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Principalship and Mentoring: A Review of Perspectives, Evidence, and Literature 1999 – 2019

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Abstract

The aim of the present article is to review literature on mentoring of school principals. The review focuses on the importance of mentoring in fostering effective leadership as a principal by presenting the pervasive definitions and perspectives on mentoring in the field. Second, based upon predefined selection criteria, we present empirical evidence from a number of studies organized by emergent themes on how mentoring in the principalship is conceived and valued. The bulk of the article presents evidence from studies organized along themes. Two central themes emerged in the review focused on determinants of effective mentoring relationships: a) the mentor and protégé pairing and b) length of time in the mentoring relationship including enough time for mentoring sessions. The article concludes with methodological recommendations and an outline of possible directions for future research concerning these commonly overlooked, yet critical features of successful mentoring programs.

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Introduction

Although mentoring has been established in the field of teacher education for many years (McCann & Radford, 1993; Wilkin, 1992; Zimpher & Rieger, 1988; Hunzicker, 2018), mentoring is still considered a recent phenomenon within educational leadership (Daresh, 2004; Oplatka & Lapidot, 2018). Mentoring models for novice principals were developed in the late 1980s and early 1990s by university-based principal preparation programs and policymakers as a means to indoctrinate novice principals into the profession by promoting reflective practice and providing technical expertise, role clarification, and socialization in a more authentic context (Barnett, 1995; Bush & Chew, 1999; Crow & Matthews, 1998; Daresh, 2004; Daresh & Playko, 1991; Kirkham, 1995). The focus in early studies on mentoring was on skill attainment for novice principals, specifically on how a veteran principal (mentor) supports a novice principal (protégé) in acquiring the needed skills in order to gain confidence in managing the school (Daresh, 2007; Oplatka & Lapidot, 2018). As new principals enter the profession, mentoring has become an integral element for successful first years for principals by providing an invaluable opportunity to socialize novices into the changing landscape of the field (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Bandura, 1997; Daloz, 1998) and preparing them for effective leadership and wellbeing.

Mentoring is becoming a recognized method of supporting and developing novice principals as they begin their careers; however, there has not been much investment in mentoring processes internationally (Daresh, 2004; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006). Subsequently, many mentoring programs have provided inadequate training for mentors and protégés, lacked a clear set of goals and

responsibilities, and employed poorly conceived methods for mentor selection and mentor/protégé pairing (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Bush & Chew, 1999; Daresh, 2004; Gimbel & Kefor, 2018; Villani, 2006). Thus, this study provides a review of international empirical research on mentoring for principals published in peer-reviewed educational journals between 1999-2019, specifically answering the following research questions:

1. What have researchers in the past 20 years attributed to the benefits and outcomes of mentoring school principals and/or head teachers?
2. What have researchers in the past 20 years attributed to the challenges and impediments to mentoring school principals and/or head teachers?

For the purposes of this article, we first define mentoring by presenting the pervasive definitions and perspectives on mentoring in the field. Second, we explain the research methods for the narrative review and then present empirical evidence from a number of studies organized by emergent themes on how mentoring in the principalship is conceived and valued internationally. We then discuss the central themes that emerged in the review and present summaries of the relevant findings focusing on the benefits and outcomes as well as challenges and impediments to mentoring. We conclude the article with methodological recommendations and an outline of possible directions for future research concerning these commonly overlooked, yet critical features of successful mentoring programs.

Perspectives on Mentoring

The tradition of mentoring is rooted in Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey*. In the epic poem, Ulysseus entrusted his son, Telemachus, to his wise friend, Mentor (Athena in disguise), to counsel and guide him during Ulysseus' long absence in The Trojan War. The word *mentor* evolved to mean trusted advisor, friend, teacher and wise person (Mertz, 2004; Playko, 1991). In mentoring relationships, a mentor and a protégé develop a dyadic relationship in order to support the protégé as he/she matures in his/her role or craft; consequently, mentoring is a fundamental form of human development where one person invests time, energy and personal know-how in assisting the growth and ability of another person (Mertz, 2004). Mentoring has multiple definitions in the literature, and researchers' beliefs about mentoring have developed and transformed over the past few decades from a hierarchical traditional view on mentoring to a more relational view on mentoring.

