

**PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE HIGH SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS OF THEIR LEADERSHIP ROLES**

by

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**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
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DECLARATION

I, Hildah Lungu Ng'ambi, hereby declare that this dissertation for the degree Master of Education in Education Management, titled: *Perceptions and experiences of female high school principals of their leadership roles*, submitted at the North-West University (Mahikeng Campus), has not been previously submitted, by me or any other person for a degree at this or any other university, that it is my own work and all materials contained herein have been duly acknowledged.

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Above all, **God Almighty** for affording me life, good health and courage throughout the period of this study.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the following:

My children, Muma, Chikwefu and Taonga.

My husband, Victor Ng'ambi.

My late parents, Anderson Malizyani Lungu and Tamara Luhanga Lungu.

ABSTRACT

Despite the persistence of underrepresentation of females in senior leadership positions there is now a steadily growing pool of females in senior educational leadership positions. It is this growing pool of females who have managed to advance into leadership positions whose experiences and perceptions of leadership may be vital to the understanding of leadership from a female perspective.

This study sought to establish, from five female high school principals how they had attained their positions and what their perceptions and experiences were of their educational leadership roles.

The study utilised a mainly qualitative research design with a minor supporting quantitative component. The entire population of female principals from Mahikeng, Disaneng and Ramatlabama in Ngaka Modiri Molema district was utilised as it was not feasible to draw a sample from such a small pool of female principals. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews and closed-ended questionnaires respectively. Qualitative data analysis proceeded as soon as the first set of data were collected and continued until all interviews had been conducted. The process of analysis involved transcription of recorded data, coding and categorisation, and seeking for patterns among the categories. Analysis of quantitative data was done using descriptive statistics, that is, frequency distribution and percentages.

The findings reveal that the female principals in this study perceived their educational leadership and management roles as those of: Planning, organising, monitoring student progress, defining and communicating the school mission and also nurturing a positive learning climate. They attained their leadership positions through their experience and qualifications, and as a result of the post becoming vacant. Their perceptions are that the position of principal entails demonstrating measurable outcomes, leading pupils, teachers and the community at large and being accountable to all stakeholders including the Department of Education.

It is evident from the study that the main reasons behind the underrepresentation of females in positions of leadership in secondary schools are family responsibilities, lack of mentors

and of networks. The Department of Basic Education should consider strategies to attract more females to educational leadership positions and females should engage themselves in self-improvement programmes for career advancement.

More training in the form of workshops should be given to principals, particularly female principals in order to enhance their ability to be more decisive, assertive, interactive and emphatic in their positions of leadership. Females already in educational leadership positions should help other females aspiring to be leaders by mentoring or motivating them.

KEYWORDS

Educational leadership

Educational leadership roles

Perceptions and experiences

Female principals

Barriers to advancement

LIST OF ACRONYMS

UN - United Nations

UNESCO - United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UIS - United Institute of Statistics

MDG - Millennium Development Goals

DOE - Department of Education

ACE - Advanced Certificate in Education

PAM - Personnel Administrative Measures

SGB - School Governing Body

SMT - Senior Management Team

SASA - South African School Act

NCS - National Curriculum Statement

LRC - Labour Relations Council

IRB – Internal Review Board

IACUC – Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

HODs – Heads of Departments

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Despite persistent underrepresentation of females in education as in many other occupations (Bush (2007:28), there is now a steadily growing pool of female principals in educational leadership positions. It is this growing pool of females who have managed to advance into leadership positions whose experiences and perceptions of leadership may be vital to the understanding of leadership from a female perspective.

In South Africa, legislative frameworks for equality and affirmative action have resulted in the introduction of policies and procedures that promote equality between males and females. The Constitution of South Africa 1996 (Section 9, Act number 3, 1996) clearly explains that no one should be discriminated against based on gender. This affirmative action and equal opportunity legislation designed in part to increase opportunities for working females has raised awareness of gender issues in organisations such as schools.

In Mahikeng, as in many other towns in the North-West Province, there are several public high schools and only a few of these schools have female principals, mainly because gender inequalities still persist in educational leadership (Brown & Irby, 2010:7). The perception remains that males make stronger, firmer leaders that are better able to effectively implement and maintain discipline. Female teachers are marginalized. This was also a finding of research done by Shakeshaft (2011:218) found that communities believe that females are malleable and that they have limited and specific abilities. However, as this research has shown, there are females today whose leadership abilities are not limited.

In Shakeshaft's (2011:210) view the history of females teaching is intertwined with the history of leadership and management roles and that both histories need to be understood. Shakeshaft further explains that historically, males were in the first place unavailable to teach, so females were sought first because they were viewed as able to bring civilisation and motherly abilities extending from home to the classroom and vice-versa. The secretary of the United Nations, Kurt Waldheim gave a speech and uttered these words, "*We must think positively about how the position of women in their own societies and in international affairs*

could not only be improved, but the large potential contribution be better utilised for the benefit of all” (Byrne, 1978:13)

Like the secretary general’s perspective on females, Shakeshaft also denounces the lack of inclusion of females in many aspects. Entrenched social-cultural stereotypes against females cut across colour. This means that there is a very firmly established belief about females being unable to lead because the culture stipulates that females should not take up leadership roles. In this modern day and age there are people that still believe that females are incapable of leading. The United Nations (UN) 4th World Conference on women held in Beijing in 1995 established that, despite the widespread movement towards democratisation, in most countries females are largely underrepresented at most levels of government.

In South Africa generally, and in Mahikeng (the site of this study), a number of schools are still headed by males despite the change in legislation after 1994. As a result most female teachers are still found at the lower levels of the hierarchy in contrast to their male counterparts. This sentiment is also shared by Grogan (in Brown & Irby, 2010:2) who confirms that although the number of females in educational leadership has more than doubled in the last ten years, they are still woefully small. This is a common phenomenon especially at higher levels of the education system. On social inequality, the National Framework of Teacher Development found that 53% of teachers are female in South Africa and yet males are still disproportionately represented in promotion posts and school management. Eagly and Carli, (2007:193) state that societal pressures and highly industrialised societies are not interested in gender equality but want employees to be chosen on the basis of their abilities and also retained on basis of their performance or competence.

Gupton and Slick (1996:135) argue that even though the number of female leaders has increased, females still remain significantly underrepresented as a gender, especially considering the fact that they comprise 70% of the entire profession. In South Africa, according to Kane-Berman and Holborn (2011:421), a report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Institute of Statistics (UIS) made a revelation that it had the largest number of female teachers compared to most other countries in the sub-Saharan African countries. This data brought to light that globally the proportion of female teachers grew from 56% in 1990 to 63%. In sub-Saharan Africa, the change was insignificant from 40% to 42%. Kane-Berman and Holborn add that research by

the Department of Basic Education of South Africa revealed that the proportion of female teachers stood at about 67% in 2010.

Crawford (in Brown, 2011:81) reports that almost all educational reform reports have come to the conclusion that no nation can attain excellence in education without effective school leadership but this does not mean that only males make effective leaders, as Gupton and Slick (1996:134) state:

In any school environment, there should be an appreciation and respect for the qualities, skills and expertise that the individual, be it male or female leader brings. They further state that masculine characteristics, female characteristics and neutral characteristics combined with effective leadership interaction give a new perspective, one of androgyny, where performance is judged according to its rightness for that situation and not judged according to gender.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The underrepresentation of females in positions of leadership especially in high schools persists despite their numerical dominance as teachers and in spite of the legislation on equality and equity which is well-intentioned. Although more females in high schools are being promoted to senior management positions, they are still proportionately fewer than males and their progression through the ranks is not an easy one (Bush & Coleman, 2009:29). Eagly and Carli (2007:13) also point out that despite expanding opportunities, it is rare to find females in very high positions and those that have managed to get into leadership positions receive a huge amount of media attention. However, despite this underrepresentation, it is noteworthy that some females have managed to break the so-called 'glass ceiling' and 'attain educational leadership' (Shakeshaft, 1987:21). But, very few studies have documented the perceptions and experiences of these females holding leadership and management positions in schools. Hence, this study seeks to investigate the perceptions and experiences of educational leadership roles by high school female principals who have ascended into leadership positions. It seeks to understand how these females attained their educational leadership positions and what barriers they think hinder females from attaining higher positions in educational leadership. Having stated the research problem, the following questions are posed.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.3.1 Main research question

What are the perceptions and experiences of female high school principals of their educational leadership and management roles?

1.3.2 Secondary research questions

- What are the roles of educational leaders and managers?
- What do female principals perceive to be their management and leadership roles and what are their actual experiences of management and leadership?
- What do females perceive to be their level of leadership and management skills?
- What are the job challenges encountered by female principals and what are the perceived barriers to females' promotion to educational leadership positions in public high schools?
- What can aspiring females do to advance into educational leadership positions?

1.3.3 Research aim and objectives

The main aim of this study was to establish what female high school principals' perceptions and experiences of their leadership and management roles are. The objectives were as follows:

- To describe the roles of educational leaders and managers.
- To determine the perceptions and experiences of female high school principals regarding their management and leadership roles.
- To determine what female principals perceive to be their level of management and leadership skills.
- To determine challenges female principals encounter in their job as educational leaders and the perceived barriers to females' promotion to educational leadership positions.
- To establish what aspirant females can do to advance into educational leadership positions.

