC do not fulfil this function. For those which require a reference or references, as well, a reference request form should also be designed (Morgan *et al.*, 1983: 32-36). Morgan *et al.* emphasize that the absence of pre-structuring of the letter of application:

"... makes comparison between the candidates' answers difficult and shifts the focus to more easily discerned features of their presentation,

e.g. handwriting, spelling and style, which detract from the content of what they actually say" (1983: 43).

and the selector is "forced to rely on a 'hunch' and 'feel' rather than hard evidence" (1983: 44). However, Morgan *et al.*, during the course of their research also noticed that there was a 'code' used in the language of references, i.e. the reference was used as a source of negative rather than positive information, and that the wording of the last line was of prime importance. They further alerted that as soon as this line expressed anything less than unequivocal recommendation, the candidate was eliminated, as selectors placed different interpretations on certain wordings, and this made unstructured references an unreliable source of information (1983: 46-49).

Concurrently with the compilation of a job description, the selectors must also establish the criteria for selection and they must all agree on and understand these criteria. If this is not done, decisions are taken according to individual selectors' opinions and stereotypes. Evidence has also shown that in the absence of established criteria, selectors judge candidates purely on their performance in the interview, i.e. according to their perceived personality (Morgan *et al.*, 1983: 61-63). However, the assessment of skills used for selection must test both latent and developed abilities, as not all candidates have identical previous experience. Skills are normally assessed by means of analogous testing which will be described in more detail later in this chapter.

However, at this stage, Morgan *et al.*, in their research, have agreed that a number of administrative and other arrangements can be made (1983: 19-21). They say selectors can each be allocated specific tasks in this process; all the rest of the steps in the process can be determined, and some of these stages can only be decided on once the job description has been compiled, as different jobs have different requirements; a pre-planned timetable for all the remaining steps in the process must be determined; the selectors and the school representatives involved in the selection must compile a

comprehensive document with relevant information on aspects of the school for the applicants to peruse in order to ensure that they (candidates) wish to apply for that post.

Furthermore, it is often advantageous for all candidates to have a well organised visit to the school, preferably prior to the preliminary interview, but at least before the final interview in order to enable the candidates to absorb information they need to know, and to appraise the nature of the post. The research here emphasises that the school visit is not to be used as a time for assessment (Morgan *et al.*, 1984: 10).

After the school visit, then the initial assessment stage should follow. This initial assessment stage uses the documents (application form, structured references) submitted as indicated earlier in order to produce a long list of candidates. As the questions asked in the application form are structured, a marking scheme should be produced, so that all the answers assessed and graded and how the information obtained can be used to compare the information provided by the referee and the candidate, as well as to compare candidates on the basis of skills and knowledge in areas, identified by the job description. Morgan *et al.* recommend the use of an initial assessment profile and provides one as an example for the assessment of a secondary principal (as indicated below).

Task Skill Area	Application Form Grade	Reference Grade	Other Comments

Key: 1 = above average
 2 = Average
 3 = Below average

(Morgan *et al.*, 1984: 46)

At any stage of the selection process which involves a comparison between candidates, the paired comparison technique of Jauch is a "simplified, logical procedure that can easily be adapted to various jobs" (Jauch, 1976: 564-567). A matrix is constructed for each criterion being analyzed. The name of each candidate is placed in the matrix both on the vertical and the horizontal axes.

PAIRED COMPARISON
 MATRIX CANDIDATES

Criterion 1	A	B	C
Candidate A	0		
Candidate B		0	
Candidate C			0

(Jauch, 1976: 565)

The selector then compares each candidate with each of the others listed, and places '+' in the matrix if the candidate is superior, a 'ø' if the candidate is equal and a '-' if the candidate is inferior. Once this has been completed, the signs are totalled to the right of the candidate's name for a total score on this criterion. From this, it is easy to rank candidates on each criterion, and then compare the rankings on all the criteria used.

2.2.3 The interview

In England and Wales, it is traditional to have only one interview for applicants for primary school posts, whereas two interviews are traditionally held for secondary school applicants, the first for all the candidates on the long list functioning to construct the short list, and the second to make an overall assessment and select the successful candidate.

2.2.3.1 The preliminary interview

This is the first interview whose function is for the officers/District Superintendent to judge the "scope and depth of the candidate's technical knowledge through documents (i.e. application forms, references, academic and professional certificates, certificates of appraisal, etc.)."

2.2.3.2 The final interview

This is the second and final interview conducted by the panel which includes lay members. Information is collected by questions and answers. This interview is followed by the final decision made by "declaration or voting" (Morgan *et al.*, 1983: 80).

Furthermore, Morgan *et al.* confirm that at both interviews (preliminary interviews and final interview) the same basic rules apply to ensure that the interview fulfils its

function, i.e. to provide valid information to ensure the selectors make an informed decision of who is best able to fill the post (1983: 81-82). Interviews confirm biographical details, assess technical knowledge and experience and, to a limited extent, assess verbal skills and intellectual ability. They may (but not as a matter of course) determine attitudes, job relevant interests and personal energy, but they cannot assess job-related skills. Unfortunately interviews can also mislead and falsify as the whole interaction maximises visual and impression factors and hence decisions tend to mirror the values of the selectors (Morgan *et al.*, 1984: 38).

The number of selectors at an interview should be kept to a minimum. The selectors must be trained to ensure that they ask open-ended questions which are not leading or ambiguous, and which ask only one question at a time. Their training must develop their ability to become active listeners.

Prior to the interview, the selectors must meet to determine the purpose, format and content of the interview. They must decide what information they require in addition to the biographical information they have. Questioning must be allocated to the selectors according to their knowledge and expertise so that each selector can prepare his questions in advance. An assessment sheet, to be used by all the selectors, must be drawn up to enable the recording of grades indicating the job knowledge, experience and other job-related activities of the candidate. It is essential that each selector makes notes during the interview. Morgan *et al.* (1983) report:

"... those selectors who had taken notes, mainly when candidates were answering questions put by them - were in a better position to present a more coherent case for and against different candidates at the time of the final decision" (p. 85).

2.2.4 Analogous testing

The information selectors obtained from interviews and applications is limited as it provides evidence based on projections from what the candidate says or knows, not on actual observable behaviour. Therefore even a structured interview or application form has severe limitations. It is possible to use analogous tests to obtain an unbiased assessment of the potential of a candidate to display required skills in a real job situation. Analogous tests must have been "validated over time by comparing job performance with previous test performance" (Morgan *et al.*, 1984: 49).

Such tests are written or oral exercises designed to test specific job-related skills which would be required by the candidate to perform the job for which he has applied. These skills are "applied techniques in which one can be trained and which can be demonstrated and observed by eye and ear" (Morgan *et al.*, 1984: 49). The observed skills are graded by trained assessors and the grades of the different candidates can be compared. Morgan *et al.* recommend the use of analogous tests as over 30 research studies have validated their "predictive validity" (1984: 49). Results from such tests can be used directly or as a basis for an interview.

Furthermore, Morgan *et al.* state that to construct a good analogous test, one must determine the skills required by the job, obtain from the incumbent of such a job an example of a situation which requires the use of some of these skills, prepare a marking scheme so that all carefully briefed assessors can accurately assess explicit criteria in the same way for all the candidates, e.g. on a seven-point scale, and the test can then be administered (1984: 50-61).

However, the following indicate the examples of analogous tests. These according to Morgan *et al.* involve drafting exercises, in-basket exercises and committee exercises (1984: 53).

2.2.4.1 Drafting exercise

Here the candidate needs to be provided with all appropriate content information and be given clear instructions before participating in this type of exercise. An example of such an exercise would involve replying to a typical, complex letter in a way which demonstrates tact, sensitivity, a clear analysis of the problem and an ability to communicate in writing.

2.2.4.2 In-basket exercise

Here the candidate must be provided with all the relevant information, i.e. a "school scenario" and a "role scenario" and be given clear instructions of what is required. He must then, within a given time limit, deal with (giving reasons for all his actions) a set of items that would typically appear in the basket of a job incumbent. From the way in which he deals with these, a whole range of technical skills can be assessed. Morgan *et al.* state that, for example, such items could include having to deal with a situation in which all the speech-day programmes had been printed and a copy forwarded to the guest speaker who, offended, had contacted the school to say her qualifications had been incorrectly printed on the programme (1984: 52-57).

2.2.4.3 Committee exercise

This test according to Morgan *et al.*, aims at testing skills in a group situation. Here the group of candidates is assessed, given all the relevant context information, assigned roles within the committee and, following clear instructions, they must deal with the problem presented. Following this, the group is rotated so that each candidate gets a chance to play the role of chairman (1984: 57-61).

Furthermore such an exercise enables trained assessors to rate the candidates on a number of different skills such as interpersonal behaviour, verbal skills, and problem

analysis as well as all the leadership skills required by a chairperson, such as the ability to control the group, lead the discussion tactfully and to guide the group to a resolution (Morgan *et al.*, 1984: 60-61).

Following the analogous tests, assessors will have graded the candidates on observed behaviour and have a number of scores covering a large range of generic skills. These grades can be used to rank the candidates on skills and knowledge each possesses or has the potential to develop.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) in the USA has done an extensive research and pioneered the development of an assessment centre to determine the specific skills required of a headteacher, and to assess the potential of individuals to perform the role of a principal. Morgan *et al.* reported that these exercises were validated in a research study by Schmitt (1983: 97). NASSP and research done by Schmitt and by Morgan *et al.* showed that structured interviews should be used in conjunction with analogous testing to assess adequately whether the person has the potential to succeed in the job.

2.2.5 The extended assessment profile

An extended assessment profile should be compiled and distributed to all the selectors at the final interview. This should contain a summary of the candidate's performances at all the activities conducted so far, it will enable the selectors to get an overall picture of all the relevant aspects of all candidates.

2.2.6 The final decision and conclusion

Reaching the final decision should not be a haphazard process. The chairman of the selection committee must ensure that the final meeting is conducted in such a manner that the decision taken is made in a rational and methodical fashion. The chairman

should review the information regarding the post to be filled and the abilities and skills required for a candidate to fill the post successfully (Morgan *et al.*, 1984: 72-73).

2.2.7 Successful candidate is informed

According to Morgan *et al.*, selectors must consider all the evidence they may have accumulated on all the candidates. The information gathered should be discussed and an overall grade allocated to each candidate. On this basis, some candidates can be eliminated (1984: 73). Then the final discussion on the evidence and grades obtained by all the remaining candidates at all stages of the procedure should continue until an agreement on one candidate is reached (1984: 73).

2.2.8 Informing the candidate of the decision

The successful candidate should be informed by post of the decision. Following his written acceptance of the post, all unsuccessful candidates should be informed of the decision (Morgan *et al.*, 1984: 743).

2.3 FINDINGS

2.3.1 Introduction

Morgan, Hall and Mackay (1984) herein find that a managerial perspective on the whole process of selecting and interviewing people means that job selection is tied to occupational performance, past and expected, rather than on qualities approved for under social purposes. They have further found that selection practices are taken very much for granted and have little predictive value and are based more or less on acts of faith. The researchers further pose a question; What is the rational view of selection and how does education measure up in practice to a rational view of the nature of selection and the principles (or principals) that flow from it?

To answer the above question, Morgan *et al.* (1983: 140-144) advanced the notion that "selection should be an act of prediction and not a blind gamble". They further state that the fundamental purpose of selection is to predict as accurately as possible that a person can perform a certain job. They say the progressive accumulation of evidence tied to job performance is one method of doing this. On the contrary, Morgan *et al.* find that the world of education falls far short of this mark (1983: 145-147).

2.3.2 Displacement of a focus on job performance

In appointments in education, research has found that a focus on job performance figures low in the concerns of selectors. It is often displaced by social-acceptability criteria and even political factors impinge on the selection for jobs. However, reference to literature reveals that in order to achieve a link between selection and job performance there are four key steps that need to be carried out:

- (1) The job to be filled should be clearly defined and understood by the selectors. There should also be an accurate job description.
- (2) The competencies required for successful job performance should be made explicit to the selectors.
- (3) There should be planned provision for the objective assessment of all the required competencies.
- 4) There should be clear policy on how the final decision is to be arrived at; the procedure for this final stage must be based on careful consideration of all the accumulated evidence.

Therefore the tradition in the education world in general falls rather short of the approach mentioned above (Morgan *et al.*, 1984).

2.3.3 Rarity of published particulars

Published particulars on job descriptions are rare. Where the job descriptions are issued they tend to be dominated by other sorts of information, such as descriptions of the school organisation as a whole; statements of the ethos of the school; and some may even include a statement on the housing opportunities in the region (if the post is widely advertised). What is rare is real, clear, job-related information in terms of tasks that are to be carried out; even more rare is information on the way that these tasks might be interpreted.

2.3.4 Abilities and competencies

A rigorous definition of the required abilities and competencies is required. The most useful way of assembling a list of competencies in a job involves the knowledge base of the job. The basis of this is that in order to be functionally competent, the job incumbents need the knowledge component; they need certain skills (these are the doing-things and can be easily verified), and lastly, the incumbents must have appropriate attitudes - these are not as easy to assess. Very often attitudinal competency is misinterpreted in terms of some social or other value unconnected with the job itself. It is easy to slip into defining attitude as personality and assume that observed personality (in, say, the interview situation) and effectiveness are closely related.

2.3.5 Analysis of knowledge, skills and attitudes

If certain skills and attitudes are required, then it becomes necessary to be able to test and assess these skills. Analysis of knowledge, skills and attitudes produce a specification of the type of person required to perform a particular job. Analysis is what counts and not the taking of things for granted. An example is a pro forma used by a

manager to build up a person-profile of candidates for jobs. It has the merit of trying to link competence to particular tasks.