Definition of Mentoring

Traditionally, mentoring is defined as a relationship between an older, more experienced mentor and a younger less experienced protégé for the purpose of supporting and developing the protégé's career (Ragins & Verbos, 2007). In this capacity, mentors serve their protégés, by providing acceptance and support, dispensing advice and guidance, coaching in the ways of the organization, communicating important and sometimes privileged information, offering visibility and exposure, and extending protection (Jacobi, 1991). Traditional definitions of mentoring assume a power differential inherent in mentoring relationships, and traditional mentoring is often depicted as a hierarchical relationship with the

mentor in the top/superior position and the protégé in the bottom/inferior position. This type of mentoring is often referred to as a *functionalist perspective* of mentoring.

Functionalist conceptions of mentoring formulate mentoring as a rational and hierarchical process that involves an experienced mentor and a novice protégé. Implicit in the functionalist perspective are assumptions about knowledge and power. Learning in the functionalist perspective is considered to be a method of transmitting knowledge from the mentor to the protégé. Functionalist mentoring implies a power relationship in which the mentor has the power as the expert, and the protégé is the beneficiary of the mentor's expert knowledge. As an example, novice principals are often assigned to a veteran mentor in order to support them transition as a school leader. Early school researchers (Bush & Chew, 1999; Crow & Matthews, 1998; Daresh, 2004; Daresh & Playko, 1991; Southworth, 1995; Weingartner, 2001) primarily commended mentoring as a means to support novice principals with the day to day operations of the school. The mentor would use their expertise to guide and advise the novice principal in scheduling, budgeting, managing personnel, problem-solving, and time management (Weingartner, 2001). In this capacity, mentoring would be considered as a functionalist because the primary goal of mentoring is to transfer knowledge from the principal mentor to the protégé to support novice principals in their new leadership role (Hayes, 2020).

In contrast, *relational mentoring* draws attention to a mutual and reciprocal growth-producing relationship (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007). In lieu of viewing the mentor as the established source of power and knowledge, relational mentoring recognizes that high-quality relationships involve the capacity for mutual influence, growth, and

learning. Crow (2012) used the term *critical-constructivist* (p. 233) when referring to relational mentoring as the mentor and the protégé learn together through an intense developmental and long-term relationship (Eby, 1997) that deepens over time with a ripple effect (Varney, 2009). Crow explained that in a critical constructivist perspective, the essential nature of mentoring is learning, and learning involves the "social construction of knowledge in which knowledge is co-constructed through the social negotiation process of relationships" (p. 233). Rather than identifying and transmitting knowledge, the mentor and the protégé construct the knowledge of how to be a school leader that makes sense to the protégé (p. 233). Mullen (2012) also alluded to a critical-constructivist perspective when she referred to mentoring as a journey encompassing the mentor and the protégé in "learning that is open-ended, creative, and uncertain, as well as subject to unknowns" (p. 7). In relational mentoring, both the mentor and the protégé enter the relationship expecting to grow, learn, and be transformed by the relationship; consequently, relational mentoring has been identified as an outstanding approach for leadership development (Boerema, 2011; Crippen & Wallin, 2008; Hayes, 2019; Dimmock & Walker, 2004; Reyes, 2003; Villani, 2006).

It should be noted, however, that both the functionalist and relational mentoring perspectives usually occur throughout a mentoring relationship. In practice, the two perspectives are used to both support principals in the transition to the role of campus leader and in their leadership development. A mentor may begin working with a protégé by providing advice and guidance in the protégé's early career, and then both the mentor and protégé develop a more mutually beneficial and meaningful relationship as they learn and grow through the mentoring process. Although support functions are

set, the mentoring process is always fluid, reciprocal, multi-dimensional, and dynamic, thus presenting both benefits and challenges to mentoring.