1.3.4 Motivation for the research

1. This research was motivated by a need to understand how female principals, who are underrepresented in educational leadership positions, perceive their educational leadership roles and more importantly how they experience being leaders in a predominant male environment. Females' experiences of leadership in a male-dominated environment are spotlighted in the study in order to draw attention to females' unequal social position (Creswell, 2013:29) and hopefully decrease the inequality. The researcher has visited many high schools of North-West Province and most of them are under the leadership of males. Similarly in Mahikeng, few secondary schools are run by females and the researcher became interested in investigating how these few females perceive and experience leadership (and management) and also to establish what they perceive to be their roles as principals. Females seem capable of providing effective leadership; hence it is important to understand, from their own perspectives what their experiences are in their leadership roles.

1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Two methods of investigation were employed, namely, a literature study and an empirical investigation.

1.4.1 Literature study

After the research topic had been identified, the researcher embarked on a search for literature related to the topic as suggested by Creswell (2009:25). Creswell states that literature review shares with readers the results of previously conducted studies that are closely related to the study at hand. It also relates to the current study by filling in gaps that may exist and extends on findings from other studies. Furthermore it also provides a framework for outlining the importance of the study.

1.4.2 Empirical investigation

This study utilised a predominantly qualitative approach with a minor quantitative component aimed mainly at triangulating data sources and methods. The qualitative and (supporting) quantitative research design based on pragmatic and social constructivist/interpretivist worldviews was employed to investigate perceptions and experiences of educational leadership roles by female high school principals in Mahikeng and its surrounding areas.

The qualitative aspect was used to capture the experiences of the female principals. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012:30) define qualitative research as “a broad approach to the study of social phenomena” and it is “pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in people’s lived experiences...is enacted in naturalistic settings, focuses on context and is emergent and evolving”. Qualitative enquiry “is based essentially on a constructivist and/or critical perspective” (Lincoln and Guba, in Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012:30). A brief description of each approach follows in the sections below.

1.4.3 Qualitative approach

Denzin and Lincoln (in Maree, 2010:259) explain that in qualitative approach, the researcher approaches the truth or reality from a position that is constructivist, which allows for multiple meanings of individuals. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012:27) posit that qualitative research promotes a deep understanding of the social setting of an activity as viewed from the perspectives of the research participants.

Qualitative data assisted the researcher in gaining in-depth knowledge concerning the problem and also in obtaining a more complete picture of the participants’ experiences. Fraenkel *et al.*, (2012:425) indicate that qualitative data allows the researcher to place people’s perceptions and attitudes within their contexts. For both the qualitative and quantitative approach – the same participants were used as the intention was to use quantitative data in a supportive role to the qualitative data. Hence, five female principals were invited to participate in the study.

1.4.4 Quantitative approach

Maree (2010:145) defines quantitative research as a process that is systematic and objective in its ways of using numerical data from any selected subgroup of a population and generalises those findings to the population being studied.

In this study, the quantitative component was intended to complement the qualitative component and to provide triangulation of data from both approaches. Quantitative data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire.

1.4.4.1(a) *Participant selection*

In this study, no attempt was made to draw a sample from such a small population as it was not feasible. Hence the entire population of five High school female principals from Mahikeng, was used. These principals were from schools in Mahikeng area office of Ngaka Modiri Molema District.

1.4.4.1(b) *Data collection strategies*

These are techniques or strategies the researcher uses to gather information from the participants when in the field. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews and quantitative data were collected using closed-ended questionnaires. The semi-structured interview was used as the main data collection method as the study was predominantly qualitative.

1.4.4.1 (c) *Data analysis*

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:367) describe qualitative data analysis as a systematic process of coding, categorizing and interpreting data to provide an explanation for a single phenomenon of interest. Qualitative data in this study were analysed according to Cohen *et al's* (2011:537) description as given below. Data analysis involved organising, accounting for and explaining data. It involved making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the key constructs. Patterns, themes, categories and regularities were noted. Quantitative data, according to Maree (2010:186) consists of a list of numerical values, one for each respondent. In this study quantitative data were descriptively analysed and presented in tables.

1.5 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The study is significant in that its findings will be useful to all school principals, human resource managers and the North-West Department of Education and Training as it highlights the under-representation of females in leadership positions in schools in South Africa while it brings attention to their experiences as educational leaders.

It is hoped that the Department of Education and Training would use this study to improve opportunities for more females to become principals. It is also hoped that other female

principals would draw inspiration from the experiences of the principals involved in this study for their own educational leadership practice.

1.6 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

The following concepts are defined in the way they are used in the study.

Management: Is a continuous process through which members of an organisation attain organisational goals in an effective and efficient manner through planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling organizational resources (Coleman & Early, 2005:256).

Leadership: Bush (2008:4) defines leadership as influencing others' actions in achieving desirable ends. He also describes leaders as people that shape the goals, motivations and actions of others. Leadership draws others into the active pursuit of the strategic goals (Cordeiro & Cunningham, 2013:139). In schools leadership is about creating a vision to establish the nature and direction of change so that innovations are implemented efficiently and the school's residual functions are carried out effectively.

Educational leadership: Educational leadership is the relationship between the educational leaders, instructional staff and learners intended to create opportunities for exploring and the sharing of knowledge, influence changes about the value of life-long learning and create strategies designed to build and promote a shared vision (Roddy, 2010:1). Bush (2008:1) defines it as the formulation of policy and the transformation of the educational organisation. This refers to the leadership that provides direction and expert advice on learning, teaching and curriculum developments, emphasizing relevance to education management, diagnosing educational problems and encouraging professional development and teaching improvement (Bush & Bell, 2009:57).

Role: James *et al.* (in Bush & Middlewood, 2013:78) define it as tasks and responsibilities matched with people through job descriptions and other formal processes. They further state that assigning the role requires a boundary to delineate the responsibilities associated with the role. Loock (2003:42) states that the role of an educational leader is to create a sense of purpose and direction, aligning people behind the organisation. The principal with his senior team ascribe roles and subsequent predicted behaviour.

Gender equity: It is concerned with the promotion of equal opportunities and fair treatment of male and female in the personal, social, cultural, political and economic areas (Wolpe *et al.*, in Deventer & Kruger, 2009:271).

1.7 ORGANISATION OF CHAPTERS

Chapter one: Orientation

This chapter provided the background of the study, purpose of the study, research questions, rationale, limitations, delimitations and definitions of terms.

Chapter two: Literature review

In this chapter, a review of literature is shared related to gender issues, history of female educational leadership, roles played by principals, how female educational leaders can enhance their leadership skills, types of leadership and management models.

Chapter three: Research design and methodology

This chapter explains the research design and methodology utilised in the study. This study followed the qualitative approach with a minor quantitative component. It also presents the targeted population and instruments for data collection as well as data analysis. Procedure issues are explained of how trustworthiness as well as ethical considerations are taken care of.

Chapter four: Data presentation, analysis and interpretation

Data presentation and analysis: Data collected is presented, analysed and interpreted.

Chapter five: Summary, synthesis of findings and recommendations

This is a closing chapter for the research. A summary of the study, a synthesis of the findings and recommendations are presented. A conclusion of the main learning outcomes is discussed. The benefits and the contribution of the research along with recommendations for future research and extensions are presented.

1.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the rationale/motivation as to why the study was conducted. It has provided the general background to the study and also the framework of the study. The problem statement, the objectives as well as the research questions have all been highlighted. The study also has highlighted the existing literature and the research methodology used to

gather and analyse data. The next chapter deals with literature relevant to this study and contextualises the problem being investigated.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a review of the literature which provides a context for the current study on the perceptions and experiences of female high school principals regarding their educational leadership roles. The first part of the chapter presents the theoretical framework which includes transformational leadership, feminism and feminist theory. The chapter then moves on to discuss female leadership, historical perspectives on female leadership, the history of principalship, leadership styles, roles of principals, skills required by principals, barriers to females' progression into educational leadership positions, how leadership skills for females can be enhanced and what could be done to reduce barriers to females' promotion to educational leadership positions. The next section describes the theoretical framework of the study.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to best describe the theoretical framework underpinning this study, the following discussion will focus on transformational leadership, feminism and feminist theory, as well as models of educational leadership and management. Since this study is concerned with the perceptions and experiences of female principals regarding their educational leadership roles, it was deemed necessary to discuss management models as well because principals perform both leadership and management roles.

2.2.1 Transformational leadership

The study is underpinned by the *transformational leadership* theory as expounded by James Burns (1978), as well as *cultural feminism*. The combination of the two theories in this study is intended to illuminate the commonly perceived nature of female leadership as transformational and to highlight that the lack of visibility of females in leadership may be attributed to cultural beliefs about leadership.

The feminist perspective, as discussed in 2.2.2, also adds an important dimension to the interpretation and understanding of the experiences of the female principals under study. Lumby and Coleman (2007:4) state that the feminist perspective provides a different lens through which to observe social relations, and therefore adds to the researcher's ability to conceptualise gender in relation to leadership. The transformational leadership theory serves

to highlight what female principals can do to enhance their leadership roles while the feminist theory highlights issues that affect female principals by following the recommendations or actions that are suggested by the theory.

Transformational leadership theory according to Leithwood (in Volante, 2012:13) is concerned about pursuing three goals, namely: helping staff members in developing and maintaining a collaborative, professional school culture; fostering teacher development and helping teachers solve problems together more effectively. The feminist theory as Flax (in Young & Lopez, 2011:240) aims at analysing gender relations, how gender relations are constituted and experienced and how we think or, equally important, do not think about them and he further states that feminist scholarship has its own praxis, which calls for action that may yield more equitable distribution of resources and opportunities for those that have been marginalised. The female principals will use the transformational leadership theory to enhance their leadership.