2.3.6 No relationship related to performance

Morgan *et al.*'s research (1983: 22-24) reveals that there is no relationship between a person's effectiveness in a job and age, gender, the particular mixture of schools, universities attended and degree courses taken. There is no hard evidence that relates performance in an interview to effectiveness in a job; there is no evidence that relates particular personality characteristics to effective performance to particular jobs in education. Yet, some of these factors seem often to be considered important in the selection process.

2.3.7 Absence of job-related criteria

In the absence of explicit job-related criteria, non-job-related criteria are used by selectors. Criteria embodying some sort of idiosyncratic social value (which can vary from silver hair to rescuing a dog somewhere or known ability to socialise with a community) are seriously advanced by selectors as being, in some sense, influential in justifying particular appointments. However, in the "play-it-by-ear" process, the appointment activity becomes not so much getting the right person for the job, but about the most socially acceptable person. Seniority also plays a major role in the selection process. Seniority does not mean a thing according to research; certain inferences may be drawn, e.g. is it forty years of experience or one year of experience repeated forty times? (Morgan *et al.*, 1983: 27). The above authors further argue that while job-related factors need not be the total concern of selectors, they should be the central and dominating concern in a rational selection process. In explaining this point, Morgan *et al.* (1983: 20) suggest three fundamental defects in traditional selection practices. They say:

- (1) The interview is a defective method of selection.
- (2) There is a pressing need, which is often not met, to assess latent and developed abilities on the part of the applicants.
- (3) Problems arise in the selection process when the body of selectors comprises both professionals and lay people.

2.3.8 Final decision

This key step of making the final decision is particularly challenging in the world of educational appointments. Traditionally, the final decision is made either by taking a vote by going round the table, as it were, or by arriving at consensus. A distinction should be made between intuitive modes, actuarial modes and professional modes of arriving at a decision. The complex issue is the comparison of the evidence of each of the candidates and the comparison of the candidate to the criteria laid down for the job (Jauch, 1976: 34-36).

2.4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Research alluded to in the above paragraphs (Morgan *et al.*, 1983) suggests that if selection in an educational setting is to be put on a proper management basis, then certain issues need to be resolved. Essentially selection for promotion is a problem of prediction; how to predict that a person will do a job effectively, or how to predict that one person will do a job more effectively than another. What aspects of job performance that the interview can predict need to be mentioned, because the interview is, traditionally, the major and sometimes the sole method (KDEC) used, when the candidates are physically present. There is a substantial body of evidence that suggests that the interview has a poor predictive value. It just does not generate much job-related evidence, nor does it promote in general, any real level of agreement

between selectors (where there are panels of selectors). Therefore, since prediction requires a sufficient amount of job-related evidence, this is something that has been singularly lacking in traditional selection procedures; the predictive value of the interview is extremely low in terms of job-related performance. However, the most hopeful way around this is the use of analogous testing procedures which enable applicants to be assessed beyond just their personality, beyond social factors and beyond developed ability. Analogous tests therefore enable some measurement of latent ability, i.e. how the applicant might perform in the job situation (Morgan *et al.*, 1984: 49-57).

The next chapter will present an outline of the selection procedure employed by the selection committee of the KDEC in the selection of secondary school principals.

CHAPTER THREE

SELECTION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE KWAZULU DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the selection factors were reviewed for their characteristic utility. A managerial perspective on the whole process of selecting and interviewing people means that job selection is tied to occupational performance, past and expected rather than on qualities approved for wider social purposes. It is therefore obvious that the recruitment, selection and appointment of candidates to the position of principalship should not be left to chance. The cost and disastrous effects of selecting an unsuitable candidate far outweigh the trouble taken in setting a programme for a rational and systematic selection process.

In the review of literature, it has been indicated that selection should be an act of prediction and not a blind gamble. The fundamental purpose of selection is to predict as accurately as possible that the person can perform a certain job. The progressive accumulation of evidence tied to job performance is one method of doing this (Van der Westhuizen, 1991:127). The world of education in the KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture (KDEC) rates failure low on the concerns of selectors. However, it is often displaced by social-acceptability criteria, even political factors impinge on the selection for a post of leadership. Reference to the literature has revealed that in order to achieve a link between selection and job performance there are four key steps that need to be carried out:

1. The job to be filled should be clearly defined and understood by the selectors. There should also be an accurate job description.

2. The competencies required for successful job performance should be made explicit to the selectors.
3. There should be planned provision for the objective assessment of all the required competencies.
4. There should be clear policy on how the final decision is to be arrived at; the procedure for this final state must be based on careful consideration of all the accumulated evidence (Morgan *et al.*, 1983: 123-124).

3.2 A PRINCIPAL OF A SECONDARY SCHOOL WITH LEADERSHIP ROLE

The head of the school is by the very nature of his post thrust into a leadership position. As such leadership is a topic that concerns the selectors in many aspects of their work within the KwaZulu Education and Culture Department. In trying to understand the concept of "headship" or "principalship" in this research, it will help us to look at some of the current theories.

3.2.1 Leadership as qualities

One of the theories is that leadership is a matter of possessing certain characteristics such as intelligence, courage and strength of character. There is a great deal of literature based on this theory of leadership, and at certain times it seems that particular people who have the needed qualities come to the fore. However, there seems to be little agreement as to what these qualities are or scientific data to support the theory.

3.2.2 Leadership as a style

More focus has been on the 'style' of leadership, ranging from autocratic or authoritarian ... through democratic ... to *laissez faire*. Each style has its strengths and weaknesses.

(a) Autocratic

- * The power is vested in one person who tends to make all decisions;
- * The autocratic leader does not believe in delegation or sharing power with others.
- * Communication flows in one direction, from the leader to the people.
- * In the leader's absence chaos can reign.

(b) Democratic

- * Certain people are elected to represent the larger group and to act on their behalf.
- * Emphasizes participation in the process of planning, decision making and problem solving.
- * Communication pattern encourages free exchange of ideas.

(c) *Laissez faire*

- * This is a French term which means that the leader absolves himself/herself of responsibility to take any lead, resulting in members deciding for themselves individually.

- * In a positive sense this style means delegating through placing trust in one's co-workers.

3.2.3 Leadership as a function

Both the increasing emphasis on democratic participation and the increasing inability of any one person to perform all the needed functions of leadership in the complexities of our modern urban and industrial society, have shifted the focus of the concept of 'leadership' still further. The emphasis is now on 'leadership' as:

- (a) the performing of **need functions** in the context of the group, its need and situation.
- (b) as a process in which the members of the group participate as well as the designated 'leader', i.e. a concept of **shared leadership**.

Therefore in looking at a secondary school principal in a leadership role, as a function, he is seen as someone who does something rather than simply holds a position or title. The emphasis is placed upon what a person **does** rather than on what a person is. He is someone who does something in a group and he is not a particular designated person with certain qualities.

3.2.4 What is a principal of the secondary school in the KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture?

For the purposes of this research, principalship today is different and much more difficult than it was a decade ago. There is little resemblance between the duties, responsibilities and problems of a principal of a few years ago and those of today's principals. A principal here will refer to the incumbent of highest rank and designation within the school level with some functional leadership role, and what person is

considered to be the representative of the Executive Director/Deputy Chief Director in the case of KDEC, but also accountable to him. His roles therefore involve professional, organisational, administrative and pastoral duties. Significant changes have taken place in school organisation, teaching methods and instructional materials. The underlying reasons for these changes is the adaptation of the learning experience to the needs of the individual. The rapidity and complexity of the changes have placed new demands upon the principal as he seeks to involve his staff in adapting to the use of new techniques. If the principal is to assume the leadership role in the improvement of the educational reference for students and staff in his school, he needs professional study to become the change agent (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988: 33).

Once again in this research the principal of a secondary school in the KDEC is viewed as being a leader of a school. The community, teachers, students and KDEC expect the principal to lead. It is apparent that the question is not whether the principal of a secondary school must behave as a leader, rather it is a question of how shall he/she behave to be an effective leader.

The leadership of a principal in the KDEC is required on behalf of those youth who may be devalued by those factors around them by virtue of economics, language and/or disabilities, but who may have the potential for great contributions to our world. However, it is obvious that the old patterns of principal behaviour will not be sufficient to meet the new opportunities or challenges for leadership. The principal today and in future must increasingly be willing to prepare for wise and critical participation in a society characterised by conflict and chronic change and be successful in managing both conflict and change in his/her school respectively. The world around us is changing at an ever increasing rate. It is essential therefore that the principal should have a vision of what should be and what can be. Without this vision changes he/she makes are merely reactive (Owens, 1987: 300-205).

Furthermore, an effective principal of a secondary school will always frame goals, set standards, create a productive working environment and obtain needed support. No matter how the staff is organised, a major responsibility of the principal of a secondary school in the KDEC is to help staff and pupils to grow into an enthusiastic, hard working dynamic team. Unfortunately, this is a difficult task. Invariably it is a combination of many factors, having mostly to do with creative people on teaching learning programmes, and projects in a professional environment (Department of Education and Culture: Guide for Principals of Schools: ZE31: 1).

A principal of a secondary school must be aware that as a leader, he/she occupies a special place in the educational situation, that he, in the field of didactics, should dynamically indicate the course which his school should take with regard to educational innovations and staff development. For this reason it is of vital importance that he/she should be excellently framed for his/her role as a leader. Unfortunately, principals in the KDEC do not receive much training in those regions where training is done but mostly rely on trial and error. However, even though the situation in the KDEC is in such a shambles, the principal of a secondary school in the KDEC is amongst other things expected to:

- initiate improvements in teaching techniques and methods;
- ensure that curricula fit the needs of students;
- direct teachers to motivate students to learn at their optimal levels;
- afford teachers the opportunities to individualize programmes;
- direct teachers to coordinate and articulate the subject matter taught on each grade level;
- keep abreast of current curriculum trends;
- encourage teachers to evaluate themselves and provide assistance in evaluating their effectiveness;
- interpret general school goals to the staff;

- manage the teachers, determine teaching loads, class schedule and support personnel required for effective implementation and management of curricula.

In view of the above mentioned exposition of what the secondary school principal's role is, and what he/she stands for, it is therefore clear that a managerial perspective on the whole process of selecting and interviewing people for the post of a secondary school principal means that selection is tied to occupational performance, past and expected rather than on qualities approved for wider social purposes. Selection practices should not therefore be taken for granted but should be taken as an act of prediction and not a blind gamble by selectors of secondary school principals as is the case in the KDEC (Van der Westhuizen, 1991: 124).

3.3 HOW DOES A VACANCY OF PRINCIPALSHIP OCCUR IN THE KWAZULU DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Like in all education departments and in all worlds, selection and appointment to a post of principalship is made where a vacancy exists.

3.3.1 The existence of a secondary headship post in the KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture

Under the KDEC a vacancy for a secondary school principal exists when:

- a new school is established and the first post is that of principal. This post is always a permanent post;
- a principal has been transferred for reasons recommended by the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Senior Education Specialist (Assistant Director) and approved by the Director and Deputy Chief Director-General and approval confirmed by the Minister of the KDEC;

- the former principal has been promoted to a position considered higher in rank and status;
- a former principal has been demoted for reasons recommended by the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Chief Education Specialist and affirmed by the director and Deputy Chief Director-General and confirmed by the minister of the KDEC;
- the former principal has died through natural death or through accident;
- the former principal retires either prematurely due to ill-health or some other reasons or if he/she retires "legitimately due to age";
- the school is upgraded and the present incumbent does not have the necessary requirements for the level and purpose of the school

The post of secondary headship and a role the secondary school principal is very crucial because it exists for the fulfilment of job description for a school principal, i.e. he/she has to administer and supervise all activities and personnel within an assigned school toward the fullest possible development of the skills and motivations of each pupil and fulfilment as a reasonable and significant human being.

3.4 WHAT ARE THE TARGET PEOPLE FOR A POST OF A SECONDARY SCHOOL HEADSHIP IN THE KWAZULU DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE?

Once a post of a secondary school principal is vacant in the KDEC due to one or some of the reasons mentioned earlier, the Chief Education Specialist (Chief Inspector for the region (as there are four regions in the KDEC - with each under the control of the Chief Education Specialist (Chief Inspector/Assistant Director) is notified by the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist, Senior Deputy (Chief Education Specialist/Circuit

Inspector) of the area of the name of the secondary school, reason for the departure of the former principal, the level of the school (Junior or Senior secondary school) and the curriculum of the school, i.e. a school with general stream, science stream, commercial stream or technical stream or a school with two or more of the above mentioned streams of subjects. In turn the Chief Education Specialist notifies the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist when he could be available for interview which the KDEC so much depends upon before a post of secondary school principalship is advertised.

3.4.1 How is the post of a Secondary School principal advertised in the KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture

Once the Chief Education Specialist has mentioned the date on which he could be available for interviews, the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist can advertise the post through the press like *Ilanga* and *Natal Witness* as well as through circulars sent to as many circuits as he could afford to. In other words the target group is all teachers across the KDEC and Department of Education and Training. It is quite common nowadays to have as many secondary and primary school principalship posts advertised on the air through 'Ukhozi', a broadcasting Zulu Station especially in Durban.