Research Strategies for the Narrative Review

We conducted an extensive search of all articles published between 1999 and 2019 via EBSCO, JSTOR, ERIC, and Google Scholar databases to identify peer reviewed empirical studies that focused on mentoring. In the initial query, we used the search terms *mentoring, mentoring relationships,* and *principal*, which yielded 453 articles. We then searched for *mentoring, mentoring relationships,* and *head teache*r and identified 26 articles. We read the abstracts of all 479 articles and removed articles that discussed "principals mentoring teachers" and focused only on articles where researchers studied the mentoring of school principals. This query yielded over 63 articles. We determined that the research scholarship on principals/head teachers and mentoring is delineated into three primary categories:

- Aspiring Principals/Head Teachers (those still in university-based programs)
- Aspiring Principals/Head Teachers (those that are currently Assistant Principals or Teachers)
- Principals/Head Teachers (novice and veteran)

After reviewing the abstracts of the 63 articles on principals/head teachers and mentoring, we determined our inclusion criteria in order to answer the research questions for our narrative review. The inclusion criteria included:

- Mentoring of practicing principals (excluded assistant principals, interns, and aspiring principals);

- Peer-reviewed empirical studies conducted between 1999-2019 (excluded books, book chapters, dissertations, theoretical/conceptual articles, editorials, reports, and literature reviews);
- The research questions and/or the purpose of the article were primarily on mentoring or mentoring relationships of practicing principals (excluded articles where mentoring may have been included as an implication or suggestion for further research or where the focus of the study was on coaching).

After applying the inclusion criteria, we re-examined the articles and created a matrix to include the citation of the manuscript, the abstract, keywords, research methodology, and country. Each manuscript was reviewed independently by the two researchers. A structured codebook was developed to assess the eligibility of inclusion and to extract relevant data. Based on the inclusion criteria, we identified 32 empirical articles for our narrative review. Table 1 outlines all of the empirical studies from 1999-2019 on mentoring principals that were included in this paper. The majority of these studies (n=21) were conducted in the United States.

Table 1.

Empirical Studies on Mentoring Novice Principals 1999-2019

Author & Date	Study Design	Sample & Context	Data Collection
Alsbury & Hackmann (2006)	Quantitative	69 mentors & 63 mentees in Iowa (USA)	Pre & post surveys that included open-ended responses
Anderson & Wasonga (2017)	Quantitative	511 mentee principals in the USA	Survey with a 7-point Likert-type scale
Aravena (2018)	Qualitative	8 mentors in Chile	Interviews and document analysis
Augustine-Shaw	Quantitative	185 Kansas (USA)	Survey that focused on

(2015)		Superintendents and 489 Kansas principals	key attributes for 1st year principals
Bakioglu, Hacifazlioglu, & Ozcan (2010)	Mixed-Methods	1462 principals in Turkey	Longitudinal study with surveys with focus groups (5 groups of 10 principals) for interviews
Bickmore & Davenport (2019)	Qualitative	11 principal mentors in the USA	Focus Group Meetings
Boerema (2011)	Qualitative	8 principals in Canada	Semi-structured interviews
Cardno & Youngs (2013)	Mixed-Methods	300 experienced principals in New Zealand	Surveys, open-ended questionnaires, focus groups, observations, document analysis
Clayton, Sanzo, & Myran (2013)	Qualitative	11 Mentors and aspiring principal mentees in a rural school district (USA)	Interviews, document analysis, researcher notes
Daresh (2007)	Qualitative	20 experienced principals who serve as mentors (USA)	Interviews of participants. Both one-to-one interviews and focus groups.
Della Sala, Klar, Lindle, Reese, Knoeppel, Campbell, & Buskey (2013)	Quantitative	9 mid-career principals in rural schools and 65 observers (USA)	Surveys repeated throughout the year had open-ended questions
Duncan & Stock (2010)	Quantitative	187 principals in Wyoming (USA)	Likert-scale survey
Gettys, Martin, & Bigby (2010)	Qualitative	6 principals in Missouri (USA) who participated a mentoring program	Semi-structured interviews. Document analysis of mentoring logs.
Gimbel & Kefor (2018)	Qualitative	8 mentoring dyads in Vermont (USA)	Open-ended questionnaire & Interviews