Leithwood (in Bush, 2007:77) lists some dimensions of this type of leadership as: Building school vision, establishing school goals, providing intellectual stimulation, offering individual support, modelling best practices and impartial organisational value, demonstrating high performance expectations, creating a productive school culture and developing structure to foster participation in school decisions.

Preedy, Bennett and Wise (2012:75-76) posit that transformational leadership is viewed as a holistic approach to leadership because it acknowledges the fact that the subordinates share the principal's core values, being: care, equity, high expectations and achievement. The following are some of the aspects of holistic leaders, also known as transformational leaders: professionally inviting culture, effective communication, and ethical foundation, vision of excellence in empowerment of followers, personal mastery and collaboration.

Brundrett, Brutan and Smith (2008:39) point out that one of the most influential conceptualisations of approaches to leadership is that of Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach. They identify six major categories of leadership models, namely: instructional, moral, participative, managerial, contingent and transformational. In this study, as already stated, the researcher focused on the transformational type of leadership as this is the one commonly associated with female leadership.

Bass and Avolio (in Brundrett *et al.*, 2003:40) explain that:

Transformational leadership can be understood using four 'I's namely idealised influence where the leader models behaviour and acts as a role model, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration where the leader encourages the development of each person and acts as a coach or mentor.

In the following section, Bass and Avolio's dimensions of transformational leadership are presented from Leithwood's (1996:801-803) perspective. These dimensions are: charisma or idealised influence, individualised consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation:

2.2.1.1 Charisma or Idealised influence

Charisma is an important part of leadership, charismatic leaders are visionary, and the power of visionary leaders is found in the attractiveness of the missions they espouse and the willingness of others to believe in those missions. Charismatic school leaders are perceived to exercise power in socially positive ways. Transformational leadership includes behaviour aimed at promoting co-operation among employees and getting them to work together towards a common goal.

2.2.1.2 Individualised consideration

This dimension of transformational leadership encompasses behaviour, indicating that the leader respects followers and is concerned about their personal feelings and needs. This dimension of leadership parallels the central role of consideration in the style or approach the leaders use to promote mutual trust, liking and respect in the relationship between himself/herself and his/her subordinates. Among the things a leader does to show consideration for subordinates is treating everyone equally and not showing favouritism towards individuals or groups, practising an "open door" policy, being approachable, accessible and well-coming, being thoughtful about the personal needs of staff and providing support for personal and professional development of staff. Transformational leaders provide recognition for staff work in the form of individual praise or pats on the back and they take individual teachers' opinions into consideration when initiating actions that may affect their work and also instil in staff a sense of belonging to the school.

2.2.1.3 *Intellectual stimulation*

Intellectual stimulation, as Podsakoff (in Leithwood, 1996:808) believes, is behaviour that challenges followers to re-examine some of their work and to rethink how it can be performed. This behaviour may consist of a type of feedback associated with verbal persuasion. This type of stimulation, according to Leithwood, also seems likely to draw the attention of teachers to discrepancies between current and desired practices and to understand the truly challenging nature of restructuring goals of schools.

Some strategies identified by Leithwood (1996:808) as concerned with intellectual stimulation are: removing penalties when mistakes are made as an effort towards professional and school improvement, embracing conflict and even generating conflict as a way of clarifying alternative courses of action available to the school, and requiring colleagues to support opinions with good reasons and insisting on careful thought before acting.

2.2.1.4 *Inspirational motivation*

According to Preedy *et al.* (2012:75), in order to provide inspirational motivation, teachers should involve learners in envisioning an attractive future, provide meaningful but challenging work and communicate clear expectations that encourage the learners to commit to the shared goals and vision.

2.2.2 Feminism and feminist theory

Rohmann (1999:135) presents a broad definition of feminism, as “a social political, and cultural movement dedicated to the achievement of equal rights and status for females in all spheres of life...”

The feminist perspective adds an important dimension to the interpretation and understanding of the experiences of the female principals in this study because it helps to explain the feminine attributes that female principals bring to leadership.

Cordeiro and Cunningham (2013:143) indicate that feminist theorists start with a desire to present a conceptualisation of management based on beliefs and values of females. Feminist theory thus aims at analysing gender relations and how gender relations are constituted and experienced, and “feminist research approaches centre and make problematic females’ diverse situations and the institutions that frame those situations” (Creswell, 2007: 25). The next section presents one of the strands of feminism theories which is relevant to this study. The literature discusses different types of feminisms and among these are: cultural feminism, liberal feminism, radical feminism and socialist feminism (Acker, 1994:45-48). Cultural

feminism has been selected for this study and the reasons are enumerated in the following section.

2.2.2.1 Cultural feminism

One of the reasons why cultural feminism is preferred in this study is that cultural feminists call for highlighting and valuing the differences between male and female, and that is why this study is concerned with the experiences of female principals rather than principals in general. Cultural feminism is specific in what it advocates. It acknowledges the natural differences between males and females. Cultural feminism emphasises that these natural differences should be accepted instead of being undervalued. Hence, female leadership styles and feminine attributes should be embraced.

According to cultural feminism, females tend to value ideals such as interdependence, co-operation, relationships, community, sharing, joy, trust and peace, while, according to Bush (2007:80), males tend to value ideals such as independence, hierarchy, competition and domination. Cultural feminism values both what males and females bring to leadership.

Cultural feminists suggest that society should be facilitated by feminist laws which have respectful attitudes, allowing the full participation of females in all sectors, while neither denying their distinct nature nor discriminating against them for their differences (Higgins, McAllaster, Certo and Gilbert, 2006). Cultural feminism is therefore an ideology of female nature or female essence that attempts to revalidate what cultural feminists consider undervalued female attributes. Cultural feminists seek to create a more female-oriented culture (Morley & Chen, 1996:276). While this study acknowledges that the tendency of cultural feminism to essentialise females may in fact be perceived as perpetuating gender stereotypes, it is its validation of values such as relationships, cooperation and sharing that makes it appealing to a study of female leadership. The next section discusses female leadership.

2.3 FEMALE LEADERSHIP

This section presents a feminist perspective on leadership by first putting forward the historical perspective on female leadership, then describing the leadership styles of females and leadership skills.

2.3.1 Historical perspectives on female leadership

In South Africa, like in many other parts of Africa and the world at large, there has been a political agenda of on-going reform in the education sector. Gerdes (in DeWitt, 2008:516)

stipulates the issues that are feminist in contemporary society, equality for females. With females being educated, there has also been an increase in the number of females getting employed. Unfortunately, organisational cultures within education have not changed completely.

Shakeshaft (2011:212), on historical barriers, reports that females were coded as undependable, unprofessional workers and that females were a wasted investment because they untimely left the teaching post to start a family. This shows that females from early years were not given a chance to develop into managers or leaders. Shakeshaft (2011:212) continues to say males also left the teaching positions for better paying jobs but no one complained and yet laws did not allow a married female to continue with her teaching. Hansot and Tyack (in Shakeshaft, 2011:212) further state that by early in the 20th century, most urban districts in the United States prohibited the hiring of married females that could have eventually been promoted to leadership and management positions.

The Constitution of India's (1986) national policy of education guarantees females equality, liberty, and fraternity. To overcome prolonged deprivation, females were also accorded privileges of free education and reservation in education institutions. This indicates that females need to be given opportunities to become educated, succeed in life and also take up leadership and management roles. Papa (2011:200) quotes what Barrack Obama, the president of the United States of America, said on the 22 October 2009, namely that education was no longer a pathway to opportunity and success but education was a prerequisite to success. This statement also shows that with more females being educated, the chances of them being placed in leadership positions will also increase.

In 1965, as reported in the United Nations charter, a long-term programme for improving the welfare of females was announced. In 1975, United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) declared education as the most effective channel they could use to close the gap between man and woman. UNESCO also dedicated 1975 as a year of a woman. The United Kingdom also in the same year introduced legislation to promote equality between sexes. In 1979 the United Nations set out a legally binding form which was internationally accepted on principles and measures to achieve equal rights for females across the globe.

Lynch (in Onyango, Simatwa & Oding, 2011) says in America, females are also outnumbered by males in leadership and management roles. Limerick and Lingard (in Onyango

et al., 2011) also report that in Australia, males dominate senior positions because males are said to have better leadership skills. Onyango *et al.* (2011) report on Kenya as being a country with few females holding senior leadership and management positions.

In South Africa, the ideology of looking down upon African women with respect to their leadership skills was further perpetrated by the apartheid regime which segregated people according to race and culture. The plight of a female being considered to be less suitable being compared to a male has been alive for a long period of time. Research has been done in many parts of the world as reported in the above examples. In South Africa, research was also done on females before it became a democracy. De Witt (2008:516) reports on Tertiary (1981) who reports in her master's thesis in the publication titled: "The new role of women in the educational system for whites in the Republic of South Africa." Gerdes (1972) also published hers titled "Is there a place for feminists in contemporary society?" The other publication De Witt reports on is that of Hillerbrand (1989) whose publication was about motivation of female teachers. This shows that the problem concerning females has persisted for a long time. The constitutional right to equal rights in section 3 of South African Act number (9, 1996) states that everyone is equal.

Lumby and Coleman (2007:46) explain that in the last decades of the twentieth century, many studies recognised that work and life were highly gendered and viewed the same reasons as to why females were less likely than males to occupy leadership and management positions. South Africa is a non-racial democratic country and all people are equal before the law and the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998, bases the appointment or filling of posts by educators on equality and equity and promotes all considerations of ability of candidates and the need to redress the imbalances of the past in order to achieve broad representation.