However, if the former principal of the school with a vacant post has already left and the date scheduled for interviews is not within weeks, the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist has a responsibility to notify the deputy principal or Head of Department to run the school until a new principal is appointed (Department of Education and Culture (Guide for Principals of Schools: ZE 1: 13). This is done in writing and is coupled with an allowance when an acting principal is nominated by the local education authority. Mention should be made at this point in time that the presence of deputy principals and heads of department is mostly obtainable in urban

and semi-urban circuits. In rural circuits it is common that these are not obtainable and where they are available they are acting officials due to the fact that in some rural circuits it is difficult to have a bulk of teachers qualifying for promotional posts viz. principalships, deputy and head of departments where the academic qualification is a University Degree i.e. a degree with five teaching subjects - of which one should have been studied up to Course III and a professional certificate (especially a post matric professional qualification) and experience which is seven years. As has been mentioned, geographical factors differ, i.e. where it is difficult to meet the second requirement, five years is acceptable. Very rarely is less than five years teaching experience acceptable for a post of principalship. Again mention should be made here that in rural circuits it sometimes becomes difficult to have all vacant posts filled up by fully qualified incumbents, so people with more than six degree courses and, in the past, even those without were acceptable as acting principals if they satisfy the second requirements i.e. experience (NB. This is not written down as a natural procedure but Chief Education Specialists apply all their discretion whenever the regulation does not apply as long as they are able to back it up by motivation to the highest authorities of the bureaucracy and the KwaZulu Cabinet for understanding of Chief Education Specialist's actions).

3.4.2 Procedures once the Post has been advertised

When a vacancy for a post of a secondary school principal in the KDEC occurs, it is analyzed and a job description is compiled. Unfortunately the criteria for the selection are never determined but the job is advertised by the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist through the press i.e. *Ilanga* and *Natal Witness*, circulars and to a very limited degree on the air as indicated above.

However, in the advertisement, the following is included:

- the number of principalship posts;
- requirements in terms of academic and professional qualifications, i.e. a recognised degree with five teaching subjects plus a professional certificate and eight year's teaching experience in a post primary school. (However, mention should be made here that where geographical problems of having teachers meeting these requirements, this procedure only remains on paper but in actual situation people with less requirements do apply and they are considered for a post of secondary school principalship in the KDEC on the recommendation made by Chief Education Specialists to save the situation).

As a procedure, and unlike other education departments in South Africa who supply application forms on request, applicants first send their letters of application to the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist, written in their own handwriting or typed, accompanied by:

- Curriculum vitae
- Two or three recent testimonials or names and particulars of not more than three referees who may offer testimony on the applicants' behalf. Two should be either their employer or immediate supervisor;
- Certified copies of academic and professional certificates.

Furthermore, on the advertisement for the post of headship in KDEC secondary schools, the closing date for the submission of applications is mentioned. The date for holding interviews is also mentioned in the advertisement (Refer to ZE 143 attached - Appendix B).

Then, after the closing date for the submission of applications, the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist replies to those who meet the requirements. In his reply, he should inform the applicants of the date and time of the interview, as well as including the application form ZE 143 to be filled in by applicants. These application forms ZE 143 could be brought back at any date before the date of an interview or the applicants can post the application forms or bring them along when they present themselves for an interview to be forwarded to the two-man panel consisting of the Chief Education Specialist and the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist before interviews commence.

General application forms accompanied by a letter of application are then compiled at this stage. As both should be structured in such a way as to obtain as much relevant information as possible, it is unfortunate that non-job specific application forms such as those used by the KDEC do not fulfil the function. Furthermore the KDEC requires a reference or references but no reference request form has been designed for this purpose. Consequently, the absence of pre-structuring of a letter of application by the KDEC makes comparison between the candidates' answers difficult and thus shifts the focus to more easily discerned features of their presentation, e.g. handwriting, spelling and style, which then detract from the content of what they say (Morgan *et al.*, 1983: 43).

Concurrently with the compilation of a job description, the selectors must also establish the criteria for selection. However, in the KDEC, the selectors (Chief Education Specialist and the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist) take decisions according to individual selectors' opinions and stereotypes. In the absence of established criteria, the selectors in the KDEC tend to judge candidates purely on their performance in the interview, i.e. according to their perceived personality (Morgan *et al.*, 1983: 61-63). However, headteacher selection has to combine democratic control with technical efficiency. Further, this democratic control is unusual in that it is exercised by the two

selectors - the only members of the selection panel is unspecified and varies between authorities and selection stages. The assessment of skills used for selection does not test both latent and developed abilities, as not all candidates have identical previous experience. However, at this stage a number of administrative and other arrangements should be made. Unfortunately, this is not the case with the KDEC.

Finally, as has been mentioned, the lack of selectors' basic technical knowledge of selection techniques mitigates against an understanding and acceptance of better selection principles and methods in the KDEC. Selectors appear to make judgements about who are the better headteachers of those they have known, and from this experience form stereotypes, based on personality traits, of good and bad heads. Yet apart from the fact that there has been no appraisal of headteacher effectiveness, the selectors' knowledge of secondary schools' heads is, as has been pointed out, partial. Given the nature of this partiality, it is not surprising that selectors of the secondary school principals in the KDEC are found to place too much emphasis on personality. Consequently to discover whether candidates fit this image, the tendency is to rely primarily on feel, impression and hunch judgement.

3.5. THE INITIAL ASSESSMENT

This is an important stage which should function to use the documents and to provide a long list of candidates. Once the applications have been received, they are sifted by the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist (on behalf of the selection panel), to decide which are sufficiently interesting to warrant getting further information about the candidates in the KDEC.

3.5.1 Documents

It is important to note that documents are useful in identifying those who are right outside the list of possible people. This may include people over and under a certain

age or without appropriate experience or qualifications. One should be ruthless at this stage in taking out applications which do measure up to the specifications. Even if there are very few applications the selectors in the KDEC should think very carefully before pursuing someone who is not qualified by experience and knowledge for the job of secondary school principalship.

Furthermore, the confidential report is another piece of evidence to pursue in making a selection in the KDEC. If it is possible there is much to be said for asking some specific questions. If the school wants someone in a management role, there is sense in asking about experience of working with adults and skill relating to them. It is wise to get more than one report as is the case with most advertisements in the KDEC, that at least two references are asked, at least one should be from the employer (refer to Application form ZE 143; No. 10 in Appendix B). However, it is unfortunate and regretted that in the KDEC secondary school principalship selection we find that references have made no impact on the relevance of the information needed to continue with the selection process because referees are not guided especially by the application forms as to what relevant information is needed to help the selectors do their selection effectively.

Although the main principles to be followed in drawing up an application form are that it should be adequate and appropriate to the post for which it is intended, an application form in the KDEC does not allow selectors to differentiate between candidates on job related factors. Furthermore, while the application form does to a certain degree allow the candidates' answers to be assessed on some questions at least, it does not provide candidates with adequate opportunity to make available all the information required by the selectors i.e. to be specified to the type of job to be filled.

Furthermore, in terms of construction principles, the application form in the KDEC does not first ask questions that are relevant to the post being filled. The form in particular is neither adequate nor appropriate, for example, in the case of secondary headship. To use general application forms which make no distinction between applicants for their first teaching post and those who are reaching the apex of their school careers (promotional posts - headships, deputy and Head of Departments), as is the case with the KDEC in the form ZE 143 (KwaZulu), is unsatisfactory. Secondly, the application form (ZE 143) does not distinguish between questions requesting biographical information and those seeking to elicit an applicants' analysis and understanding of key educational issues or matters of school management. Consequently, these latter issues often not sought by asking candidates to write 'a letter of application' for which space is provided in the form in the KDEC but are rather constructed in the application form on the basis of:

- (a) necessary biographical items; and
- (b) some structured questions that are job-related.

(Refer ZE 143, KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture).

However, the good application form will have inputs from a professional selector, who knows what questions to ask and what wording to use: and also an Administrator who will ensure that the form fits the authority's printing, reproduction and work keeping facilities (Morgan *et al.*, 1983: 30-32).

As has been said earlier, the assessment stage functions to use the documents submitted and to prepare a long list of candidates. We find that questions asked on the application form are not well structured but all answers are assessed, graded and then the information obtained is used to compare the candidates as to job-description and job relatedness. Here too we find that the KDEC falls too short of the above because of the absence of some of the important strategies that can be used to measure the

level of development of "skills and knowledge" in areas identified by job-description of a secondary school principal (See the Appendix B).

3.6 THE INTERVIEW

The actual selection procedure should be designed to elicit as much relevant information as possible from each candidate. Thus, the interview should be planned with this in mind. However, in many developed countries like England and Wales as well as in South Africa, it is traditional to have one interview for applicants for primary school principalship posts, while for secondary schools, two interviews should be traditionally held; the first for all the candidates on a long list, and the second to make an overall assessment and select the successful candidate. Another pitfall for the KDEC's selection procedure is that it has only one interview even for secondary school principals. As this education department tends to limit the selection procedures to interviewing, there is no reason why other ways of selection should not be employed. For instance, where a candidate has applied for a management post, the candidate might be asked to chair a short discussion on a topic involving all the candidates. This will elicit information from anyone as part of the group, but also give information about the state of the group chairman.

3.6.1 The first and the final interview

For the purposes of stressing the procedure in the KDEC during the selection process of secondary school principals, it is important to mention that whatever selection procedures are used, the KDEC has made it a point that an interview as one of the selection stages is included. Although an interview is not the only way to get the necessary information, it gives the KDEC's selection panel, a candidate's an opportunity to play a part in the selection. This means that each candidate is interviewed for longer and there is therefore more information available on which the panel and specifically the Chief Education Specialist, can make a decision.

However, in selection, interviewing as in short-listing people, the KDEC selectors have to guard against their own reactions and prejudices. It is of course important that the Chief Education Specialist, as the leader of the panel, conducts interviews with the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist whom he feels can do the work, but it is easy to be attracted to an exciting candidate and turn aside a less exciting candidate who could actually bring far more to the job. It is therefore important that the Chief Education Specialist of the KDEC should know his own temptations and weaknesses as the main selector. Furthermore at the interview, the same basic rules of selection procedure apply to ensure that the interview fulfils its function, i.e. to provide valid information. Unfortunately, interviews alone and especially at the exclusion of analogous tests and school visits, fail to ensure that selectors make an informed decision of who is best able to fill the job as well as best able to perform the job. While interviews confirm biographical details, assess technical knowledge and experience and to a limited extent, assess verbal skills and intellectual ability, they may also determine attitudes, job relevant interests and personal energy but they cannot assess job-related skills especially when only interviews are used as a selection device. Unfortunately, interviews are misleading and falsifying in the KDEC, when 'interviews' tend to be the most dominating strategy for headteacher selection. As a whole, the interview maximises visual and impression factors and hence decisions tend to mirror the values of the selectors in this education department (Morgan *et al.*, 1983: 37-38).

Though the number of selectors at an interview in the KDEC are kept at a minimum, two selectors are rather too few to effect a reasonable panel because a legitimate selection committee has to go through a number of mechanisms, some of which require a lot of specialisation. Again selectors in the KDEC are not all trained to use open-ended questions which are not leading or ambiguous, and which ask only one question at a time.

Before the interview session starts, the selectors (Chief Education Specialist and the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist) should meet to determine the purpose, format and content of the interview. They should meet to decide what information they require in addition to the biographical information they have. Although questioning must be allocated to the selectors according to their knowledge and expertise, so that each selector can prepare his questions in advance, questioning is mostly done by the Chief Education Specialist and the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist records down on paper the scores of the candidates. An assessment sheet to be used by both selectors is drawn up to enable the recording of the grades indicating the job knowledge, experience and other job-related activities of the candidates. It is essential that each selector makes notes during the interview as this practice puts the selectors in a better position to present a more coherent case for and against different candidates at the time of the final decision (Morgan *et al.*, 1983: 85).

3.7 THE EXTENDED ASSESSMENT PROFILE

In the KDEC an extended assessment profile is compiled and distributed between the two selectors at the interview which is the first and final. This contains a summary of the candidate's performances at all the activities conducted so far and it also enables the selectors to get an overall picture of all the relevant aspects of all the candidates.

3.8 THE FINAL DECISION

At the end of the day a decision has to be made by the selection panel of the KDEC in the light of evidence available though scanty as some crucial stages have been omitted. However, reaching a final decision by the selection committee of the KDEC is a haphazard process when actually the whole process of the selection of secondary school principals rests on the "interview" at the exclusion of the stages that could help to make sure that it could be characteristic that the selected candidate will do the job he/she has been selected for (i.e. the exclusion of stages such as school visit,

analogous tests and rational final decision making). Unfortunately, the Chairman of the Selection Committee does not ensure that the final discussions conducted in such a way that the decision is made in a rational and methodical fashion.

The Chairman of the Selection Committee of the KDEC, as would be the case with most other education departments in South Africa and England and Wales, should review the information regarding the post to be filled and the abilities and skills required for a candidate to fill the post successfully. It seems unlikely for the selection committee in the KDEC to select the candidate that they can predict will best do the job except through chance, in view of the exclusion of so many stages that could provide enough evidence for the selectors to select a candidate that will resemble the desired candidate in terms of school needs.

3.9 INFORMING THE CANDIDATES OF THE RESULTS

The candidates in the KDEC are informed by post of the decision of the panel of selectors. However, following the candidate's written acceptance of the post, the unsuccessful candidates are never informed of the results of the selection and the unsuccessful candidates are not thanked for having shown interest in the vacant post. No feedback on the performance of candidates during the selection, especially during the interview, is given. This is one stage the selectors in the KDEC never do. Candidates wait for a long time anxious to know the outcome of the selection programme they entered for. It is only when they hear through scrap information or find when schools re-open that the post has been filled, that they were not successful.

Any statement made to the successful candidates about salary responsibilities in the KDEC may be regarded as legally binding so it is important that any information given is correct. All the information from the interview and elsewhere is kept safe for a period in case queries arise by the selection Committee in the KDEC. The papers of the

successful candidate become the starting point for his personal file giving information on which his further professional development can be based.