Gross (2002)	Qualitative	One mentor/protégé dyad (USA)	Case study of 11 interviews of one mentor/protégé pair
Gumus & Bellibas (2013)	Quantitative	200 randomly selected principals from lower secondary schools from 34 different countries	Survey using The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS).
Harris & Crocker (2003)	Qualitative	21 campus principal mentors in Texas (USA)	Interviews
Hayes (2019)	Qualitative	12 novice principals and 12 mentors in the Southeast Region of the USA	Semi-structured interviews; Focus Groups, & Field Notes
Hean (2003)	Mixed Methods	41 Secondary Principals in Singapore	Surveys and interviews
Msila (2016)	Qualitative	5 mentors in KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa)	Interviews & Field Notes
Normore (2007)	Qualitative	18 participants in an Urban School District in the southeast (USA)	Interviews, filed notes, observations, anecdotal data, and document analysis
Oksana, Zepeda, & Bengtson (2012)	Qualitative	16 participants in 4 different school districts in Georgia (USA)	Semi-structured interviews
Oplatka & Lapidot (2018)	Qualitative	12 novice principals in Israel	Semi-structured interviews
Peters (2010)	Qualitative	Mentor and mentee (USA)	Interviews
Riley, (2009)	Mixed Methods	90 experienced school leaders (USA)	Quantitative surveys, focus group interviews, participant reflections
Schechter (2014)	Qualitative	18 novice principals & 6 mentors in New York (USA)	Interviews & Document Analysis

Schechter & Firuz (2015)	Qualitative	18 school principal mentors in Israel	Semi-structured Interviews
Scott (2010)	Qualitative	14 participants that included principals and their mentors (USA)	Interviews, document analysis
Sciarappa & Mason (2014)	Quantitative	54 novice principals in USA	Surveys
Service, Dalic, Thomson (2018)	Qualitative	14 principal mentors in New Zealand	Semi-structured Interviews
Smith (2007)	Qualitative	3 elementary school principals (USA)	6 focus group interviews over the span of a year
Tahir, Said, Daud, Vazhathodi, & Khan (2016)	Mixed Methods	200 Head Teachers in Malaysia; (n=6) Head teachers for Focused Interviews	Surveys, Focus groups, & Interviews

Central Themes

After reviewing and coding the mentoring studies listed in Table 1, we developed four primary themes on how mentoring novice principals or head teachers (referred to as principals for the remainder of this paper) is conceived and valued internationally. Generally speaking, the literature regarding mentoring is centered on these four primary themes: role clarification for both the mentors and the protégés; determinants of effective mentoring relationships, benefits and outcomes of mentoring, and challenges and impediments to mentoring. Through a synthesis of the literature, we discuss each theme as it pertains to developing novice principals.

Role Clarification: Mentors

Successful mentors are experienced principals who are knowledgeable of the school organization, are patient, have the

ability to understand others, and possess good listening and communication skills (Daresh, 2007). Experienced principals, who model effective leadership behaviors and have a strong grasp of effective instructional practices tend to be ideal mentors in supporting novice principals (Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Parylo, Zepeda, & Bengtson, 2012; Peters, 2010; Scott, 2010). Effective principal mentors possess specific behaviors, and these behaviors can predict whether a principal will make a good mentor. Effective mentors should (a) exhibit strong leadership qualities (b) communicate well with others; (c) possess the ability to think outside the box; and (d) have the willingness to take risks (Gettys, Martin, & Bigby, 2010; Gumus & Bellibas, 2013). Dukess (2001) concluded that good mentors rendered three forms of assistance to new principals: (a) provide instructional support focused on student learning; (b) provide administrative support by helping novice principals manage their time to focus on learning and instruction; and (c) provide emotional support throughout the mentoring relationship. In the mentoring relationship, the mentor does not give advice but asks reflective questions to help their protégé reflect and think deeply to solve problems (Gimbel & Kefor, 2018).