2.3.2 Perceptions on female leadership styles

The debate on whether or not females differ from males in the way they lead is interesting in the leadership research. It is even more interesting for feminist researchers who are inclined to believe that women do indeed have leadership styles that differ from those of men. Eagly and Carli (2007:120-121) posit that debates on how males and females differ in leadership styles are incited among social scientists and that those that avoid the debate are either avoiding discussing the matter by simply arguing that females are nicer, kinder and collaborative. On the other hand, those that prefer to address the issue by arguing that females

and males are the same are seen to be promoting masculine leadership styles which make female leaders uncomfortable. Eagly and Carli (2007:189) point out that the other reason for organisations benefitting from female leaders is that females' leadership styles appear to be more attuned to most contemporary conditions.

Daft (2005:438) sees male leadership to include aggressiveness or assertiveness, rational analysis and a "take charge" attitude. Male leaders tend to be more competitive and individualistic, preferring vertical hierarchies and these traits are also seen in females though females tend to be more concerned with relationship building, inclusiveness and participation of all in decision making and caring. Daft gives an example of a female leader named Deborah Kent, who led a vehicle plant for Ford Motors who said she was willing to share power and information, encourage employee development and also strive to help others' feeling of self-worth enhancement. Kent said, *"It is no good to have a diverse work force if you don't listen to their opinions and thoughts, I treat people the way I want to be treated."*

Gupton and Slick (1996:139) state that leadership attributes are unfair on females and give an example of males being called firm when dealing with difficult situations and females being called stubborn when they are called upon to deal with a similar situation. Eagly and Carli (2007:119) also add to the debate by saying a leader's style of leadership is important as people blame the leader's failure on styles. There are several types of leadership styles and some of them are as follows: Bureaucratic and autocratic leadership style, coercive leadership style, laissez-faire leadership style and transactional leadership style. The leadership styles associated with female leadership are subsequently discussed.

2.3.2.1 *Democratic leadership style*

Eagly and Carli (2007:125) explain that a democratic or participative leader considers the opinions of the subordinates in making decisions. Democratic leadership provides for teamwork. Females are said to be more democratic and collaborative than males. A preference on female's part for democratic leadership makes sense because people do not show happiness under autocratic leaders. Male and female tend to lead differently and female's leadership styles have come to be accepted and more valued because females act as good coaches and also good teachers rather than a traditional command and control boss (Eagly & Carli, 2007:125).

2.3.2.2 *Participative and collaborative leadership style*

Collaborative and participative leadership implies that the principal allows members of staff to take part in the running of the school. There is collaboration among all stake holders with the common goal of achieving objectives which includes attaining good results at the end of each academic year. Preedy *et al.* (2012:79) posit that participative leadership is about the leader consulting participants. In a school it means the principal consulting with the teachers and taking their opinion and suggestions into account. They further state that this is good in a situation when the task is unstructured and the role clarity is increased. Preedy *et al.* (2012:67) are also of the opinion that collaborative leadership is about a leader using the talents and resources of all members to bring about change or generate solutions that are creative and adoptive. In terms of female leadership style, Eagly and Carli (2007:125) argue that females are more participative and collaborative than males.

2.3.2.3 *Visionary and coaching leadership style*

A visionary leader is one that drives his subordinates towards a common goal. Brumley (2012:30) posits that the principal has a responsibility to transmit the vision to all stake holders and utilise the vision to initiate activities and programmes designed to achieve great success.

A visionary leader envisions the future, revels in the possibilities of what could be and inspires people to perceive things the way they ought to be. The vision must be communicated in a way which secures commitment among members of the organisation. Coaching has a positive impact as the leader develops his people for the future (Preedy *et al.*, 2012:57). Females are good at communicating goals and they also transmit the vision to stake-holders so that they gain support. Females' leadership styles have come into fashion and more valued because female leaders act as good coaches or good teachers rather than a traditional command and control-boss (Eagly & Carli, 2007:125).

The next section discusses the principalship and its history.

2.4 THE PRINCIPALSHIP

The principalship is presented in the following section by means of a discussion on the history of principalship, the roles of principals and skills required by principals to perform their jobs efficiently.

2.4.1 History of principalship

Van der Westhuizen (2008:1) points out that at first, the post known as that of a principal was non-existent, everyone on the staff was a class teacher. Hence; the oldest form of public school administration derived from the classroom. Goodwin *et al.* (in Prytula, Noonan & Hellsten, 2013:2) contribute by saying that the role of the principal has changed considerably since its formal inception in the early 1900s, shifting according to political eras and societal changes. They further state that as schools grew in size and bureaucracy increased, the role was officially recognised in the early 1900s as one of manager and coordinator of activities. Cuban (1988:53) states that prior to 1800, most schools were not graded and only had one to two teachers. These teachers performed multi tasks, like being instructors and also being clerics. It was in the middle of the 18th century that schools became larger and the notion of having someone in charge was thought of. The growing number of high schools, combined order and efficiency in responding to ballooning of enrolments made graded schools to suggest that principals needed more time to supervise what was being taught in each room and to determine whether the teacher was doing a satisfactory job.

Cuban (1988:54) states that the wedge that pried principals out of classroom teaching was their superior's growing expectations that they not only carry out orders, complete their reports on time, look after the building, maintain decent relationships with adults and children, but that they also manage the curriculum and supervise instruction. To meet these expectations, they needed time. The less they taught, the more time they could spend managing and supervising. By the 1920s the notion of a principal as a professional also meant that the principal taught no class. Cuban gives two dominant images of a principal; a bureaucrat and also an instructional leader, and this is what they were thought of initially. Principals were referred to as bureaucrats because they performed the following roles: Admit individual pupils, grant classes permission to study the next textbooks when the year's assignment was completed prior to the regular promotion time, require transfers and excuses for absentees, exclude unruly pupils and design rules for the use of the school premises.

All the roles listed above were done by the book; hence the principals were referred to as bureaucrats. English (2008:15) adds that a leader in a bureaucracy has the means of compelling obedience by legal coercive power; the relationship to followers is transactional.

As an instructional leader, Cuban (1988:57) states that the principal performs the following roles: He/She supervises the school curriculum and instruction, leads the staff in improving schooling, plans, organises and implements programmes.

Since each school needed to have a principal to enable it to run smoothly, many other countries put up leadership centres for the leaders to acquire the necessary skills. Bush (2007:35) states that most preparatory programmes of studies include the following courses: Curriculum, school law, finance, introduction to the principalship or superintendence, personnel management, management of buildings and facilities, research methods, human behaviour, school community relationship, educational governance and administration and educational psychology. Bush (2007:38) mentions that in South Africa, the university sector has been presenting courses on educational management for many years and the department of education has launched a new national qualification for principals in partnership with many of the leading universities.

Bush (2007:37) mentions Singapore as a major centre for leadership development, the pioneer in Asia and one of the first countries to focus strongly on the preparation for principals. China is said to have provided training programmes for principals for fifty years, and more than one million principals have been trained there in recent years. Bush (2007:44) points out that the South African Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE), school leadership programme places a great deal of emphasis on mentoring; all participants have a mentor that works with a group of leaders within a network. The new education leadership programme involves assigning participants to schools for learning which takes place at work places supported by the steward principal.

Dekker and Lemmer (1996:19) posit that the education system of South Africa was marked by a history of enforced racial segregation which led to gross inequalities in provision of education based on race. With the dismantling of segregation, the country is currently taking strides to transition, equalising opportunities.

As this study is about educational leadership and management, educational management models, which are deemed by this researcher to be closely associated with female leadership are subsequently discussed.

2.4.2 Educational management models

Bush (2007:394, Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach, 2007:33) categorise models of educational leadership and management into six major models: formal, collegial, political, subjective, ambiguity and cultural. These models are linked to parallel leadership models. However, only the collegial management model which is parallel to the participative, transformational, interpersonal leadership model is discussed (Bush, 2010:78-79), because along with transformational leadership, females, according to Eagly and Carli (2007:125) are thought to prefer the participative/collegial leadership style. The collegial management model assumes that organisations determine policy and make decisions through a process of discussion leading to consensus. The collegial model advocates the removal of conflicts or divisions in decision-making and assumes, as its important elements, consensus, a common set of values held by members of the organisation, and size of decision-making groups (Bush, 2007:66).

According to Bush (2010:80), the collegial model, although also applicable in high schools, is more prevalent in primary schools where there are more females. This, according to Bush may be due to gender influences.

Bush (2010: 81) also contends that collegial models are strongly normative; they tend to obscure rather than portray reality. Decision making tends to be slow and cumbersome because policy proposals require approval of a series of committees. The attempts to achieve consensus may lead to procedural delays, participants may have to endure many lengthy meetings before issues are resolved. This is probably what causes females to be seen as unsuitable because they tend to function within a collegial model since they want to consider other members' suggestions before they make decisions.

Having presented the theoretical framework underpinning the study (transformational leadership theory) and the lens through which the study is viewed (feminism and feminist theory) and having analysed the management models associated with female leadership, the discussion moves to the topic of principalship which includes among others, the history of principalship, roles of principals and skills required by principals. Thereafter, the discussion moves to female leadership which focuses on historical perspectives on female leadership, perceptions of female leadership styles, barriers to females' progression into educational leadership and adjustments needed to reduce barriers females face throughout their careers to attain leadership positions.

Having discussed the principalship, history of principalship, educational management models, roles of a principal are subsequently discussed below.