3.10 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

Something worth noting about the selection of principals of secondary schools in the KDEC is that the proof of the effectiveness of any selection process is not only in the quality of the staff built up over time, but also in the extent to which one gets surprises. In the ideal situation, a selector should have a good idea at the end of the day of the kind of person he is getting. It is useful to review notes made during or immediately after the interview say after six months to see how far the picture formed of the person appointed was an accurate one. However, this is never done by the selection panel of the KDEC. Furthermore, once a person has been selected no follow-up is done on the person except the inauguration programme which is organised by the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Chief Education Specialist) and his local authority officers. Lastly, not all Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialists in the KDEC do the inauguration of newly appointed principals of secondary schools in their areas.

The following chapter will explain in detail the research design and procedures that will be followed in investigating the selection procedure in the KDEC for the post of principalship.

CHAPTER FOUR

DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH AND RESEARCH METHODS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the selection process for the KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture (KDEC) was reviewed, as objectively as possible, in its 'ideal' form. This chapter is devoted to a specification of the directions for research and to a description of the research methods employed in the study. Essentially, the underlying purpose of the empirical part of the study was to test the 'ideal' selection process operating in the KDEC against the opinions of a group of inspectors and secondary school principals.

4.2 DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

As has been indicated earlier in this study, research suggests that, in many parts of the world, the processes whereby school principals, and other senior staff, are selected for appointment have received little attention. Where such attention has been addressed to the process, many weaknesses have been identified.

When the 'ideal' process, operating in the KDEC, was examined in the previous chapter, it was found, either by direct evidence or inference, that, when weighed against the evidence and suggestions derived from the POST project, the KDEC process also appeared to be characterised by considerable limitations.

The empirical part of this study was intended to explore further the limitations of the KDEC process by seeking the opinions about the process of certain key role players. In particular, opinion was sought from a selection of school inspectors and school

principals. It is suggested that, by definition, these respondents are well placed to express opinions in so far as, in different ways, each has had experience of the process, either as selectors or selectees.

The ultimate aim of the study, as indicated in Chapter One is, on the basis of overseas research and the observations and opinions of employees in the KDEC, to assess critically the KDEC process and to recommend adjustments to the process, which might result in improvements. In this broad context, the specific directions for the empirical part of the study focused on the following aims, which derive largely from concerns addressed in the POST project, conducted in England and Wales, and which were considered in Chapter Two:

- 1) To investigate the occurrence of vacancies for principalship in the KDEC;
- 2) To establish the nature and composition of the selection committee in the KDEC;
- 3) To establish how secondary school principalship vacancies are advertised in the KDEC;
- 4) To establish who are the target group for principalship appointments;
- 5) To establish what procedures are followed by the KDEC once a post of principalship has been advertised;
- 6) To establish what documents are used during the initial assessment of candidates, constituting the 'long list';
- 7) To establish what procedures are followed during interviews in order to elicit as much relevant information as possible for each candidate;

- 8) To establish how an extended assessment profile is compiled and used by the selectors;
- 9) To ascertain how the selection committee arrives at a final decision;
- 10) To ascertain how successful and unsuccessful candidates are informed of the decision of the selectors.

The methods employed to access opinions of inspectors and principals related to the above issues are now described.

4.3 RESEARCH METHODS

Having reviewed a range of possible research methods, as identified and discussed by Tuckman (1972) and Wiersma (1991), the decision was taken to use interviews and a mailed questionnaire as the most appropriate methods to access the opinions of inspectors and principals in this study.

4.3.1 Sample

Slavin (1984: 98) observes that a fundamentally important aspect of research design, especially in survey research, is the determination of an appropriate sample. However, in the research process the problem for the researcher is always to achieve the best possible design decision, taking into account all constraints. In reality, the final decision usually represents a compromise between the ideal and what is possible.

In the present study, the ideal approach to the acquisition of data in respect of the views of school principals would probably have involved drawing a representative sample from among the nearly 800 post-primary schools in the KDEC. Similarly, such a procedure probably would have been optimal for selecting inspectors for interview.

However, taking into account constraints experienced by the researcher in respect of time, money and the nature of his own work situation, the decision was taken to restrict the focus of research to a single circuit within the KDEC. This circuit was the Mpumalanga Circuit, which is the circuit in which the researcher himself works as an inspector. At the time of the research, there were 35 post-primary schools in the circuit, and the circuit was managed by a circuit inspector (SDCES) and five ward inspectors (DCES).

It is acknowledged that, by restricting the research to inspectors and principals within a single circuit, considerable limitations are imposed in respect of the generalisability of the findings and that the recommendations emanating from the study may be regarded as no more than tentative. In particular, it is noted that the experiences of the selection process are likely to vary considerably between those whose work experience has been substantially or exclusively in urban and peri-urban school contexts, and those whose experience has been limited to working in rural areas where, among other things, selection criteria for principalship are often compromised out of necessity.

However, the decision to restrict the study to employees in the Mpumalanga Circuit was induced by real constraints and, although not entirely satisfactory, may be justified by the fact that the study is intended to be no more than an exploratory and very small-scale study.

4.3.2 Data collection

Data were collected from inspectors and principals respectively using interviews and mailed questionnaires. In the case of the inspectors, the interview was considered appropriate as the group was small and each member was easily accessible in the circuit office. In the case of the 35 school principals, in view of their geographical distribution, the use of a mailed questionnaire seemed both appropriate and justified.

4.3.3 The interviews

The interviews conducted with members of the inspectorate were largely unstructured, although a loose structure was sustained for the purposes of comparability of response. An indication of this loose structuring will be apparent from the reporting of the products of interviewing, reported in the next chapter.

4.3.4 The questionnaire

A questionnaire was designed, taking into account the guidelines for the construction of mailed questionnaires and methods for enhancing response rates identified by Cohen and Manion (1989). The structure of the questionnaire is discussed later in this chapter.

4.3.5 Pretesting the questionnaire

In view of the researcher's intention to administer the questionnaire to every principal in the Mpumalanga Circuit, it was not considered feasible to pretest the instrument on this group. However, the researcher did discuss the content and structure of the questionnaire with a small group of principals from outside the circuit, and with inspector colleagues. As a result of this exercise, few ambiguities were found and minimal adjustments were needed to the questionnaire.

4.3.6 Response

The researcher succeeded in conducting interviews with each member of the inspectorate and received returns from each of the 35 school principals in the circuit's post-primary schools. Thus, in respect of each group the response rate was 100%, although, as will be demonstrated, not every item in the questionnaire received a response.

4.4 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

A full version of the questionnaire, together with a copy of the covering letter sent to principals appear in Appendices C and D. This section simply describes the structure of the questionnaire and sets out the intended purposes of each part.

The questionnaire comprised eight pages and was subdivided into three parts.

Part 1 contained questions related to the principal him/herself. The underlying intention for the items was to obtain data which might have some bearing on the analysis of data. In particular, the 12 items in Part 1 sought information on such matters as:

- The name and type of school;
- The age and gender of the respondents;
- Length of teaching experience and experience in different types of schools;
- Number of principalships held and types of school in respect of these;
- Length of experience in present school;
- Qualifications of respondents.

In effect, the items in Part 1 covered the conventional biographical data frequently sought in mailed questionnaire, which may or may not have value in data analysis.

Part 2 of the questionnaire contained nine questions of an open-ended nature, and two of the questions (20 and 21) were subdivided into two parts. The underlying intention of the questions in Part 2 was to elicit the opinions of respondents in relation to certain pre-identified aspects of the current selection process. In particular, these questions related to the following:

- How potential candidates learn about vacancies;
- How potential applicants go about applying for vacant posts;
- What documents had to be submitted in respect of applications;

- What references, if any, were required;
- The interview, if any;
- The availability of specific job-descriptions;
- The interview experience;
- Familiarity with the school where the vacancy occurred: school visits;
- Method and timing of being informed about outcome of application.

The above items were derived as a result of a consideration of the overseas research and a review of the 'ideal' process, operating in the KDEC.

Part 3 of the questionnaire comprised two pages and two items. The purpose of items 22 and 23 was to provide respondents with an opportunity first to articulate criticisms of the selection process as they had experienced it and, secondly, for them to advance ideas or suggestions as to how the process of selection of school principals might be improved.

4.5 CONCLUSION

Following a broad review of some overseas research (Chapter Two) and a consideration of the process of selection of principals, as it supposedly operates in the KDEC (Chapter Three), this chapter has attempted to summarise the specific focus for the empirical part of the study and delineate the directions for research. This has been followed by a brief review of the choice and application of research methods employed to obtain data required to address the issues raised under directions for research. In the next chapter, the products of the research will be presented and discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH DATA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter data will be analyzed. These data were obtained through interviews with the head of the selection committee (the Chief Education Specialist) of the KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture (KDEC), stationed at Ulundi and the Mpumalanga circuit office inspectors. Additional information was also obtained through questionnaires administered to principals of post-primary schools, of which 35 were analyzed and interpreted. These instruments sought to obtain data on opinions about the provision and effectiveness of the selection process of secondary school principals in the KDEC.

5.2 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA OBTAINED FROM INTERVIEWS WITH THE HEAD OF THE SELECTION COMMITTEE AND LOCAL INSPECTORS

5.2.1 Interviews with Chief Education Specialist (head of selection committee)

Two interviews were conducted on two different dates with the head of the region (Midlands region), the Chief Education Specialist and the local inspectors of Mpumalanga circuit office. We will look at the broad format of questions asked, why they were asked, the responses given and the analysis and interpretation of responses.

5.2.2 Staffing and organisation

a) How is the selection committee organized?

This question was based on the fact that the successful administration and management of secondary school principals in the KDEC would, to a large extent, depend on the existence of a skilful selection committee manned by skilful selectors.

The selection committee leader outlined the following: The committee consists of only two officials, i.e. Chief Education Specialist for the region and the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist (for both post-primary schools and colleges of education).

The Head indicated that the panel is still very much incomplete. There was a need to consider more people to be included on this committee, viz. education specialists, as the principal is going to work with them, parents' representatives, Deputy Chief Education Specialists and outgoing principals.

(b) Does your selection committee serve all categories of schooling, i.e. primary schools, secondary schools and colleges of education?

The question was asked in order to assess the amount of work the selection committee has in terms of the numbers and types of institutions it serves, as well as the grades of the institutions.

The respondent answered in the affirmative. According to the KDEC (1991: 59), in 1991 KwaZulu had a total of 3 152 educational institutions of all types, excluding industrial schools, technicons, nursery schools and pre-primary schools.

However, of the above 3 152 institutions, the head of the selection committee has to service more than 780 institutions in his region which comprised six big circuits.

KDEC had four Chief Education Specialists in 1992. The ratio of Chief Education Specialists to schools was 1:788.

The above mentioned ratio suggests that the heads of selection committees have each too many institutions to offer service to. This is contrary to earlier evidence which suggests that effectiveness of the selection committee will depend on careful planning for the selection process, especially for secondary school principals. The Chief Education Specialist has limited available time and, as a result, the selection programme is fitted in between other activities in his programme without thorough preparation.

- (c) Does your selection committee cope with the big size of the education department in terms of the large number of institutions?

The aim was to determine if KDEC had enough administrative personnel to deliver the services to the schools in the various regions. The respondent answered that the selection committee definitely had a shortage of staff. A number of factors came to light:

- 1) The selection committee itself was a one-man committee supported by the co-option of the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist. The respondent said that this committee needed at least five members. The KDEC needed to create posts for a single selection committee of principals, deputy principals and heads of departments in the secondary schools for all post-primary schools, irrespective of the region.

- 2) The situation is worsened by the shortage of administrative staff and officers in specialised fields as support systems in order for the committee to be able to select a suitable principal, with a balanced knowledge of how he is expected to manage the school in accordance with the objectives of the KDEC as an organisation, as well as the expectations of the parents, teachers, pupils and the community.

The respondent acknowledged that his committee could not cope with the big size of the education department in terms of the large numbers of schools. Because of this, the head of the selection committee recommended the subdivision of big circuits, reduction of circuits in each region and an increase in administration personnel. But, for selection purposes, he recommended a single selection committee for all promotional posts in the KDEC, or a regional selection committee for all promotional posts. He suggested that this would ensure that there is uniformity and consistency in the selection of secondary school principals in the KDEC.

5.3 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA OBTAINED FROM INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL INSPECTORS

Although local inspectors, except for the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist, are not directly involved in the selection of principals of secondary schools in the KDEC, interviews were also conducted with them in order to get information to identify their opinions as well as their perception of the selection process. This was done to provide an opportunity for them to express their views or opinions about the current selection process and to give them a chance to suggest ideas for its improvement. These interviews included the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist as well, despite the fact that he serves in the selection committee directly. Broadly, the following questions were asked of the local inspectors in guiding their interviews.

- (a) In respect of your circuit, what happens when a post of secondary school headship occurs?

This question was asked in order to assess what steps the circuit office takes to inform potential candidates about the vacant post. In response to the above question, local inspectors mentioned that once the post is vacant, the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist advertises the post through the media, especially the South African Broadcasting Corporation (Radio Zulu), Durban, and *Ilanga*, also in Durban, and of course through circulars which are sent to schools within the circuit and some circulars which are sent to other circuits. Following from what they have said, it therefore becomes clear that the post is advertised before it is analyzed, before the job description is compiled and before the criteria for selection are determined by the selection committee. This is contrary to recommendations for good practice, reported earlier (Morgan *et al.*, 1983: 94).

- (b) What is the first step in receiving applications for a vacant post?

This question was asked in order to find out whether, when a post is advertised, the Senior Deputy Chief Education Specialist puts out guidelines on how candidates should apply.