Principal mentors should be respected within the field of administration, believe in and be committed to the professional development process, and be able to work with beginning principals to center their learning on their personal and professional needs and the needs of the school (Hayes, 2019). Moreover, mentors should be selected from principals who volunteer to serve because a willing mentor is more productive than one who is serving simply because of a duty of his or her position (Aravena, 2018; Clayton, Sanzo, & Myran, 2013). Principal mentors need to be able to support beginning principals, set goals, identify opportunities for learning, provide

constructive feedback, and encourage reflection of experiences (Gimbel & Kefor, 2018; Hopkins-Thompson, 2000; Parylo, Zepeda, & Bengtson, 2012). Principal mentors need the ability to build and maintain their relationships with their mentees based on mutual trust, respect, and professionalism; moreover, they should be able to create a relationship that allows them to develop a genuine understanding of their mentees' ideas and needs and encourage their mentees to honestly share and reflect upon their experiences (Anderson & Wasonga, 2017; Bakioglu, et al., 2010). Mentors also need to understand that the mentoring relationship takes time to develop (Bakioglu, Gacifazlioglu, & Ozcan, 2010; Clayton, Sanzo, & Myran, 2013), and the relationship should develop naturally based on the needs of the protégé. Finally, mentors need professional development and training in order to learn how to be mentors who focus on supporting and developing novice principals (Hayes, 2019; Riley, 2009; Scott, 2010; Smith, 2007).

Role Clarification: Protégés

New principals need support, encouragement, affirmation, and an understanding of the challenges of being a leader of learning (Boerema, 2011). Novice principals have repeatedly reported the benefits that mentoring provided them in helping them transition as school leaders (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Bakioglu, et al., 2010; Boerema, 2011; Duncan & Stock, 2010; Hayes, 2019; Hean 2003; Sciarappa & Mason, 2014). First year principals benefit from mentoring relationships through socialization into the profession, reflective conversation, and role clarification (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006); an emphasis on reflection skills and professional growth (Aravena, 2018; Gimbel & Kefor, 2018); and the receiving of professional support, empathy, problem solving skills, improved

communication skills, professional development, and improved confidence (Daresh, 2007; Hayes, 2019).

Although relational mentoring is characterized as a mutual learning partnership, Zachary (2000) emphasized the importance of the protégé taking the initiative in the relationship. By encouraging the protégé to intentionally pursue a mentor, Zachary suggested a move away from the concept of the mentor being in a superior role and the protégé serving as a passive subordinate to more of a two-way, power-free, and mutually beneficial relationship. Novice principals often feel insecure and shy away from asking for help for fear of being seen as incompetent (Bakioglu, et al., 2010), but in order to move towards a long-term and mutually beneficial relationship, the protégé needs to recognize their learning needs and communicate with their mentor (Della Sala, et al., 2013).

Novice principals also need to remember their strengths and how those strengths add to the mentoring relationship. A novice principal's growth can be stifled when they rely on their mentors for too much guidance and do not trust their own strengths and skills (Daresh, 2007). In the mentoring relationship the mentor helps the protégé become confident in problem solving and leading with their strengths thereby increasing the novice principal's efficacy in school leadership (Bush & Chew, 1999; Daresh, 2007; Gross, 2002; Hayes 2019, Peters, 2010). A successful mentoring relationship is not stagnant but is a dynamic process in which mentors and protégés grow and develop together.

Determinants of Effective Mentoring Relationships

A quality mentoring relationship is the key to sustainable leadership development (Hansford & Ehrich, 2006). The success of

mentoring in the support and development of novice principals is dependent on the quality of the mentoring relationship between the mentor and protégé (Scott, 2010). Within the literature, we found two key determinants for effective mentoring relationships: a) the mentor and protégé pairing and b) length of time in the mentoring relationship and enough time for mentoring sessions.