2.4.3 Roles of principals

Motshekga (2014:7) states that:

The core purpose of principalship is to provide leadership and management in all areas of school to enable the creation and support of conditions under which high quality teaching and learning take place and which promote the highest possible standards of learner achievement.

The role of a principal is to provide leadership, direction and co-ordination within the school. According to the South African Constitution, (section 4, of the Employment of Educators Act, 1998), referred to as Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM), the education system is in line with the mission in the cooperate plan of the department of Education to ensure that all South Africans receive flexible life-long education and training of high quality. To achieve this objective, schools need strong leadership. Cordeiro and Cunningham (2013:119), state that the principal is the heart of school improvement, and that all effective schools have one thing in common, which is good leadership. The principal has to fill both management and leadership roles. Leadership and management are two distinctive and complementary systems of action. Each has its own function and characteristic activities. Yukl (in Leithwood *et al.*, 1999:6) states that leadership involves a social influence process and it is about coping with change, while (Bush, 2008:8) states that: management is a maintenance activity; management is about coping with complexity. Yukl further states that perceptions of and expectations from the principals have changed over time; the traditional roles of ensuring a safe environment, managing the budget and maintaining discipline are still in force with new demands or additional roles in force. The additional roles include: defining and communicating a school's educational mission, coordinating the curriculum, supervising and supporting teachers, monitoring student progress and nurturing a positive learning climate.

Cordeiro and Cunningham (2013:121) add more roles which they say also contribute to the role being more complex. These are: The principal's linear conflicts between being inclusive and meeting high standards and accountability, meeting the diverse needs of students, acting autonomously and also being between and among the roles of strategic leader, fulfilling the role of organisational leader, acting in the role of political and community leader and filling the role of instructional leader.

Glanz (2006: xix) sees the principal's main focus to be on developing and maintaining effective educational programs within his/her school and promoting improvement of teaching and learning within his/her school. A leader attempts to empower staff, emphasises the importance of change, gives vision and motivates team members.

Marishane and Botha (2011:6) state that principals have functional roles which can be described as functions the principal performs and positional roles which can be described as roles the principal fulfils because of being in the position and of being in that school environment. Brown (2011:81) states the importance of school administration which is essential for school improvement and also for preparation of educational leaders. Brown further states that due to factors such as demographics and conflicting societal values and shifts in expectations, the role of the principal is ever evolving, and that up until the beginning of the 20th century, no full-time administrators existed; the teachers did all administrative work.

In South Africa, according to Reynders (in Van der Westhuizen, 2008:33), Education Administration can be described as the structure or organisational framework within which the education system functions and which is supported by a specific type of administrative work. Leadership and management positions require people in such positions to perform certain duties. There are roles they are to perform and be answerable for. Principals are expected to perform management roles.

2.4.3.1 *Management roles*

The role of school manager entails that the person in charge should keep things going or running smoothly and also should give direction to students by accomplishing certain aims and should go beyond the mandate. All activities in school need to be managed, all members of staff need to be managed, finances and buildings need to be managed and the principal is on top of the hierarchy of anyone entrusted to manage any of these. Shakeshaft (1987:30) states that in earlier days, public schools in America and everywhere else, the class teacher did both teaching and administrative work. With more time, the school organisations became difficult, compounded by bureaucracy that was imposed on schools. Then it was thought wise to separate teaching from administration so that these two functions could be distinct. Kowalski and Brunner (2011:12) report that prominent education scholars such as Ellwood Cubberley, George Strayer and Franklein Bobbitt began advocating the management of schools as being scientific, so the position of manager originated in the 1800s.

Van Deventer and Kruger (2005:77) point out that managers work with and through people to achieve school and educational aims.

Managers, according to Miller *et al.* (2007:18), perform daily operational tasks of creating systems of routines that are workable and engage others so that the school runs smoothly. Van der Westhuizen (2008:93) states that managers have authority which gives them the status which leads to interpersonal contact and relationships and also because of their status have access to information that can help them in making certain decisions. Bush (2006:120) states that principals have a vested interest in portraying the schools as caring institutions because of their own public image because how they view themselves depends on the views. Marishane and Botha (2011:42) see managerial leadership as one of the dimensions of the following: Instructional leadership, political leadership or transformational leadership.

The principal carries out a mandate from the central education authority which entails management of resources on behalf of the central authority. However, Marishane and Botha further state that the managerial roles of the principal have been broadened to cover other areas such as governance, teaching and learning and school transformation. Resources referred to in managerial role include money, teachers, buildings and even other facilities such as school grounds. The principal has the duty to unpack the resources, classify and distribute them equitably to ensure that they are used efficiently and also to account for their use. As for managerial roles, Marishane and Botha (2011:44) group them into three components, namely: input management, processes management and output management in relation to governance, transformation and curriculum management. These mentioned components of managerial roles are subsequently explained in more detail:

Input management: This involves management of resources such as power, information, technology, financial, physical and human resources including measures of accountability. The state decides how much to give and the principal plans for these resources by organising, allocating and determining how the resources should be applied.

Process management: This is about carrying out the responsibility of mobilising the resources and processes of controlling, coordinating and monitoring the use of these resources so that they are sustained and comply with applicable policies and regulations.

Output management: This is about the principal evaluating the impact on the school due to the resources and the process followed to achieve the outcomes. This means examining the

overall achievements resulting from the performance of various people and structures to determine how the mixture of resources (inputs), processes (throughputs) and outcomes (outputs) helps the school in realising its goals (objectives). The principal accounts to stakeholders by means of reports on whether the investments made in the school have yielded good results or whether the investments are worthwhile.

Hanson (in Cordeiro & Cunningham, 2013:139) likens management to nuts and bolts of the organisations as it makes the organisation work by hiring teachers, distributing resources and enforcing policy and procedure. Van Deventer and Kruger (2005:66) see education management to be a kind of work that is specific and the tasks/activities performed are: planning, problem solving, decision making, policy making, organising, co-ordinating, delegating, leading and controlling school/educational events.

Mintzberg's (1973) management role approach provides an expanded version of the traditional view of management as expounded by Van Deventer and Kruger above. Mintzberg lists the following management roles: ceremonial head, representative, maintainer of order, negotiator, leader, liaison officer, monitor, distributor, entrepreneur and allocator of resources (Van der Westhuizen, 2008:93, Van Deventer & Kruger, 2005:69). All these management roles are presented in the following section.

2.4.3.1 (a) *Planning*

Van der Westhuizen (2008:225), regard planning to be the starting point of all management tasks and that without effective planning a school cannot develop. Riessen (in Van der Westhuizen, 2008:225) states that planning is rationalising a course of action for the future. It is reflecting on the objectives of the organisation. The principal along with his/her team forecast and set objectives but the principal takes the leading role and responsibility for what is done and decided on.

2.4.3.1 (b) *Organising*

Leaders know and understand their people. They know their strengths and weaknesses as well as what motivates and frustrates them. The principal must make sure each member of staff knows what must be done by whom, with what, by when and how much work needs to be done. The principal takes the leading role in organising school activities by delegating tasks fairly.

The principal takes up the role of bringing about order and orderly structures because of his authority (Van der Westhuizen, 2008:227). The principal delegates, devises an organisational structure and establishes relationships.

2.4.3.1(c) *Leading/Ceremonial head*

Preedy *et al.* (2012:1) state that leadership is the key to success in any organisation. Leadership creates a sense of purpose and direction, aligning people behind the organisation and inspiring people to realise their goals. The following ways are cited to indicate how the leader improves quality in leadership: formulating strategy, planning and controlling activities, decision making, optimising the use of resources, disclosing information to stakeholders and safe guarding assets.

Marishane and Botha (2011:68) see this duty as including the roles of visionary, task giver, motivator, and ambassador and liaison officer and they further state that principals as leaders do not only deal with resources but also with teachers, parents, learners and ordinary community members. These people have their own beliefs, skills, values and attitudes. This then, put together with resources and given the vision of the school, can help the school to improve. The principal must show people what to do and help them realise their strengths and their shortcomings. Also due to the principal providing sound leadership, the people will realise there is someone to support them in case they meet obstacles. The leader must provide a climate of positive interpersonal relationships and this will only be possible if he/she recognises the potential that exists in people and exploits it to the benefit of the school. The principal must lead and others are to follow.

Marishane and Botha (2011:69) maintain that the principal's role in leadership is firstly to take initiative and develop a vision that will be shared by all. Secondly, the principal gives or delegates tasks so that each one is aware of his/her responsibility and attaches meaning to it, relates to the collective vision. Thirdly, the principal raises stakes high by showing commitment towards the set tasks and an interest in pursuing excellence in how he/she executes his/her tasks and also how others do it. Fourthly, the principal acts as an ambassador as he/she sits in different forums. The community will have a good standing with the school and the school will also stand out in the landscape of other counted schools. Lastly the principal, is a liaison officer, serving as a link between people acting internally in the school environment and those acting externally. Marishane and Botha (2011:68-69) add the following to the roles of a principal: keep the school's mission at the forefront of all decisions

and practices, using the mission to guide the development goals, work closely with the school governing body to ensure the school stays on track with its mission and goals and lead the effort to create a budget, school schedule and staffing pattern that best serves teaching and learning.

As a ceremonial leader, the principal receives visitors, signs documents and makes speeches (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2005:69). Bush and Middlewood (2013:58) add that in schools, culture is expressed through rituals and ceremonies which are used to support and celebrate beliefs and norms and in all of this, the principal takes the leading role. The PAM document states that the principal has a duty to participate in community activities in connection with educational matters and community building. The principal attends all important functions that take place in the community to celebrate with the community in building good relationships to the benefit and in the interest of the school and learners.