To the above question, local inspectors explained that in the KDEC candidates first write applications in their own handwriting where they indicate their qualifications, experience and the number of schools at which they have taught, including circuits, before they are given formal application form ZE 143, as specified in the circular for a vacant post.

However, this procedure is different from many other education departments, where applications are just made on an application form right from the beginning,

which give guidelines to every aspect needed. Mention should be made here that unfortunately application form ZE 143 falls short in respect of proper guidelines.

(c) What documents are expected from the candidates applying for a vacant post of secondary school principalship?

This question was asked to ascertain if the inspectors know the type of documents required when applications are made for a principalship post and whether they still remember the documents they submitted when they were principals themselves; if there are some which were not submitted in the past, which ones have been added, and of what relevance and improvement have they brought to the efficiency of the current principals?

Here inspectors indicated that the following documents are expected:

- 1) A junior degree or senior degree certificate(s)
- 2) A professional certificate(s)
- 3) A curriculum vitae
- 4) A certificate of service
- 5) Two testimonials, i.e. (i) one from the immediate superior, and (ii) one from either a minister of religion or a prominent member of the community.

The above is not entirely in line with previously reported good practice because the absence of specified structuring of the letter of application makes comparison between the candidates' answers difficult and shifts the focus to more easily discerned features of their presentation, i.e. handwriting, spelling and style, which detract from the content of what they actually say (Morgan *et al.*, 1983: 43).

(d) Do you require applicants to submit references with their application forms?

This question was asked in order to ascertain how much the local inspectors are aware of how the references are submitted and what they would like to see improving.

In response to the above question the inspectors replied affirmatively that normally references are expected with the applications of candidates. This is seen to be a formality which does not serve any valuable purpose because, in the first instance, people who write references do not know much about the candidates in connection with what a person is actually going to do as a principal. Secondly, because of lack of structured forms which would guide them, referees tend to write references which do not assist much in the selection process (Morgan *et al.*, 1983: 27). Consequently, it is doubtful if the selection committee can rely very much on references.

(e) Does your circuit invite candidates to visit schools before they are interviewed?

This question was asked in order to find out if inspectors are aware of any provision for school visits prior to the final interviewing of candidates and what their view and opinion is about school visits before final interviews.

On the above question the inspectors indicated that no candidate has ever been assisted to visit the school, probably because it might be very difficult to know which one he or she may be selected for, as in most cases advertisements involve a number of schools. This is contrary to good practice suggested earlier.

- (f) How does your circuit office inform successful and unsuccessful candidates of the results of the selection process?

This question was asked in order to find out if inspectors are aware of any procedure followed in the KDEC with regard to the notification of both successful and unsuccessful candidates of the results of the selection process.

The inspectors responded by saying that there is no formal procedure followed but each circuit can devise its own procedure, like designating a form, e.g. Ref. No. 4/2/3/1, to be sent to all candidates for them to call at the circuit office. They also are given another local form, e.g. Ref. 4/2/3/5, where they could be told that they were successful in the interview and that they will be posted to a particular school with effect from a given date. The unsuccessful applicants are also sent telegrams notifying them of being unsuccessful. While notification of successful and unsuccessful candidates is undertaken in this department, sending telegrams to unsuccessful ones is less than satisfactory in so far as unsuccessful candidates cannot learn how they fell short so that they may learn for next time. For selection to be effective, at the end of it all it should be educative (Morgan *et al.*, 1984: 73-89).

- (g) How long after the closing date for applications do you inform the candidates of the results of the selection process?

This question was asked in order to ascertain how long it takes before an appointment and placement are made after the selection process is completed, whether it is:

1. Within a week	-
2. Within two weeks	-
3. Within three weeks	3
4. Within four weeks (1 month)	1
5. After four weeks (1 month +)	-

With reference to the response, three out of four inspectors indicated that in most cases the response from Head Office, Ulundi, from the Chief Education Specialist, who serves as a Head of the selection committee, only comes after three or four weeks, which is quite a long time for the candidates to wait for a response.

(h) Can you enumerate any problems you think affect the selection process in the Department of Education and Culture?

The following responses were obtained:

- (i) When a vacancy for a post of headship occurs, Deputy Chief Education Specialists, who are directly working with the schools, are never consulted to give their input into the formation and analysis of a post for a particular school. In support of this point the inspectors expressed the view that they consider the selection committee of two as inadequate. At least Deputy Chief Education Specialists, committee board members or parents should be represented. Though they could not agree on representation of teachers and pupils, they suggested that inspectors in specialised fields, like auxiliary services and adult education, should be represented in order to attempt to select a principal who is holistic. Furthermore, while it is accepted that the selection committee works better if kept small, two people are considered to be too few to effect proper and effective decisions and at the same time apply both 'declaration' and 'voting' as procedures

for taking decisions. What actually happens in the selection procedure in the KDEC is that declaration, especially by the Chief Education Specialist, is the order of the day when decisions have to be taken towards finding a suitable candidate for the post of a secondary school principal.

- (ii) Advertisement of the post: Candidates are often given very short time between publication of the advertisement of the post and the due date for receipt of applications, in which to prepare their applications.
- (iii) Furthermore, the applications are not necessarily the same for all posts, as different posts can require different emphases in the application form. Candidates are thus disadvantaged. This can be exacerbated by the fact that the advertising circular is sent to the principal each time there is a vacancy, who then passes it on to the staff at his own convenience.
- (iv) Application forms are completed by all applicants for all posts, above level one, which ask for biographical details, a list of previous posts held, as well as details of current educational, administrative and organisational responsibilities, professional activities, professional developments, community activities and relevant information. Furthermore, candidates are asked why they believe they are eligible for promotion to the post in the KDEC. This becomes a daunting task for any person, especially one without experience of completing such forms.

- (v) Another problem that can be levelled against the selection process is that if the candidates fill in their application forms badly, and never reached the short listing stage, or are never appointed as a result of the biased impression created by their application forms, they are never given any feedback on their errors or shortcomings, thus reducing their chances of improving upon these. Thus candidates who might admirably fill senior posts might never achieve such a position, merely because of poorly completed application forms and bad handwriting.
- (vi) Another problem that affects the selection process is possible androcentric bias in the selection committee and this affects the education system negatively (Shakeshaft and Hanson, 1986: 68-82). Selectors have a tendency to choose candidates who fit their stereotypes of appropriate school managers. Women have to fare much better than their male counterparts in order to be considered for selection. It is therefore important that some women are involved in the selection process and that all selectors be sensitised to potential sex bias in such a way as to reduce bias in the selection process.
- (vii) Another problem that can be levelled against the selection process is that selection tends to stress individuality and personality, thus displacing specific management competence. Therefore with such emphasis, the bases of elimination and selection remain undefined and promotion may depend on patronage in the KDEC rather than on possession of required skills to perform the job, as opposed to the selection of senior managers who are competent in the context of the secondary school principal's role. Although the democratic control of

procedures is an added complexity, it should not, and does not have to detract from rigorous technical assessment.

- (viii) The selection committee, in its selection process, does not actually explain the nature of the school for which the principal is sought or send candidates on school visits before they are subjected to final interviews. Neither does it make use of references which are well structured from reliable people who are doing the job, such as the supervising principals of the candidates applying for the post of principal. These are not considered by the panel. Only interviews decide the fate of candidates who have applied for the vacant post. However, this is due to the fact that not enough time is made available for the selection process by the officers in charge of selection in the KDEC, because the same officers have too many other responsibilities to fulfil. To this, research on the selection of senior staff suggests that if the process is to be effective, it will be time consuming, and on-going, (i.e. selectors must from the start of the process of selection, have adequate time set aside and agreed on dates to handle the procedures necessary). Here the selection committee of the KDEC handle the process contrary to reported good practice (Morgan *et al.*, 1983: 27).
- (ix) With regard to the analysis of the vacancy, the selection committee hardly assesses the present school situation and does not consult other people involved with the school, like Deputy Chief Education Specialists, committee board members (chairperson), deputy principal, teachers, etc. The selection committee rarely looks at opportunities the new post may afford. The committee hardly talks to the outgoing principal to find out what he currently does, so as to be able to project

the school's needs as well as the type of person who could fit into such a school, (i.e. the selection committee of the KDEC does not look at where the school is going so as to be able to assess the school's needs, viz. to redefine the post).

- (x) While both successful and unsuccessful candidates should be informed by post of the results of the decision of the selection panel, the latter after the former has accepted the post, unfortunately it takes too long before the decision is known in the KDEC. This is regretted especially because advertisements are mostly placed when the former incumbent has already left and almost two months pass before the principal post is filled. That is too long for a secondary school to be without a principal.

In summary, all four respondents stated that the selection process is presently not effective, due to problems such as those reported above.

The acknowledgement of weaknesses of the selection process in the KDEC by inspectors corroborates a similar acknowledgement by the Chief Education Specialist, as reported.

5.4 ANALYSIS OF DATA OBTAINED FROM PRINCIPALS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The data reported in this section were obtained from responses to items in a questionnaire administered to thirty-five post-primary (secondary) school principals in the Mpumalanga Circuit (see Appendix D). As indicated earlier, the questionnaire was structured in three parts. The first part sought information of a biographical nature, which was intended to be used in identifying potential variations in the pattern of

responses in parts two and three. The second part contained directed questions, related to defined aspects of the application and selection processes. The third part of the questionnaire was intended to obtain information about the principals' criticisms of the existing selection process, together with their views on possible improvements. In this section, data obtained are considered with reference to the structure of the questionnaire.

5.4.1 Part One of the questionnaire

As indicated above, and elsewhere, the items in this part of the questionnaire were designed to obtain biographical data, including such related to experience as a principal, gender, qualifications and age. It was not intended that the data should be used to create a profile of the respondents, but rather the information obtained was intended to be used to discover if any of the biographical 'patterns' that might emerge could be related to differences in response patterns.

However, when the responses to each of the items contained in Parts Two and Three of the questionnaire were examined, with reference to the biographical data, no consistent or notable differences were found. Consequently, and regrettably, the biographical data obtained proved to be redundant in respect of the purposes of this study, and will receive no further attention in this part of the chapter.

5.4.2 Part Two of the questionnaire

The nine items in Part Two of the questionnaire were designed to identify the opinions of principals about various aspects of the current selection process. The data obtained are reported in the same order as the relevant items appear in the questionnaire (see Appendix D). Responses were received from all 35 principals, although not all principals responded to every item. The number of principals responding to each item

are indicated below each table and percentages shown in each table are calculated on the basis of the actual number of principals responding.

5.4.2.1 Advertisement of vacant posts

Item 13 in the questionnaire asked principals to indicate how they found out about the vacant principalship. Responses to this item are summarised in Table 5.1.

TABLE 5.1: Sources of information about vacant posts

SOURCE	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Media: newspapers and/or radio	8	23,5
Circulars	21	61,8
Routine transfers	5	14,7

n = 34

The data show that 14,7% of the principals obtained their present posts through routine transfers. This means that they were either transferred at their personal request or in the interest of the specific school. Over 23% of the principals learned of the vacancy for the principalship of their present post through the media. This means that the post was either advertised through the press (*Ilanga*) or on the air (i.e. SABC (*Ukhoz*) Durban). However, it is clear that the great majority of the principals learned of the vacancy through circulars which are sent to schools inside and outside the circuits.

5.4.2.2 Method of applying for vacant posts

Item 14 of the questionnaire asked principals to say how they went about applying for their present posts, once they had learned of a vacancy. Responses to this item are recorded in Table 5.2.

TABLE 5.2: Method of applying for post

METHOD	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Cross-transfer	2	6,1
Straight transfer	6	18,2
Application letters followed by application forms ZE 143	25	75,8

n = 33

The data show that 6% of the respondents indicated that they were cross-transferred by the KDEC and 18% were just transferred to their present posts (as they never applied for the posts), mainly because they were already serving principals. These respondents were either placed in their present posts in their personal interest (as they had applied for transfers), or in the considered interest of the school, when their transfer was instructed by the KDEC. However, as might be expected, the overwhelming majority of respondents (75,8%) first wrote application letters, which were used for long listing, after which they were issued with application forms (ZE 143) to be filled in before they could be considered for interview.

5.4.2.3 Documentation accompanying application forms

Item 15 in the questionnaire asked principals which documents they were required to submit in support of their applications, and their responses are summarised in Table 5.3.

TABLE 5.3: Documents in support of applications

DOCUMENTS	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Academic and professional certificates	21	63,6
Birth certificates	1	3,0
No documents	11	33,3

n = 32

The majority of respondents (63%) were required to submit copies of their academic and professional credentials and one respondent was even required to furnish a copy of his birth certificate! (Two testimonials and a curriculum vitae were also generally required.) However, it is somewhat surprising to find that a third of the respondents (33,3%) were not required to submit any supporting documentation.

5.4.2.4 Submission of references

Item 16 of the questionnaire asked respondents to say whether or not they were required to submit references with their applications. In addition, they were asked to say from whom references were required. Responses are summarised in Table 5.4.

TABLE 5.4: References

REFERENCES REQUIRED	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	19	59,4
No	13	40,6

n = 32

It is apparent that over half of the respondents (59,4%) reported that they were required to produce references in support of their applications. However, unfortunately, none of these took the opportunity to specify what sort of references were required or

from whom they were required. A substantial proportion of respondents (40,6%), however, apparently were not required to furnish references and this exhibits considerable inconsistency in the process.

As was suggested earlier, when good practice was considered, the submission of references, on properly structured forms and from appropriate and knowledgeable referees, constitutes an important source of evidence in promotion selection decision-making. Although the majority of respondents reported that they were required to submit references, it is unfortunate that details were not forthcoming as it might be argued that some types of reference are of little real value in the process of predicting suitability for promotion.