Mentor and Protégé Pairing. The literature suggests that the mentor and protégé pairing is the largest factor in developing a strong and effective mentoring relationship. Researchers have suggested that both gender and race (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Moorosi, 2012; Msila, 2016; Oplatka & Lapidot, 2018; Peters, 2010) as well as context (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Anderson & Wasonga, 2017; Aravena, 2018; Gettys, Martin, & Bigby, 2010; Gimbel & Kefor, 2018; Hayes, 2019; Msila, 2016; Schechter, 2014; Tahir et al., 2016) matter when it comes to insuring an effective pairing. When mentors and mentees are matched, variables such as professional goals, interpersonal styles, and learning needs should be considered (Oplatka & Lapidot, 2018; Schechter, 2014). Additionally, context matters--the "mentoring process must be developed in a specific context" (Aravena, 2018, p. 224). Anderson & Wasonga (2017) found that "mentoring relationships yield greater outcomes when paired with the right context" (p. 291), and Hayes (2019) found that protégés reported increased professional learning when matched with mentors in similar school contexts. Finally, both the mentor and the protégé must be committed to the mentoring process and allow the process to develop naturally over time (Aravena, 2018; Clayton, Sanzo, & Myran, 2010; Duncan & Stick, 2010).

Mentoring pairings can be either formal or informal, and researchers vary in their opinion on which is more effective. Formal

mentoring relationships generally occur in established mentoring programs. In a formal relationship, a mentor is assigned to a novice principal, and typically, personal factors or complementary characteristics of the mentor or protégé are not always considered when making the assignment. When mismatches occur in formal mentoring relationships, the mentor and the protégé are likely to have feelings of anxiety and stress and often have difficulty establishing a positive and productive mentoring relationship (Schechter, 2014). However, when personal characteristics and context are considered in making matches in formal programs, positive results occur in the mentoring relationship.

Informal mentoring relationships often occur more naturally and organically when protégés seek out a trusted adviser or friend with whom they have an affiliation, or they trust and admire. Informal mentoring relationships are usually built on shared interests and personal characteristics and most likely result in a good match between the mentor and the protégé. Anderson and Wasonga (2017) found that informal mentoring processes in the forms of socialization and internalization had a greater impact on leadership learning than formal relationships. Although informal mentoring relationships may appear to be ideal, there are some disadvantages including: the selected mentor may lack respect and/or knowledge as a leader; the mentor may not be able to meet the needs of the protégé; the mentoring sessions may lack the content needed to support the novice principal's transition to an effective school leader; and the mentoring relationship may primarily focus on socialization rather than professional development (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Gettys, Martin & Bigby, 2010; Hayes, 2019; Moorosi, 2012; Peters, 2010).

Time. The majority of the researchers in the mentoring studies indicated that both time for mentoring sessions and length of time in the mentoring relationships are critical when it comes to effective mentoring relationships. Developmental mentoring embraces a relationship that often lasts longer than a year and emphasizes longer-range expertise (Reyes, 2003). New principals need time with their mentors to share experiences in similar contexts (Harris & Crocker, 2006; Hayes, 2019). Hayes (2019) found that when mentors and protégés dedicate consistent time together on a monthly basis sharing similar experiences, the protégé's reported an increase in their efficacy as instructional leaders. Gimbel and Kefor (2018) recommended that mentors and protégés need ample time to learn and grow together and suggested creating ample time for contact hours to work on leadership development. Tahir et al (2016) also acknowledged that protégés need time with their mentors to develop their leadership skills and suggested using technology (e.g. video conferencing) as a means to support additional time in the mentoring relationship. Finally, several researchers (Hayes, 2019; Service, Dalgic, & Thornton, 2018; Tahir et al, 2016) suggested that protégés need to spend time observing their mentors by job shadowing them, and mentors need to model best practices for their protégés.

Benefits and Outcomes

Mentoring has benefits for both the protégé and the mentor. Researchers have outlined numerous benefits that mentoring provides to novice principals, including indoctrination into the profession (Daresh, 2004); socialization and networking (Anderson & Wasonga, 2017); improving the school culture (Msila, 2016; Oplatka & Lapidot); and building confidence in instructional leadership (Gettys, Martin, & Bigby, 2010; Gumus & Bellibas, 2016; Hayes, 2019;

Normore, 2007). The first year as a school principal is difficult, and often lonely and isolated (Hayes, 2019; Walker & Dimmock, 2006); moreover, the only people who understand the extent of the principalship are other principals (Young, Sheets, & Knight, 2005). Mentoring provides novices with a trusted confidante and adviser to assist them as they transition to the principalship and eases the burden of first year challenges. Novice principals need support, encouragement, affirmation, understanding, information/resources, and interactions with other principals. Supportive mentoring relationships are essential to novice principals in developing the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to lead successful schools (Boerema, 2011; Daresh, 2004; Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Hayes, 2019; Parylo, Zepeda, & Bengtson, 2012). Tahir et al (2016) confirmed that mentoring benefits include psychological and social benefits, instilling professional values, improving leadership skills, and improving management skills (p. 440), and they concluded that "the mentoring process is definitely effective in improving leadership capacities" (p. 441) among novice principals.