2.4.3.1 (d) *Controlling*

Controlling of everything that happens in school is a task performed by the principal. He/she controls how resources are used, how time is utilised and how the syllabus is covered. What is out of plan is also controlled and put back on track. Controlling brings about accountability in school. Van der Westhuizen (2008:232) states that control as a management task aims at attaining all planned goals and objectives and the principal has a role to make sure plans are in place to execute decisions and tasks, the principal has a role to control instruction, observe and measure, evaluate and take corrective action to bring back in line any task out of control.

2.4.3.2 *Leadership roles*

There are eight interdependent areas which together constitute the generic role of the principal in any South African school context (Motshekga, 2014:9). These include: leading the learning school, shaping the direction and development of the school, managing quality and securing accountability, developing and empowering self and others, managing the school as an organisation, working with and for the immediate school community as well as for the broader community, managing human resources (staff) in the school and managing and advocating extra-curricular activities.

Van Deventer and Kruger (2005:68) argue that leadership relates to mission, direction of how the school must go forward and inspiration, which is essential for all stakeholders so that the school can achieve its objectives. They further state that leaders create a vision of how things could be done, turn vision into workable projects, communicate agendas, solve

problems and show persistence until objectives are achieved. The following is the detailed description of some of leadership roles principals perform:

(i) *Human relations*

Motshekga (2014:20) the principal working with the School Governing Body (SGB) and the school Senior Management Team (SMT) should build collaborative relationships and partnerships within and between their internal and external school community for the benefit of each. She further states that the principal must know ways in which parents and other carers in the community may be encouraged to support children's education and overall well-being. The principal should practise good relations in all aspects, especially relationships with all stakeholders, more so in boosting the staff morale and creating a humane school environment. As a team builder, it is the principal's role to bring together teachers, parents and other community members to work as teams in governance, management, teaching and learning. The school principal as a team builder should facilitate change by providing guidance on how the teams should work collectively. The principal also has a role to play by recognising the wealth of skills, knowledge and experience from a wide range of backgrounds which can be shared to strengthen members and achieve goals.

Herzberg (in Bush & Middlewood, 2013:105-106) states that principals need to make staff positively satisfied and remove causes of dissatisfaction and he further states that teachers can be motivated by a sense of knowing that their relationship with the principal is good. This sentiment is also shared by Brumley (2012:75) who teachers must feel good about their relation with the principal and must be shown that their voice will be heard.

Niemann (2008:384) states that for the principal to bring about sound relationship between administrative staff and teachers, he/she should convince those involved that the issue at stake is to achieve the primary objective which is to teach and not to satisfy personal egos. Yeager (in Niemann, 2008:384) contends that group dynamics, empathy and mutual respect can be used to fruitfully promote collaboration which is harmonious between the administration and the teaching staff. Bush (2010:79) adds by saying when the principal applies interpersonal leadership, authentic range of intuitive behaviour that can drive self-awareness which facilitates effective engagement with others can be realised.

Bogotch (2011:13) posits that the objective in every principal-teacher interaction is to instil in every teacher the ability to reason for himself/herself and equally, determine reality for himself/herself. Maxwell (in Bogotch, 2011:13) confirms that besides safety and sanitation,

the other important duties of the principal are human relationships and educational judgement. Miller *et al.* (2007:111) also contributes by saying that the principal has a role to remain aware of teachers' and other staff's personal needs including their lives and also to acknowledge events that are significant in the lives of staff. Team building is a process by which individuals and loose groups of actors are brought together to constitute coherent structures, that function for a common purpose (Marishane & Botha, 2011:49).

(ii) *Information circulator/ Communicator*

In any organisation, communication is one way of assuring things are done. The principal has a role to play in ensuring information gets to the right people at the right time. The principal gives information but also receives information. The principal needs to have an open mind so that the staff in the school can communicate with him/her. They need to develop communication competencies that will help them to articulate and implement their vision in a diverse work place.

Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005:46) understand communication as referring to the extent the school leader establishes lines of communication with and between teachers and students. It is considered to be the glue that holds together all the other leadership responsibilities. Leithwood and Riehl (in Marzano *et al.*, 2005:47) list specific behaviours and characteristics associated with this responsibility as defined in a meta-analysis as:

- Develop effective means for teachers to communicate with one another.
- Be easily accessible to teachers.
- Maintain open and effective lines to communicate with staff.

The principal has a role of dealing with information. Information is of great importance because it empowers the principal in the sense that if he/she knows what is going in and out of school, he/she also knows how things are done, and the feeling of having a sense of power and control over his/her affairs is enhanced. The PAM stipulate that the principal must liaise and communicate with the circuit/Regional office, supplies section, and personnel section concerning administration, staffing, accounting, purchase of equipment, research and updating of statistics in respect of educators and learners. The document also states that the principal must communicate with relevant Government Departments like Health and Public Works as required. The principal must also communicate and co-operate with universities, colleges and other agencies in relation to learners' records and performance. The communication done by the principal will benefit all stake-holders. According to Marishane

and Botha (2011:45), information is both incoming and outgoing. This information is required for planning, organising, co-ordinating and monitoring resources for guiding and supporting people and also for using it when decisions are made in all areas. Van Deventer and Kruger (2005:156) posit that communicating effectively is one of the skills that is very important for principals because the flow of information and ideas from top-down and from bottom-up helps in planning vision, mission, aims and in making sure they are achieved. Glanz (2006:xxiv) contributes by stating that effective communication is central to a well-functioning organisation.

(iii) *Decision maker/ Allocator of resources/ Negotiator*

Playing a decision-making role is about deciding on people and resources. According to the South African Constitution, Resolution 8 of 1988, the principal should make sure the available resources are used effectively; this is also echoed in the PAM document. On decision making, it is noted that policies, regulations and other legislative guidelines that come with resources serve as information for making decisions in matters related to governing, teaching and learning and transformation (Marishane & Botha, 2011:45).

The principal, due to the authority he/she has, makes decisions regarding what should be done, and when and how the deployment of resources should be done and also decides on the conditions under which these activities should be performed. As a decision maker, the principal has a role to manage conflict in the school as his decision serves as a power broker and the principal should be in the forefront when it comes to negotiations on contractual agreements on behalf of the school.

The principal also plays a role as a negotiator since he negotiates with internal and external government officials on matters such as staffing and other resources (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2005:69). The principal needs to negotiate on several issues. For example, he/she negotiates with students on social or even academic matters, negotiates with teachers on extra-curricular activities and time-tabling, and also negotiates with all other stake-holders. The principal also negotiates with the employer on remuneration. With good negotiation skills, the principal can diffuse bad situations and avoid riots or even fights which could lead to learners being expelled or being hurt. Van der Westhuizen (2008:95) states that the principal may have to make some of the school facilities available to outside institutions and he may need to negotiate the terms. Hence he needs to be flexible as he negotiates with those asking to use the school facilities. Marzano *et al.* (2005:49) say flexibility refers to the extent

to which leaders adapt their leadership behaviour to the needs of the current situation and are comfortable with dissent.

Eagly and Carli (2007:169) contend that although negotiation makes people anxious most of the time, it is good for career advancement.

(iv) *Governor/ Representative*

Marishane and Botha (2011:40) claim that using a political dimension, a school principal is regarded as a governor. They name decentralisation which is achieved by establishing the SGB. The school principal plays the role of a political leader as he/she serves on the board as a member of the SGB. Like other members of the SGB, the principal is accountable to a constituency; he is accountable to the employer (the Government) that constitutes such a constituency. According to the PAM resolution 8 of 1988, the principal must cooperate with the school governing body with regard to all aspects as specified in the South African Schools Act (SASA), 1996. The principal must attend and participate in all meetings of the SGB. According to PAM, the principal must provide the SGB with a report about the professional management relating to the school.

The principal also plays the role of a representative as he/she is the provider of information to learners, teachers and parents (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2005:69). Bush and Middlewood (2013:5) contribute to the debate by saying that educational institutions operate within a legislative framework set down by either national, provincial or state parliament and that one of the aspects of such a framework is the degree of decentralisation because centralisation tends to be bureaucratic, which allows little discretion to schools and communities.

(v) *Conflict mediator/ Maintainer of order*

Conflict has its basis on the incompatibility of aims and it is also out of opposing behaviour or disagreement among parties. According to Miller *et al.* (2007:62), this role was bestowed upon the principals in the mid-1960s and they say conflict management skills form part of the academy curriculum which principals need to know as they find themselves mediating different types of conflicts daily with parents, staff and the community at large. Murphy (in Van der Merwe, 2005:26) says that conflict is an inevitable feature of all organisational life and it is also predictably part of a school's functioning.

Principals discipline learners as well as staff and also make sure there is order at all times and that is why they are also referred to as maintainers of order. Where there is disorder, instruction time is lost.

(vi) *Capacity builder*

The principal will inspire others by what he does and how he/she behaves. He empowers, encourages, informs, mentors, guides and supports the teachers as they confront new challenges in their respective areas of operation which are the instructional programmes, governance and management. According to the PAM, management in education should be able to draw on the professional competencies of educators, build a sense of unity of purpose and reinforce their belief that they can make a difference and where appropriate, authorities need allocate responsibilities which will ensure the building of human resource capacity. The principal also helps teachers on personal developments, enriched by what he/she personally derives from others' experience, skills and knowledge, inculcating a culture of continuous learning in which everyone in the school is prepared to learn from one another. Marishane and Botha (2011: 48) explain that as a capacity builder, the principal has a role to play in influencing everyone in the school community. Muzumara (2011:146) adds to the debate by saying that the principal should make everything they do worthy of their pride, persevering and meeting their responsibilities even when it is difficult to do so.