5.4.2.5 Interviews

Item 17 of the questionnaire asked respondents to indicate whether or not they were interviewed for their present posts, and if so, by whom. The responses to this item are recorded in Tables 5.5 and 5.6.

TABLE 5.5 Respondents interviewed

INTERVIEWED	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	27	81,8
No	6	18,2

n = 33

TABLE 5.6: Interviewers

INTERVIEWED BY	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
SES and Local Officer (i.e. SDECS/DECS)	25	75,8
CES, SDECS and inspector in special field/auxiliary services	2	6,1
Never interviewed	6	18,2

n = 33

It is apparent that a substantial majority (81,8%) of respondents were interviewed in connection with their appointment to principalships and it is probable that the much smaller proportion of respondents who reported that they were not interviewed reflects certain appointments by transfer. What might be construed as 'problematic', in respect of the data presented in Table 5.6, is that it appears that Deputy Chief Education Specialists and representatives of the committee board, among others, are excluded from interviewing panels.

5.4.2.6 Job descriptions

Item 18 in the questionnaire asked respondents to indicate if they had been supplied with a job description in respect of the vacant post applied for. Responses to this item are summarised in Table 5.7.

TABLE 5.7: Provision of a job description

JOB DESCRIPTION ISSUED	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	3	8,8
No	31	91,2

n = 34

It is apparent that the overwhelming majority of respondents (91,2%) did not receive a job description for the post for which they had applied. Even if a job description specific to the school in question had not been prepared, it might have been expected that some form of generic job description would have been available. The absence of any form of job description, in the light of what has been advanced earlier in respect of good selection practice, must be considered as a major weakness in the KDEC selection process.

5.4.2.7 Nature of interview

Item 19 in the questionnaire was intended to obtain further information concerning the interview situation, for those who had been interviewed. In this instance, respondents were invited to comment on their interviews in respect of such things as representation on the panel, the questions asked and the extent to which they were able to learn more about the job requirements, in the absence of formal job descriptions. The responses to item 19 have been classified and are recorded, in summary form, in Table 5.8. (From Table 5.5 it may be seen that only 27 of the 35 principals reported that they had been interviewed.)

Whereas 27 principals responded to this item, it is unfortunate that they appeared to restrict their responses to the 'clues' provided in the question, rather than elaborating on the meaning of, or justification for, their responses. It must be acknowledged that this situation probably reflects an inadequacy in the formulation of the question, which was not picked up in the pretesting stage of the research. However, such data as were generated, and were recorded in Table 5.8, suggest the following: the majority of respondents (74,1%) were of the opinion that the selection committee was not sufficiently representative in its composition. It must remain a matter for speculation as to whom respondents considered should be represented on a selection panel. (See,

however, relevant section under analysis of the inspectorate's responses.) It seems that another substantial majority of respondents (81,5%) considered that the questions asked were relevant to the job although, again, their precise meanings in this connection were not obtained. Finally, 85,2% of the respondents expressed the view that the requirements of the job were not explained to them in the interview. This might be argued to be a serious omission in the process, given that it was reported above that the majority of respondents had not received a job description. In short, it implies that the selection process proceeds on the basis of unexamined assumptions about the role of the school principal. Responses to this item are summarised in Table 5.8.

TABLE 5.8 The interview situation

RESPONSE CLASSIFICATION	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Selection committee adequately representative	7	25,9
Selection committee not adequately representative	20	74,1
Questions asked relevant to the job	22	81,5
Irrelevant questions asked	5	18,5
Job requirements explained	4	14,8
Job requirements not explained	23	85,2

n = 27

5.4.2.8 Preliminary school visits

Item 20 in the questionnaire, which contained two parts, sought information about whether or not candidates were exposed to the school before the interviews took place. The first part of the question asked if candidates were invited to visit the school before being interviewed and the second part asked if, in the absence of an invitation, the

candidates exercised the initiative to visit the school. No candidate undertook the latter, and responses to the former part of the item are recorded in summary form in Table 5.9.

TABLE 5.9: School visit prior to interview

RESPONSE	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Invited to visit/visited	0	0
Not invited to visit/didn't visit	27	100,0

n = 27

The data in Table 5.9 speak for themselves. Not one of the respondents who was interviewed was invited to visit (or visited) the school for whose principalship they had applied. This might be argued, in the light of the suggested tenets of good practice, to be another serious weakness in the prevailing system. It has been suggested earlier in this study that there is a strong case for aspirant principals to have an opportunity provided whereby they may become familiar with organisational and other aspects of the prospective school. This 'ideal' state of affairs is made difficult in the KDEC, where it has often been the practice to advertise a number of schools in the same advertisement. It is not always easy to identify which will be the school to which any given candidate will be appointed, if successful.

5.4.2.9 Informing the candidates

In item 21 of the questionnaire, respondents were asked first to indicate how they were informed of the results of the selection process and, secondly, how long after they had applied for the post was it before they learned they had been successful. Responses to this item are recorded in Tables 5.10 and 5.11.

TABLE 5.10: Manner of being informed

MANNER	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Telegram	4	12,1
Verbal	13	39,4
Letter	16	48,5

n = 33

TABLE 5.11: Length of time before notified of success

LENGTH OF TIME	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Within a week	5	15,2
Within two weeks	7	21,2
Within three weeks	1	3,0
Within four weeks	1	3,0
More than a month	19	57,6

n = 33

Whereas the data in Table 5.10 are self-evident, with the majority of successful respondents being informed by letter, the data in Table 5.11 suggest that a significant proportion of respondents were required to wait in excess of a month before they were informed of their success. There would appear to be little consistency within the KDEC in respect either of the means whereby candidates are informed of their appointments or of the time within which they are informed. Reference to the ideal of good practice would suggest, however, that a time lapse of a month or more between interview and notification of outcome is probably somewhat excessive.

5.4.3 Part Three of the questionnaire

In Part Three of the questionnaire respondents were invited, in item 22, to record any criticisms of the current selection process in the KDEC and, in item 23, to offer suggestions for the improvement of the process. In so far as the responses to the above were found often to overlap, what is recorded below represents a general listing of criticisms and suggestions gleaned from the completed questionnaires.

The following constitute the main categories of response to items 22 and 23:

1. Candidates are given very little time between publication of the advertisement of the post and the due date for applications, in which to prepare their applications.
2. The selection process takes place behind closed doors. Interviews are rather a harsh and haphazard process owing to too many candidates attending the interview due to lack of short listing.
3. The opening of the interviews does not describe the procedure for the interview and its place in the total decision making process. Interviewers display arrogance in the questions and comments they made during the interviews.
4. Threatening questions. Some of the questions asked, like "Why are you interested in the post" are threatening because the reasons for the application are often complex and not easy to summarise.
5. No job description is given to applicants.
6. Informing successful candidates is never done in time. This could take up to a month or longer before people are informed of the decision of the selection

process. Unsuccessful candidates are never informed even after a written acceptance of the post by a successful candidate has been made.

7. Principals from where the candidates come, are never used as referees for candidates who apply for principalship for the first time in the selection process of the KDEC.
8. Schools where the vacant posts exist are never indicated on the advertisements. As a result of this practice candidates who would never apply for the post do so because of not knowing the school that has a vacant post. This wastes the time of the selection committee, involving the person who would never have had an interest in a particular school.
9. Whenever an appointment has been made in the KDEC, no consistent official handover is made by the outgoing principal to the incoming officer, hence this does not make a smooth takeover of office by the newly appointed principal.
10. Application forms ZE 143 are never sent to applicants in good time before the day of interviews and local officials wait until the day of the interviews to give candidates application forms to fill in, thus making candidates fill these forms hurriedly.
11. No short listing is made before candidates are invited for interviews. Up to 20 or 25 candidates can be invited for only two or three posts.
12. Interviewees waste too much time waiting for their turn. They normally report at the circuit office at ± 08h00 but some of them would only be interviewed at 15h00 or even 16h00.
13. Interviews for different posts (and levels) are held on the same day. Posts for different levels, viz. principalship posts, deputy principalship posts and head

of department posts should be held on different days in order to avoid too much waiting as well as allowing the selection committee members to prepare thoroughly for one particular level, rather than mixing their expectations from the candidates.

14. Lack of expertise, experience and intelligence from the selection committee of the KDEC. The selection process of principals of secondary schools must be handled by people with a good track record of expertise, experience and intelligence in view of the vital role of the principal, especially in this period of change. However, the selection process must remain an educative exercise for both the selector and the selectee.
15. Selection of principals at times is full of nepotism and favouritism. It is not unusual to hear of a new incumbent of a post while the selection process is in progress and in most cases this is confirmed true when the implicated person becomes the selected.
16. Lack of consistent policy pertaining to notification of the success of the selection process. Information about the outcome of the selection process is sometimes released before the candidates concerned have been informed and this results in great concerns about the behaviour of the selection committee.
17. Allocation of posts to principals is never based on merit, i.e. on the abilities one has to cope with the capacity of the school. What seems to dominate is that favouritism determines who should go where, even when his/her strengths and abilities are wasted when he/she could be given a school to match his/her abilities and strengths.

18. Lack of consistent policy on specific qualities required for a vacant post. Some candidates come from the ranks of teachers, lecturers of the colleges of education, heads of departments and deputy principals.
19. Lack of representative selection committee. The selection committee of the KDEC is incomplete because it excludes representatives of the committee boards, Deputy Chief Education Specialists, representatives of the auxiliary services, because principals work with all these people.
20. Lack of consideration of track record of the applicant. The track record of the applicant is ignored by the selection committee of the KDEC. Instead the KDEC relies on academic qualifications and considerations like appearance of person which are not good predictors of a good principal.
21. Lack of provision for school visits. Candidates are never provided with an opportunity to visit the schools where vacancies exist. Advertisements never mention the names of the schools.
22. Lack of capacity for advertising posts. The KDEC has a limited capacity of advertising the posts. Research has shown that only *Ilanga* is used and excludes the other five newspapers used by the public in the province. While circulars are commendable, some of the school principals do not bring information to the attention of the teachers. Even those who do, often bring information to the attention of the teachers quite late, or even when the closing date had gone by.
23. Irrelevance of testimonials. Testimonials supplied by candidate to the selection committee are in most cases not relevant to the post applied for. A priest concentrates on the conduct or whether the candidate attends church services or not, irrespective of the relevant potentials and abilities required by the job he/she has applied for.

25. Lack of provision of history of the school advertised: Candidates who apply for vacant posts are never given the history of the school, i.e. how the school functions, the socio-political environment of a particular school, or the types of teachers and pupils.
26. Not enough time between advertisement and handing in of applications and the holding of interviews. Too often potential applicants are excluded by closing dates of interviews and are thus eliminated.
27. Lack of uniform system of selection. The KDEC has no uniform system of selection as different Senior Education Specialists adopt different methods of selection in their various regions.
28. Lack of application forms specifically designed for principalship posts. Applicants for all posts above level one complete the same application form, which asks for biographical details, a list of previous posts held, as well as details of current educational, administrative and organisational responsibilities, professional activities, professional developments, community activities and irrelevant information. Another criticism that can be levelled against the selection process is that if a candidate fills in his/her application form badly he/she might never reach the short listing stage, or never be appointed as a result of the biased impression created by his/her application form. He/she is never given any feedback on his errors or shortcomings, thus reducing his/her chances of improving upon these.
29. Antithetical to systematic selection. Though the culture of the education service in the KDEC is antithetical to systematic selection, it seems to stress mostly on individuality and personality, thus rejecting management competence. Therefore, with such emphasis, the bases of elimination and

29. Antithetical to systematic selection. Though the culture of the education service in the KDEC is antithetical to systematic selection, it seems to stress mostly on individuality and personality, thus rejecting management competence. Therefore, with such emphasis, the bases of elimination and selection remain unspecified and hence promotion can often depend on patronage in the DEC in KwaZulu, rather than on possession of required skills to perform the job.
30. The principal's selection is characterised by conflict. The prevailing system of secondary school principalship selection is characterised by conflict between the selector and the selection of a candidate. Any increased systematisation of the procedure is likely to reduce this conflict and to emphasise the technical requirements of the job rather than the control and patronage which a procedure based on unstated and idiosyncratic criteria allows.
31. Lack of provision of analogous tests and references. The selection process in the KDEC excludes activities such as analogous tests and well structured references. These are not considered seriously by the panel. Only 'interviews' decide the fate of the candidates who have applied for the vacant post. However, this is due to the fact that not enough time is made available for the selection process in the KDEC.
32. Lack of analysis of the vacancy: With regards to the analysis of the vacancy, the selection committee hardly assesses the present school situation to where the successful candidate will be posted, hardly talks to the other people involved in the school, such as the deputy principal, teachers, advisers or even the committee board. Furthermore, the selection committee rarely looks at the opportunities the new post may afford. The committee hardly talks to the person leaving the post nor asks him/her to write down all

the tasks he/she currently does, so as to be able to project who could fit in to such a situation.

33. Androcentric ideology. Lastly, the selection committee of the KDEC is implicated with an androcentric ideology in the management of education (Shakeshaft and Hanson, 1986). Since selectors in the KDEC have been proven to choose candidates who fit their stereotypes of managerial appropriateness, it is essential that some women are also included in the selection process and that all selectors are briefed on sex bias in such a way as to eliminate such bias in the selection process.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented data, related to the selection process for principals in the KDEC, derived from members of the inspectorate and from principals in the Mpumalanga Circuit. Both sets of data reflect the opinions of people with first-hand experience of the process, as it operates currently.

There appears to be a considerable overall congruence between the opinions of members of the inspectorate and those of the practising principals. Each group has highlighted a critical awareness of the limitations of the present process. Even within the present system, there would appear also to be considerable evidence of inconsistencies of practice.