While mentoring provides invaluable support to novice principals, there are many benefits to the mentors as well. Mentors have reported benefits such as collegiality, personal reflection, and gratification in helping a peer (Aravena, 2018; Clayton, Sanzo, & Myran, 2013; Daresh, 2004). Harris and Crocker (2003) outline several benefits that mentoring provides to mentors including the opportunity to share ideas, to help someone grow into the profession, to evaluate their own practice, and to be inspired by their protégé (p. 76). Msila (2016) found that mentors benefitted from a mentoring relationship through their own ongoing professional development, enhancing their own school culture, and forging healthy relationships with key stakeholders. Schechter and Firuz (2015) reported that

mentors found the act of mentoring rewarding in that they are able to help shape novice principals and guide them through the leadership development process. Researchers have also reported that through a mentoring relationship, mentors found their own practices as a school principal were enhanced (Bickmore & Davenport, 2019; Service, Dalgic, & Thornton, 2018), and they became better principals as a result of the mentoring relationship (Hayes, 2019; Parylo, Zepeda, & Bengtson, 2012).

Challenges and Impediments

Harris and Crocker (2003) outlined three main difficulties in cultivating and sustaining effective mentoring relationships: time constraints, not understanding the mentoring role, and inadequate communication skills. Mentoring does not happen in isolation and not all mentors understand how to be effective mentors. Mentors need ongoing professional support (Aravena, 2018; Parylo, Zepeda, & Bengtson, 2012; Schechter, 2014), and without formal training programs and support for mentors, the protégés in the relationship often do not get what they need to be successful (Msila, 2016; Hayes, 2019). Mentoring is also confused with novice principal induction (Aravena, 2018), and many school mentoring programs are focused on induction rather than professional development (Brondyk & Searby, 2013). Other limitations include incompatibility between the mentor and protégé (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Msila, 2016; Oplatka & Lapidot, 2018; Peters, 2010), insufficient support from the school district (Gettys, Martin & Bigby, 2010; Msila, 2016), and inattention to the protégé's needs (Clayton, Sanzo & Myran, 2013).

Directions for Future Research

Mentoring Studies and Practice-based Recommendations

Despite the existence of many mentoring programs, few programs are developed through formal set and established processes over the course of a principal's career. While mentoring programs may deem to be helpful for supporting principals and cultivating effective leadership skills, there is also a need to support principals not only as novice principals but over a long-sustained periods of time. Such programs may bring forth confidence due to the social network that is being nurtured through that mentoring relationship. Additionally, university preparation programs, in particular, could play a critical role in developing formal mentoring programs by connecting principals for mentoring relationships through an organic process.

Beyond preparation programs, further efforts need to focus on incorporating mentoring as an integral part of simply being a principal. Similar to how professional learning communities have trended over time and proven to be important for a healthy school system, mentoring could be designed to become normative through policies and an integral part of the schooling culture and system. In this way, education policies and systems may include the need for mentoring to be part of school culture and even principal preparation programs and thus be enabling for authentic transformative learning to happen giving agency for principals to develop the program as they see fit for their own personal leadership and school improvement. Further research is also needed to define the underlying aspects of mentoring schemas that are associated with non-traditional formats such as virtual mentoring, peer mentoring, group mentoring, and mentoring networks. Mullen (2013) discussed

alternative mentoring paradigms such as mosaic mentoring, collaborative mentoring, and multi-level co-mentoring, but we found little research exploring these mentoring paradigms with practicing school principals.