(vii) *Evaluator*

Reynders (in Van der Westhuizen, 2008:221) refers to evaluation as a task with a main purpose of identifying the merits and shortfalls or deficiencies and mentions that it forms part of the control task and is integrative. Evaluation will indicate to the principal careful, thorough and objective analysis of each individual, group or programme to determine strong and weak points (Gorton in Van der Westhuizen, 2008:221).

As a result of evaluation, progress made with regard to goals will be measured and actions that have deviated from the track can be corrected. The principal evaluates the tasks of staff and also evaluates himself. Careful and well-planned evaluation is key to development and improvement of any organisation. Evaluation enhances accountability. Miller *et al.* (2007:110) say the principal monitors and evaluates how effective the curriculum, instruction and assessments are. Miller *et al.* (2007:84) add more to the debate by saying principals must ascertain the standard they will use to evaluate. Bondesio and De Witt (2008:255) name two types of evaluation as: primary and secondary; the primary aims being there to improve the work achievement of staff and the secondary aim being there to give recognition to proven

achievement, identifying future educational leaders and determining attitudes to work and whether the person is ready for promotion.

However, Bondesio and De Witt (2008:256) also mention problems associated with evaluation. They say evaluation has multiple goals because it tackles the welfare of staff and the welfare of the learners, as it intends to improve the working achievements of teachers and eventually improve the service to pupils to serve the general goal of the school. When merit and promotion are the issues, then staff is at the centre. If the evaluation is for general working situation, then all that is needed is support measures such as training but if evaluation is for promotion, the person being evaluated can try to cover up as many weaknesses as possible so that he/she only gets promoted. According to Bondesio and De Witt (2008:256), the role of the principal in the evaluation process can at least involve clarifying the evaluation request and responsibilities and determining who should be involved in the evaluation, developing a management plan, establishing evaluation criteria and selecting methods of evaluation and finally reporting findings and implementing recommendations.

(viii) *Model*

According to Podsakoff *et al.* (in Leithwood, 1996:809), modelling is a dimension of transformational leadership that encompasses behaviour on the part of the leader that is exemplary to employees to follow and is consistent with the values the leader espouses. Such behaviour is said to enhance teachers' beliefs about their own capacities, their sense of self-efficacy and modelling is also believed to be a contributing factor to emotional arousal processes by creating perceptions of a dynamics. In transformational leadership, a leader can yield modelling effects like: energy, honesty, integrity, self-confidence, initiative and persistence.

The leader demonstrates through decision-making processes, the value of examining problems from multiple perspectives. Transformational school leaders also engage in behaviours intended to reinforce key values which are basic values of respect for others, trust in the judgement of one's colleagues, integrity and instrumental value of punctuality.

Motshekga (2014:12) adds by saying that the principal must demonstrate and model a personal commitment to learning and the maintenance of high standards.

(ix) *Contingent rewarder*

Leaders frequently acknowledge good performance and also provide public recognition for good work. This also is a role the principal plays, rewarding deserving teachers and learners. As the principal rewards deserving teachers and learners, he/she motivates others to work harder than before just to receive a reward. Avolio and Bass (1988:35) clarify that contingent reward occurs when the leader is seen frequently telling the subordinates what to do to achieve the reward for their efforts. Avolio and Bass further state that though this could be seen as transactional, it is in a way transformative because it arouses emotions and provides informative feedback.

(x) *Structuring agent*

Staff members are a good source of ideas if the principal allows them to make a contribution to the running of the school affairs. They have vast experience which they gain with time and the principal can make good use of their experience. The PAM document stipulates that the principal must provide professional leadership in school and structure it in such a way that all members of staff have equitably distributed workloads. Leithwood (1996:811) explains that structuring is a type of transformational leadership that includes behaviours aimed at providing opportunities for members of staff of the school organisation to participate in decision-making about issues which affect them and for which their knowledge is crucial. Using the structuring dimension, leaders can allow staff to establish own decision-making committees, distribute the responsibilities and power for leadership widely throughout the school and also create opportunities for staff development.

(xi) *Instructional leader*

Marishane and Botha (2011:46) posit that as an instructional leader, the principal has the role of standing at the vanguard as he/she is considered to be a professional practitioner. Principals are primarily teachers that share in educating learners to the highest academic achievement possible. Principals also have the role of standing at the vanguard because of the position they occupy. They provide leadership service to their teams of teachers of whom their main area of operation and function is the curriculum and the delivery of the same curriculum. Motshekga (2014:14) posits that the principal must ensure that the educators have full understanding of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and possess attendant skills related to teaching, monitoring and evaluation. This is also echoed in the PAM, where it is stated that the principal must make sure that the education of the learners is promoted in a

proper manner and in accordance with approved policies. The document also stipulates that the principal must liaise with relevant authorities or structures regarding school curricular and curricular development and also meet parents concerning learners' progress as an intervention. The Constitution of South Africa section 23(1) (C) states that the principal of a public school identified by the Head of Department in terms of section 53B must annually, at the beginning of the year, prepare a plan setting out how academic performance at the school will be improved.

Miller *et al.* (2007:110) state that principal should have knowledge of the curriculum and instruction practices and also provide teachers with conceptual guidance. Being instructional leaders, the principal always stays informed about current research and theory regarding effective schooling; hence he/she continually involves and exposes all staff members to ideas that are cutting edge about how to be effective. Brown (2011:98) states that in the 1980s; the instructional leadership role was highlighted as being central to coordinating and controlling curriculum and instruction. Principals were regarded as visionaries, problem solvers, providers of resources, change agents and policy implementers that guided the teachers and students towards productive learning experiences. This is in agreement with what Davies (2007:13) says: "There are some basic things that an education system should provide for children, it should provide them with definable learning achievements that allow them to function and prosper in society and the principal should be in the forefront." However, Beck and Murphy (in Brown, 2011:98) refute an old or traditional role and redefine it by saying the principal is the organisational architect, educator, moral agent and person in the community. Bogotch (2011:13) suggests that the principal should have knowledge of what is taught in each class and how it is being taught by inspection and examination.

The principal has a duty to improve the school instructional program and in some cases the principal is removed if the school is classified as low performing for a specified period of time. The principal has a role to lead school reform that would raise student achievement. Success in leading reforms to increase student achievement often hinges on the principal's ability to create a shared vision within the school community and success in implementing new organisational structures that engage teachers in shared decision making. The principal is also responsible for facilitating their school's interactions with parents so that when disciplinary issues arise and when students are not succeeding academically, they can come together and solve these problems. The principal must know ways in which parents may be encouraged to be source of support and resources for the school (Motshekga, 2014:20).

(xii) *Disciplinarian*

A serious problem in many public schools is disciplinary challenges. One of the roles of principals is that of a disciplinarian. Discipline is demanded through behaviour and is said to improve as communication channels become clearer and evident. Without discipline, many learners underperform, they fail. Some learners have even been expelled from school because of lack of discipline. The PAM states that the principal must take a leading role in handling disciplinary matters pertaining to learners, educators and support staff employed by the department of education.

However, Van der Westhuizen (2008:67) says disciplining has been identified as more masculine. This is stereotyping, as this role perceives females to be acting outside their appropriate gender role. Van der Westhuizen (2008:68) refers to discipline as obedience. Miller *et al.* (2007:109) contribute by saying principals being disciplinarians protect instructional time from interruptions and also shelters teachers from distractions. This means, the principals besides shaping behaviour in students, also make sure no time is wasted.

Punishing students can be a difficult and frustrating task. However, modern concepts of discipline emphasise more positive approaches to improving students' conduct. Disciplinary actions should be aimed at the contravention and not at the person (Van der Westhuizen, 2008:224).

(xiii) *Safety manager*

Acting as safety manager is also one of the major responsibilities of the principal that takes up the leading role in reminding all the teachers. Motshekga (2014:7) states that the principal has the primary responsibility of creating a safe, nurturing and supportive learning environment which enables effective teaching and learning. According to Brumley (2012:55), the most crucial responsibility of the principal is to ensure safety of learners and employees. The school safety means the safety of the learners and the facilities and equipment in school. The PAM directs the principal to also keep in safety all school records because he must provide accurate records to the department when requested to do so. The facilities and equipment need to be in good working condition. The principal takes the leading role in developing overall school discipline and safety policies and in the enforcement of these policies. The responsibility of supervision remains high. Especially in areas where the potential for injury is greater such as labs and athletics facilities, the principal has to caution the teachers about safety in these areas.

(xiv) *A vision builder*

The principal has a role to develop a vision concerning the school and to share his/her vision with other stake-holders, and according to Marishane and Botha (2011:48), this has three advantages, which are that people pursue a shared vision as they have a shared goal and that there is clarity on how to achieve goals, and the transformative leader assumes this role to communicate realistic goals to teachers and the teachers rally behind him.

Motshekga (2014:13) says that the principal working with the SGB and the SMT and others in the school's community should create a shared vision, mission and strategic plan to inspire and motivate all who work in and with the school and to provide direction for the school's on-going development. The principal must know about strategies for inspiring, challenging, motivating and empowering people to commit to school's values, vision and mission and to carry forward in planned action. The principal must ensure that the vision and mission of the school is shared, understood and acted upon by all in the school community.