The main findings of the study will be summarised in the next chapter, and recommendations for possible improvement of the selection process will be derived from the summary.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter concludes the study, and comprises two main components. In the first part of the chapter the main findings of research are summarised. The findings reflect the opinions of respondents concerning the selection process for principalship, as it operates in the KDEC, and are derived from the responses of members of the inspectorate and a group of post-primary school principals.

The second part of the chapter sets out recommendations, advanced by the researcher, which it is suggested might be considered profitably by those concerned to improve present practices. The recommendations, which take account of the findings of the research, are derived substantially from the 'ideals' of good practice in selection, to be found in the work of Morgan *et al.* (1984).

6.2 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

In the sections which follow, the main findings of the research are broadly summarised and reviewed. The focus for these sections is derived largely from the directions for research, identified in Chapter Four. For purposes of summarisation the findings derived from the inspectorate and the principals are considered together, and only the broad trends are considered (specific variations in responses are recorded in the previous chapter).

6.2.1 Staffing

The research suggested that, for whatever reason a post falls vacant, the existence of vacancies for principalship are advertised, often collectively, by means of the public media and/or by circular. Indeed, the majority of the responding principals reported that they learned of vacancies through circulars. The main problems identified by respondents related to inefficiencies in the present process. In particular, respondents were concerned at the lack of informative detail in advertisements and the unreliability of advertising through circulars, especially when school principals act as 'gatekeepers' of information in this regard.

6.2.2 The target group

The research indicated that, although the KDEC lays down certain basic criteria of eligibility for principalship, focusing on qualifications and experience in many areas, and especially the more rural areas, it is not always possible to recruit candidates who possess the necessary qualifications, and compromises have to be made.

Whereas this situation cannot be regarded as a weakness of the selection process itself, nevertheless it does represent a problem in the process. What is perhaps of more significance is that the criteria laid down relate to considerations which the literature has suggested bear little connection to demonstrated ability to manage schools. Although it is quite reasonable for minimum criteria to be laid down, in order to narrow the field, what is probably required is that greater attention should be given to identifying criteria which more directly relate to potential effectiveness in principalship, and these should be specified in advertisements.

6.2.3 Making application for a post

The research raised issues, in this connection, related both to the documentation and the sources of evidence to be submitted. In terms of the former, it would seem that selectors rely heavily on individually written letters of application and a pre-prepared form (ZE 143). With respect to the former, it would seem that applicants are not guided as to the kinds of information they should provide in their letters of application and the main criticism in respect of ZE 143 is that it is a general form, not specifically related to applications for principalship. If neither the generic qualities and competencies for principalship nor those specifically related to the vacant post in question are thought out and defined in advance, then it is unlikely that selectors will be in a position to be more focused in terms of the information required of applicants.

In the absence of clear guidelines, it is likely that undirected letters of application will not generate information that is necessarily of direct use in decision making. Furthermore, reliance on undirected information makes the process of comparison much more difficult. When an application form is used (ZE 143), it is probably desirable that it should be designed for a specific purpose and that the items contained in such a form should be justified on a basis stronger than 'tradition'.

The problem for applicants is made greater by the fact that they are not often clear as to which school precisely they are making application. Although, as suggested, there are generic competencies and qualities which are probably applicable to all principalships, nevertheless each school has its own particular character, possibilities and requirements and personnel decision making should take account of these.

Whatever documents are 'officially' required, the research suggests that they are not always obtained. In fact, Table 5.3 shows that, in the sample group, a third of the respondents submitted no documentation whatsoever in support of their successful

applications. This must raise questions about the need for such documents, or more precisely, the use to which they are put.

6.2.4 References

Most selection procedures make some use of the opinions of 'referees'. In the present case, some respondents indicated that they were required to submit testimonials. The literature has shown that the use of testimonials has become a questionable practice. Testimonials often bear little reference to objective 'truth' and, even if they have any value, this value tends to date rapidly. The literature does suggest, however, that, under certain circumstances, the use of references might produce useful supportive evidence. In particular, it is important that references are sought from those whose experience and knowledge of the candidate is both relevant and recent. Also, the literature suggests that the best references are those which are made with reference to predefined attributes, qualities or skills. In other words, referees should be guided as to the nature of the information they provide.

In the KDEEC situation, no evidence was obtained which suggested any consistency in the use of references. Over 40% of the respondent principals reported that they were not required to submit references. neither was any evidence obtained which would suggest that referees were invited to respond in relation to predetermined categories.

6.2.5 Job descriptions

The construction of job descriptions is considered to be an essential aspect of personnel selection. Not only do job descriptions provide valuable information for prospective applicants, but also they provide a valuable yardstick for selectors in focusing their search for appropriate evidence of potential to succeed. Ideally, job descriptions should be directed both at the generic competencies of principalship and the specific requirements of any designated post.

The research has shown that the overwhelming majority of responding principals were not provided with a job description before they were interviewed, and neither was the job described during interviews.

6.2.6 Visits to schools

The literature suggests many advantages of building formal school visiting into any selection process for principals. Not only do such visits provide applicants an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the school, but also those intimately involved in the school themselves are provided with an opportunity to 'vet' potential principals.

This research produced unequivocal evidence that the practice of school visiting is a non-existent aspect of the KDEC selection process.

6.2.7 Interviews

The literature indicates that the interview is the most commonly employed aspect of existing selection procedures. However, the literature is strongly critical of the interview as the only, or predominant, mechanism of selection (and reference has been made to this critique in Chapter 2). Not only is the interview, on its own, a very weak mechanism for predicting potential, but also its use is greatly undermined if it is not carefully planned and properly structured.

In the KDEC, the research suggests that provision is made for interviews and most of the respondents had been interviewed. However, no evidence was found to suggest that these interviews were designed or conducted in accordance with good practice and their utility in terms of predictability must be questioned, especially in view of the fact that the KDEC's mechanisms for the collection of evidence from other sources is shown to be very limited.

6.2.8 Informing candidates

Informing candidates about the outcome of a selection process, in good time, is clearly in the interests of the candidates and the school awaiting a principal. Furthermore, the literature suggests that it is a professional imperative to inform unsuccessful candidates about reasons for failure, as part of their ongoing professional development process.

The evidence obtained in connection with the KDEC process, suggests that successful candidates are informed of their success by a variety of means, with a letter being the predominant mode. However, two things must remain matters for concern. The first is that a significant majority of respondents reported that it was more than a month before they learned of their appointments. This delay can hardly be justified. Secondly, there is no evidence that unsuccessful candidates are informed as to why they were unsuccessful and this must be construed as professional negligence.

6.2.9 Induction of principals

Although this matter was not identified specifically in the directions for research, it became apparent from discussions with members of the inspectorate that no provision is made for the induction of new principals, or of principals new to specific schools. Although not strictly part of any systematic selection process, it would seem that induction would be a desirable adjunct to the process. Clearly, this does not happen at the moment in the KDEC.

6.2.10 The selection team and process

The research has suggested that concern exists about the composition and operation of the 'selection team'. In summary, the views expressed, largely by the officials interviewed, suggest that the selection panel is small and is insufficiently representative of those who could be argued to be in a position to most effectively evaluate potential

candidates. Partly as a result of the size limitation, the selection panel is overworked and this seriously compromises its effectiveness.

Furthermore, there is no evidence that the selection panel is informed about good practice in selection and is trained to do the job. The panel makes its decisions on the basis of limited documentary evidence, in the absence of carefully structured job descriptions, and the interview (which has been shown to have marked limitations in respect of assessing potential).

6.2.11 Summary

In the above paragraphs, an attempt has been made simply to identify and summarise the main findings of the research carried out with principals and members of the inspectorate. Whereas each aspect of the KDEC process, considered individually, is worthy of specific critical comment, it is probably when they are considered together that the major finding emerges. In short, collectively, the evidence suggests a process of selection which is both inconsistently applied and is weak in its conception and operation, when assessed against reported good practice.

It is in the context of this somewhat harsh evaluation that certain recommendations are suggested, which might contribute to the development of a more effective process. These recommendations follow below.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations which follow are derived from the characteristics of good practice, identified by Morgan *et al.* (1984) and others, and from a consideration of current practice in the KDEC. They are presented in summary form only.

6.3.1 Selectors

It might be suggested that it is ineffective, and probably unworkable, to operate on the basis of a small, centralised selection panel for all principalship appointments. The ideal place for selection to take place is at the school with the vacancy. Those involved in the selection process should be representative both of the professional concerns of the employing authority and the interests of the school community itself. This means that, in addition to employing authority representatives, other constituencies, such as the school 'governing body', should be participants in the process.

It is recommended that consideration should be given to decentralising the selection process to school levels.

Naturally, a considerable responsibility must remain with the employing authority in respect of managing the selection process, but ultimately decision making should take place as near as possible to the school.

6.3.2 Training

Even if no change is made to the existing procedure, there is strong evidence to suggest a pressing need for improvement in the skills and competency of those involved as selectors. There is available now a considerable body of training material for systematic selection in general, and improved interviewing in particular.

It is recommended that the KDEC invests resources and mounts a comprehensive training programme for selectors.

Specific strategies for designing and operating such a programme will be influenced in turn by whatever decisions are taken in respect of the degree of decentralisation of

the selection process. Minimally, such programmes should be implemented at circuit level.

The above two recommendations, in a sense, are umbrella recommendations, which point to a complete overhaul and reconstruction of the process of selection. They represent an ideal, the introduction of which would be both costly and complex. However, if such a major reconstruction is deemed not to be possible in the short term, certain adjustments to existing practice could be effected for improvement. These would be subsumed in a complete reconstruction of the system.

The following short-term recommendations are suggested to be capable of implementation.

6.3.3 Locating responsibility at the circuit level

Although the expressed ideal is for selection to take place at the level of the school, it is acknowledged that there is an administrative and professional dimension which is properly the responsibility of employing authority officers. However, in view of the limitations expressed by the inspectorate in relation to the present practice, it is recommended that, as an interim measure, responsibility for administering the selection of principals should be located at the Circuit Office. This would have the effect of 'humanising' the scale of the operation and would offer a greater chance for 'more informed' people to be involved in the process. It must be assumed that inspectors in any given circuit would be reasonably informed about the characteristics and needs of the schools in their domains.

6.3.4 Documentation submitted by applicants

Thought must be given to the purposes behind whatever documentary evidence is required in connection with applications. With this in mind, it is recommended that application forms be designed which are specific to principalships. Although there may be some merit in requiring applicants to write letters of application, provision for this can be built into a well designed application form. In particular, application forms which are basically generic may be modified for any school so that applicants are required to respond in their 'letters of application' to issues which have specific bearing on the school in question.

6.3.5 References

First, it is recommended that testimonials should no longer be required or accepted. There is sufficient evidence to cast doubt on the reliability and utility of testimonials.

Secondly, it is recommended that applicants should be required to nominate a limited number of referees, who should be people qualified to make judgements about a candidate's suitability for principalship.

Thirdly, it is recommended that responsibility for contacting referees should reside with the selection committee.

Finally, it is recommended that referees should be invited to respond on predesigned forms, which have been carefully constructed to elicit evidence and information which is directly relevant to the potentiality of a candidate for promotion to principal.

6.3.6 Job descriptions

The construction of job descriptions is an essential element in any selection process. Candidates need to know what is required and expected of an incumbent. Selectors need to be clear about the generic and specific requirements of any given job.

It is recommended that job descriptions should be constructed for every vacant post of principal and that these should be available to the selection committee (which in any case should have contributed to the construction) and should be issued, in advance, to all applicants.

Job descriptions constitute the yardstick against which all promotion decisions are made.

6.3.7 School visits

Principalship is not a routine task and no two schools are identical. It follows that no person should be permitted simply to apply routinely for a principalship. Candidates for posts of principal should, at least, have some familiarity with the nature of the schools for which they are making application. Apart from anything else, some familiarity with a school where a vacancy exists can inform a decision to apply and may reduce the number of 'unsuitable' applications for any given post. On the other hand, those with an interest in a particular school, might benefit from exposure to potential incumbents of a principalship. It is recommended that opportunities for short-listed candidates to visit schools should be built into the selection process.

6.3.8 Informing candidates

To delay the notification of outcomes in a selection process is unprofessional and may restrict the successful applicant's opportunities to prepare for the new post.

It is recommended, first, that successful candidates should be informed of their appointments much more quickly than is the case at present. (This may be easier to achieve if greater decentralisation of the selection process is effected.) Secondly, it is recommended that procedures should be put in place whereby, as a matter of course, unsuccessful candidates are provided with feedback which could assist them when they make future applications. This is a professional imperative related to continuing professional development.

6.3.9 Induction

The whole area of training and support for principalship is a major one for development in the KDEC, and is beyond the scope of this study. However, some form of induction for new principals is an imperative. This covers both induction to principalship in general, for all new to principalship, and induction specifically related to a given school.

It is recommended, minimally, that it should be the responsibility of the Circuit Office to ensure that all new principals receive some form of general and specific induction.

6.3.10 Interviews

It has been argued earlier that interviews have very limited potentiality in prediction. At best they can elicit some types of information related to past form and personality, but only if they are expertly conducted. They cannot be used to assess potential. Experience suggests that, not only are interviews the main mechanism used in the appointment of principals, but also that they are conducted without any substantial preparation.

It is recommended, first, that all those involved in interviewing candidates for principalships should be required to undergo interview training. This need be neither

excessively expensive or complex, as 'accessible', and reasonably priced, training packages are readily available.