Additionally, the majority of the research is focused on novice principals and their induction into the principalship. There is limited information and studies on how mentoring can support mid-career principals. The mid-career stage is defined as that which occurs "after individuals perceive they have mastered the role's basic knowledge, skills, behaviors, and values and before they begin to move toward retirement or termination of their role involvement" (Crow & Matthews, 1998, p. 129). Smith (2007) asserted that principals in mid-career tend to operate alone and do not always allocate time to reflect on their own practice and gather appropriate feedback from others. With the current reality of increased burnout rates and principal turnover, it is crucial to build a support system for principals through mentoring. Future mentoring studies could address how mentoring influences the mindful leadership practices of principals, specifically addressing job related stress and work-life balance. Additionally, such studies could inform the type of practices in mentorship that are needed to best address the needs of the mentors as well as mentees. Investigating various mentorships programs implemented in different contexts and cultures--internationally and locally-- could be key to solidifying the core best practices and policies that need to be integrated in effective and successful mentorship programs.

Methodological Recommendations

This review underscores the crucial importance of mentoring in developing and supporting school principals. While this review only reported on the literature that is currently available, it may be

important for future researchers to focus on various aspects of principal mentoring. Given the gaps in research described above, the optimal design would be a meta-analysis that would match the specificity and reliability of direct measures with the in-depth qualitative perspective of indirect measures. Furthermore, it is important that an effort is made in future studies to describe precisely how mentoring influences the school administrator's performance in leadership. It would also be beneficial to study relationships between attrition and mentorship, mentorship/personality compatibility, etc. Researchers should also consider methodologies that contribute to developing a more consistent theory of mentoring. Developing mentoring programs and using randomized controlled trials to evaluate the efficacy are important to understand in depth the effects of such programs on mentors, principals, and school culture. Comparative international studies could also be important as they would reveal how various contexts and cultural differences affect the implementation process, receptivity of mentorship programs, and influence on schooling. We also suggest descriptive/longitudinal studies and case studies to examine on a deeper level the relationship dynamics and processes that have not yet been explored in the literature.

Conclusion

The review of literature presented in this study builds upon other literature reviews and book chapters conducted by other researchers. Most notably, Hobson and Sharp (2005) conducted a systematic review of literature on mentoring new head teachers primarily in the United Kingdom (UK). In their review, Hobson and

Shaw (2005) found four main themes pertaining to mentoring head teachers:

1. Types of mentoring employed with new head teachers;
2. The effectiveness if mentoring programmes for new head teachers;
3. The stated benefits of new head teachers (for both mentor and protégé)
4. Factors which are said to influence the success of mentoring schemes for new head teachers. (p. 32)

In the past fifteen years since the publication of Hobson and Shaw's systematic review, the research on mentoring has continued to focus around these four general themes—little has changed. Researchers have continued to study the effective practices of mentoring principals for professional learning through: role clarification for both the mentors and the protégés; determinants of effective mentoring relationships, benefits and outcomes of mentoring, and challenges and impediments to mentoring. All of the studies included in this review assert that mentoring continues to be one of the most significant ways to indoctrinate novice principals as effective school leaders; however, many of the researchers have expressed that in order for mentoring to be effective, then high quality training, mentoring pairings, context, and time must be considered for a successful mentoring program. This study contributes to the growing body of research on principal mentoring and extends the previous research by consolidating all the research studies for a unified perspective on the outcomes and challenges of mentoring in the past 20 years. Although the majority of mentoring studies have been conducted in the US, we feel research on mentoring is gaining more recognition in international contexts. As

researchers continue to conceptualize mentoring and mentoring programs, we feel it is important to progress future research on mentoring from simply understanding the dyadic relationship and the impact it has on the development and support of school principals and move towards finding innovative and effective practices in mentoring as a professional learning tool for principals to address context specific problems in leading schools (e.g. mindful leadership, leadership for social justice and equity, etc.). Additionally, mentoring networks and virtual mentoring are emerging as trends in mentoring school principals and warrant further research. These two innovative paradigms have the potential for broadening the mentoring research by understanding how mentoring can be used as professional learning and growth within and across international contexts.

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