Even if the limitations of interviews are understood and acknowledged, this does not alter the fact that they are unable to be used to assess potential. The job of a principal is very different in its demands from that of a class teacher (or deputy principal and head of development for that matter) and even successful experience as a teacher is inadequate evidence of an individual's potential to operate effectively as a principal. Assessment of potential is, in many ways, an 'act of faith', but it can be enhanced through the use of such mechanisms as analogous tests or simulations (in-basket exercises, etc.). It is recommended, secondly, that all interviewing for principalships should be accompanied by a requirement for candidates to participate in analogous tests. This would enhance the predictive validity of the selection process, and would not be too difficult to put into effect.

6.4 CONCLUSIONS

This study, which has been very limited in its scope, has attempted to explore some of the characteristics of the way in which post-primary school principals are selected in the KDEC. In order to do this, an attempt was made to seek the opinions of people who themselves had had first-hand experience of the process.

The opinions of some principals and inspectors, which have been assumed to represent a 'reality', have been assessed in the light of the only major critical study of senior staff selection in education, so far published. Although this study derived from any system in another country, it is suggested that the general principles of good practice are very useful in the local context of the KDEC.

The overall impression formed, as a result of the research, was that the process of school principal selection, currently operating in the KDEC, is hardly systematic and exhibits considerable inconsistencies.

The major recommendations of this study strongly imply a complete overhaul of the process, which is acknowledged to be an expensive and complex undertaking. The majority of the remaining recommendations advanced would be subsumed if a major overhaul were put into effect. However, in so far as in the short-term a major overhaul is unlikely, the researcher has attempted to make recommendations for shorter-term adjustments to present practice, which would be both affordable and realistically attainable. It is suggested that, should these recommendations be acted upon, the present system of selection of post-primary school principals would be considerably improved, even if the system remained far from ideal.

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APPENDIX A

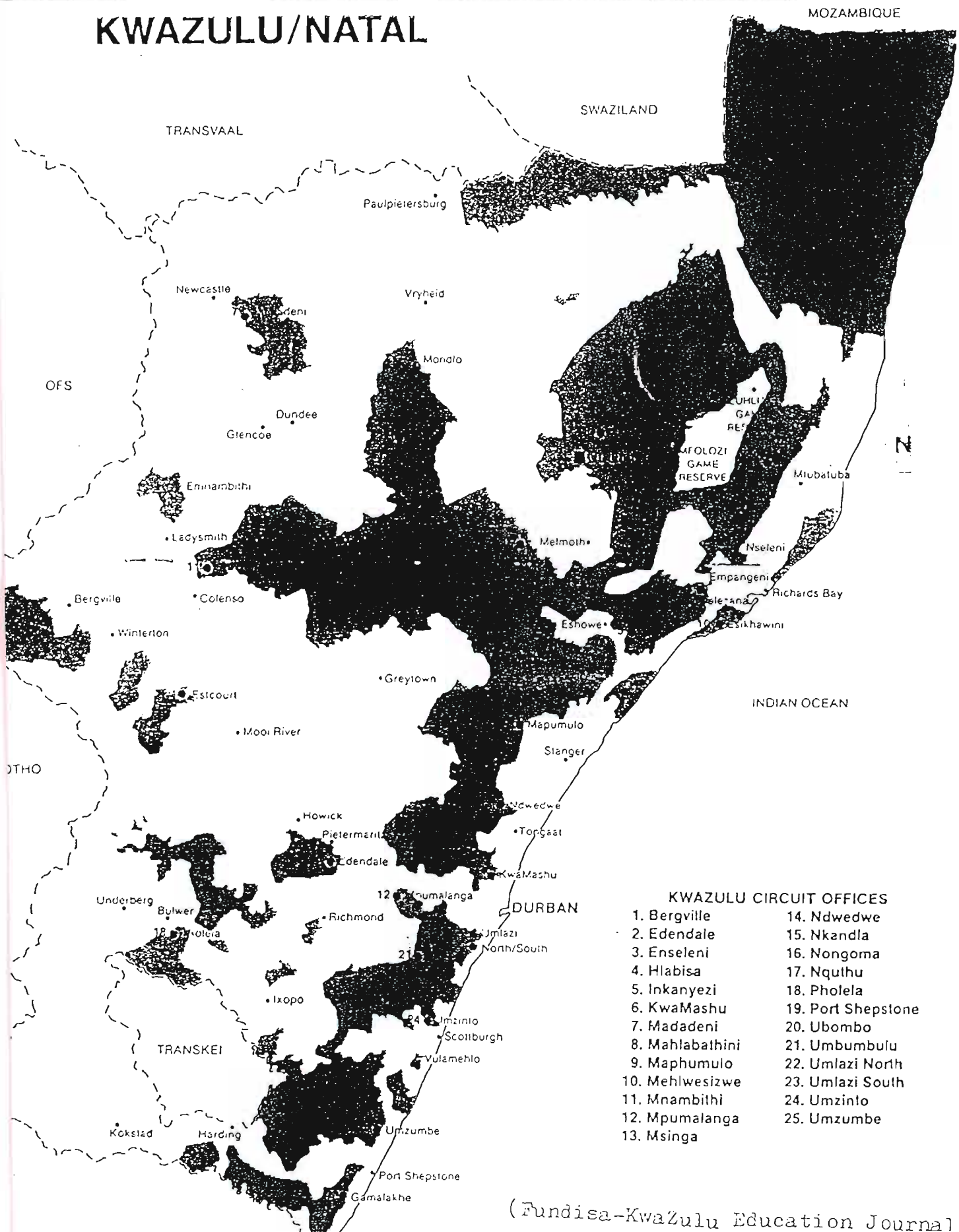
MAP SHOWING KWAZULU-NATAL CIRCUIT DISTRICTS AND OFFICES

CIRCUIT DISTRICTS AND OFFICES

KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture

APPENDIX A

KWAZULU/NATAL



- KWAZULU CIRCUIT OFFICES**
- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. Bergville | 14. Ndwedwe |
| 2. Edendale | 15. Nkandla |
| 3. Enseleni | 16. Nongoma |
| 4. Hlabisa | 17. Nquthu |
| 5. Inkanyezi | 18. Pholela |
| 6. KwaMashu | 19. Port Shepstone |
| 7. Madadeni | 20. Ubombo |
| 8. Mahlabathini | 21. Umbumbulu |
| 9. Maphumulo | 22. Umlazi North |
| 10. Mehlesizwe | 23. Umlazi South |
| 11. Mnambithi | 24. Umzintlo |
| 12. Mpumalanga | 25. Umzumbe |
| 13. Msinga | |

APPENDIX B

KDEC APPLICATION FORM (ZE 143)

APPLICATION FORM (CONFIDENTIAL)

APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF

N.B.

- 1. Use black ink or typewriter
- 2. Attach certified copies of certificates/diplomas
- 3. Attach testimonials in original form.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- 2.1 Prof., Dr., Mr, Mrs, Miss
- 2.2 Surname
- 2.3 First Names
- 2.4 Section/School
- 2.5 Have you applied for another post within the Department at the same time as this one? Yes/No
- 2.6 If yes, for which post?
- 2.7 Were you successful for 2.6?
- 2.8 Where did you get information for this vacancy?

PERSONAL PARTICULARS

- 3.1 Sex Marital Status
- 3.2 Date of birth Age
- 3.3 Home Address
- 3.4 Telephone No. Home Work
- 3.5 Identity No. Work Ref. No.
- 3.6 Dependants

Names	Age	Relationship	Occupation

Names	Age	Relationship	Occupation

STATE OF CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

4.1 Name of Employer.....

4.2 Address of Employer.....

.....

4.3 Phone No. of Employer.....

4.4 Present Job.....

4.5 Years in Present Job.....

4.6 Salary Scale.....

4.7 Present Notch.....

4.8 Period of Notice to quit job.....

4.9 Earliest date in which ready to assume duties.....

.....

4.10 Do you have any contractual liability with employer?.....

.....
.....

4.11 If yes, what is it?.....

.....
.....

4.12 If you are a principal of a school, are you up-to-date with the auditing of financial books?.....

.....

4.13 If you have audited, is auditing without deficiencies?.....

.....

4.14 If you are a principal, are you up-to-date with your stocktaking?.....

QUALIFICATIONS

5.1 ACADEMIC

Certificate/Diploma Degree	School College Technicon University	Year F/P	Main Courses
.....
.....
.....
.....

6.2 Which of the above job experiences are related to the post you are applying for?

.....

.....

.....

6.3 State briefly the way in which your work experience is relevant to the job

.....

.....

.....

.....

6.4 What are your outstanding achievements in the work you have been doing hitherto?

.....

.....

IN-SERVICE COURSES ATTENDED WHICH ARE RELEVANT TO THE

Course	Organiser/s	Date	Duration
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

7.2 Were you issued with certificates?

7.3 If yes, how many times were you issued with certificates?

.....

.....

7.4 What role did you play in in-service courses?.....

7.5 What contribution did you render after the course/s?.....

MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Mention names of organizations or sub-committees within organizations of which you are a member of have been a member).

Organization/Sub-Committee	Position
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Supply additional information about your experiences which you regard as relevant in support of your application as a candidate to the vacancy.....

REFEREE

Please supply the names and particulars of not more than three referees who may offer testimony on your behalf. Two should be either your employer or immediate supervisor.

Names	Position	Address	Tel. No.

DECLARATION

I declare that the particulars I have supplied in this form are true and correct

Date: Signature:

APPENDIX C
LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

Department of Education and
Culture
Private Bag X1008
HAMMARSDALE
3700

3 March 1994

To Principals

Dear Colleague

**RESEARCH PROJECT: SELECTION OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE
KWAZULU DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND
CULTURE**

I am writing to seek your cooperation in connection with a research project which I am undertaking in the Faculty of Education, University of Natal.

The focus of the research is the selection of school principals and how the process might be improved.

Although some research with this focus has been conducted overseas, no similar research has been undertaken in South Africa in general, and in KwaZulu in particular. It is hoped that, as a result of the present research, improvements may be made locally in the selection processes for school principalship and the preparation of those charged with making selections.

By definition, you as a school principal, have had experience of existing selection procedures. In the light of your experience, I should be most grateful if you would spare a little of your valuable time to complete the attached questionnaire. If we are to effect

improvements in our own selection process, your first-hand experiences and opinions are of vital importance.

I should like to take this opportunity to assure you that your responses to the questionnaire will be treated in strictest confidence. You may be confident that what you write is for the eyes of the researcher only.

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me, in the envelope provided, by

Thank you for your assistance in this important project.

**E.M. HLONGWANE
CIRCUIT OFFICER**

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE TO PRINCIPALS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS

RESEARCH PROJECT : SELECTION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is divided into three parts:

- Part 1** seeks information about you as a principal. This information is needed for analysis of findings.
- Part 2** contains a number of open-ended questions whose purpose is to identify your opinions about various aspects of the current selection process.
- Part 3** provides an opportunity for you to express any views or opinions about the current selection process which have not been covered in Part 1, and to give you a chance to suggest ideas for the improvement of the present process.

Please try to give answers to all the questions.

PART 1

1. What is the name of your school?

2. What type of school is it? (i.e. High School, Junior Secondary, etc.)

3. What is your gender?

Male		Female	
------	--	--------	--

4. What is your present age?
(Please indicate years AND months)

5. How many years have you been teaching?

6. Please indicate how many years you have taught in different types of school.

HIGH	
JUNIOR SECONDARY	
COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL	

7. How many principalships have you held altogether?
(Including your present post)

8. If you have been a principal more than once, please complete the following table to show how many times you have been principal in each type of school and for how many years altogether you have been a principal in each type.

TYPE OF SCHOOL	NUMBER OF PRINCIPALSHIPS HELD	TOTAL YEARS AS PRINCIPAL OF EACH TYPE
HIGH SCHOOL		
JUNIOR SCHOOL		
COMPREHENSIVE		

9. In which year were you appointed to your first principalship?

10. In which year were you appointed to your present principalship?

11. Do you hold any degrees?
Please indicate the name of the degree and the year in which it was awarded.

DEGREE	YEAR AWARDED

12. Please give the names of all your teaching qualifications and the year in which each was awarded.

QUALIFICATION	YEAR AWARDED

PART 2

13. In respect of your present post, how did you find out that there was a vacancy for a principal at the school? Please explain

-
14. How did you go about applying for your present post, once you knew there was a vacancy? *(Please explain as fully as possible)*

-
15. What documents did you have to submit in support of your application?

-
16. Were you required to submit references with your application?
(If YES, please explain what sort of references were required, and from whom)
-

17. Were you interviewed for your present post?
(If you were, please indicate what people interviewed you - i.e. inspectors, etc.)
-

18. Were you at any time given a 'job description' for the post during the selection process?
(If you were, please say at what stage you were given the 'job description' and say what the description covered)
-

19. If you were interviewed for your present post, please give your comments on the interview.
*(For example, were the 'right' people represented on the selection committee?
Were the questions asked relevant to the job?
Were the requirements for the job explained to you? ... etc.)*
-

20. a) Were you invited to visit the school before you were interviewed (or appointed)?

(Please elaborate)

b) If you were not invited, nevertheless, did you arrange to visit the school before you were selected?

(Please elaborate)

21. a) How were you informed that you had been appointed?

b) How long after you first applied for the post was it before you learned that you had been successful?

PART 3

22. Please use the space below to write down as many CRITICISMS as you can think of in relation to the selection process you experienced in respect of your present post (or any other principalship for which you have applied).
(Please explain as fully as possible)

23. Please use the space below to write down any ideas/suggestions you may have about HOW THE SELECTION PROCESS FOR PRINCIPALS might be improved.

(Please explain as fully as possible: for example, you may wish to comment on advertising, interviewing, knowledge of the post before interviewing, etc.)

Thank you for completing this . Your opinions will be of considerable help in improving the selection process.

Please return the completed in the envelope provided to:

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