(xv) *Transformer/ Change agent*

People resist change naturally but the principal has the role to make teachers understand that change is necessary. The principal needs good communication skills and also negotiation skills in order to change perceptions. He/She needs to show a mind vision to the staff simply for them to see change is necessary in certain situations. Marishane and Botha (2011:47) point out that principals have a role to focus on restructuring the school by improving its condition. He/She is the agent of transformation and a school community builder that should be engaged in four main tasks, namely: school vision building, capacity building, team building and programme design, and management. Transformation is about change. According to Alinsky (in Milsten & Henry, 2008:119) "*change means movement, movement means friction, friction means heat and heat means controversy*". The principal has a responsibility to take charge as change takes place. Change is about building new things and reshaping old ones. Building in many occasions involves teamwork; the principal as a transformational leader, shares his/her leadership with other people in the school so that collaboration and not a one man show can be identified (Marishane & Botha, 2011:48).

Below is a diagram that displays contexts of dimensions of perspectives, approaches and practices included in the roles of the principal.

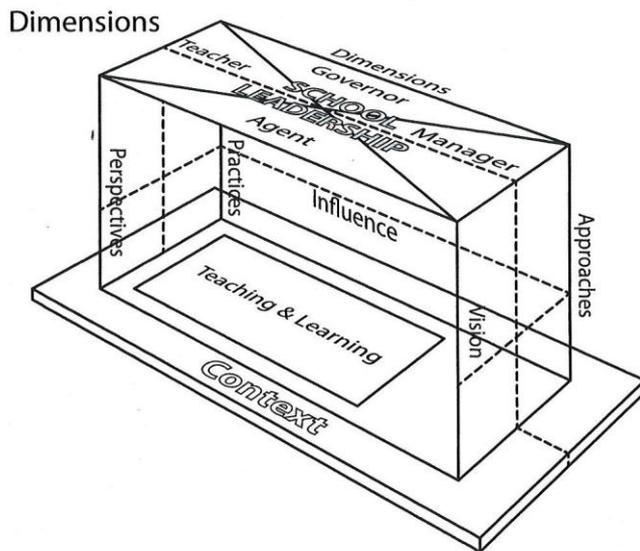


Figure 2.1: Source: Marishane and Botha (2011:26)

Marishane and Botha (2011:26) summarised all the leadership roles of the principal and showed them in diagram form as displayed Figure 2.1.

2.4.4 Skills required by principals

Leadership must be about competence in leading and decision making. Leadership is about making decisions that affect school change and improvement. It is also about the leader learning how to model, how to dialogue, how to collaborate and how to sustain improvement. Goddard and Miller (in Prytula *et al.*, 2013:4) explain that creating an organisational culture that supports a learning organisation requires a principal to possess a different set of leadership skills. Yukl (in Bush & Middlewood, 2012:4) posits that leadership involves a process of influence exerted by either an individual or a group over other people to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organisation. Leaders set the direction and get people to follow.

Leadership involves a social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person or group to structure activities and relationships in a group or organisation to achieve a desired result (Yukl in Leithwood, *et al.*, 1996:6). The principals need to have certain skills to achieve the set goals. Below are some of the skills principals need so to enhance their educational leadership skills.

2.4.4.1 Developing/empowering herself and others

The principal working with and through the SMT and others in embracing the philosophy and practice of Ubuntu has the overall responsibility of building a professional learning community in school, and through the provision of genuine opportunities for shared leadership, teamwork and participation in decision making, he/she empowers him/herself (Motshekga, 2014:16). This will help her improve her skills and also build personal capacity. The principal also interacts more with others to share experiences to improve his/her leadership skills. With opportunities for shared leadership, there is also delegation of duties. With delegation, anything that goes out of line can easily be corrected because so many people will be involved in carrying out tasks. Delegation helps members of staff to develop. When they make mistakes, it becomes a learning experience. More staff gain experience in how the school is run and when they get promoted they have vast experience on how to run a school. Marzano *et al.* (2005:106) state that responsibilities need to be distributed throughout the senior management team, it is reasonable that a team of committed individuals can address issues of responsibilities more effectively than any one individual. This is also echoed by Muijs (2012:33) who says that leaders need to involve more school staff in leadership to alleviate the pressure on the principal and also let others gain experience.

2.4.4.2 Managing the school as an organisation

The principal must provide for the effective organisation and management of the school and on the basis of on-going review and evaluation and he/she must strive continuously for ways of developing and improving organisational structures and functions and these management functions require the principal to build and strengthen the capacity of those working in the school (Motshekga, 2014:18).

2.4.4.3 Financial management skill

The principal is responsible for ensuring that the school and its people, assets and all other resources are organised and managed to provide for an effective and efficient environment, hence the principal needs to know about procedures for the effective and equitable allocation of finances (Motshekga, 2014:18). According to Labour Relations Council (LRC), Resolution 8 of 1988, the principal needs to assist in the budgeting for the department, collecting fees and other monies and also having various kinds of school accounts and records properly kept to make the best use of funds to the benefit of the learners in consultation with the appropriate structures.

2.4.4.4 *Time management skills*

Time management skills are essential for any leader to succeed in his/her leadership. In a school, the principal needs this skill. Without good time management skills, programmes and projects may never be a reality. It can also cause financial constraints if time management is not good. Good time management skills help the principal in allocating time to activities inside and outside the classroom.

Bisschoff, Govender and Oosthuizen (2004:41) see time management skills to include planning, prioritizing, goal setting, scheduling and managing one's work load. Glanz (2006:28) contributes by stating that effective managers are aware of time constraints but they accomplish a great deal because they allocate their time wisely and effectively.

2.4.4.5 *Problem-solving skills*

Conflicts in a school are inevitable. If the principal lacks problem-solving skills; any bad situation would be fuelled up and havoc would reign. Van der Westhuizen (2008:95) states that crisis management usually takes priority over most other activities as they have to be dealt with immediately. Crisis decisions create precedents; hence they need to be regarded as strategic decisions. Van der Westhuizen further states that the way the principal handles the crisis can have a decisive influence on his staff's assessment of him/her as a leader. The principal is therefore expected to possess good problem-solving skills. Van Deventer and Kruger (2005:34) contribute to the debate by saying that problem solving aims at resolving an argument through face-to-face confrontation of conflicting parties and that the outcome of this approach is having persons present their views and opinions to each other and working through the differences in attitudes and perceptions.

2.4.4.6 *Interpersonal skills*

A leader should be able to influence without relying on coercive power or threats and he/she negotiates fairly and effectively. Van der Westhuizen (2008:94) posits that parents, teachers and other stake holders want to address the principal directly with a belief that the only way they can achieve what they want is by talking to him/her and also that the principal is always willing to listen to whatever they want to say. According to Ibid (in Bush, 2008:15) interpersonal skills, which also means emotional intelligence, is the authentic range of intuitive behaviours derived from sophisticated self-awareness, which facilitates engagement with others to be effective. The principal needs to possess good interpersonal skills. The next

section presents barriers to progression of females into leadership positions and how these barriers can be overcome.

2.4.5 Barriers to females' progression into educational leadership

The term 'barrier', sometimes referred to as 'obstacle', 'stumbling block' or 'impediment' is "a factor, event or phenomenon that prevents or controls access to individuals from making progress" (Ismail & Ibrahim 2008:2).

It could be argued that barriers are responsible for the under-representation of females in positions of senior management in schools which continues to be a matter of concern to date. Coleman (in Chabaya, Rembe & Wadesango, 2009:236) points out that females in educational leadership are in the minority in South Africa, but they are also in the minority in most countries, and this arguably leads to gender representation problems in educational leadership.

Gender representation and gender equality issues could be said to be closely related to barriers in that the existence of barriers can lead to underrepresentation of either women or men and the lack of gender equality could result in the underrepresentation or marginalisation of one gender or the other. Gender representation in this study relates to the representation of females and males in decision making in education. This is both in context and numbers of females and males in senior levels in the profession and in policy roles, and in the context of the absence of females' voices in stakeholders in the services which are provided. McLennan and Thurlow (2010:3) indicate that "management capacity and training asserted along gender and race has resulted in unequal distribution of power in institutions such as schools."

'Gender equality' means that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of females and males are considered, valued and favoured equally. This does not mean that females and males have to become the same, but their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they were born male or female. Gender equality means fairness of treatment for females and males, in accordance with their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

According to the press (UNESCO, 2000), gender equality, equality between males and females, entails the concept that all human beings, males and females, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid

gender roles and prejudices. Stereotypical beliefs about males and females in regard to leadership as well as traditionally-held beliefs about what roles are suitable for males and females all contribute to barriers for females aspiring to be (educational) leaders.

A report on a study of female principals in South Africa indicates that:

women face a number of barriers including traditional stereotyping that sees men as 'natural' leaders, and a disproportionate share of domestic responsibilities, and particularly childcare. Once appointed, many face discriminatory attitudes from colleagues and the wider community. Education, mentoring and more inclusive forms of leadership are suggested to be supportive of career development (Lumby *et al*, 2010:1).

In Shakeshaft's (1987:81-82) view, the origins of many barriers can be explained in terms of three main models to which can also be the lack of women in administration. These models are: the women's place model, discrimination model, and meritocracy model. Women's Place model, assumes that females' non-participation in administrative careers is solely based on social norms. The second model is the Discrimination model which, according to Estler (in Shakeshaft, 1987:82), assumes that there are patterns used by institutions resulting from the effort by one group to exclude the other from participating, for example the exclusion of females from leadership by some males. The third model, the Meritocracy model assumes that the ones promoted are the competent, and females are not competent.

There are several barriers that are perceived to prevent females' advancement into educational leadership positions. These can be internal or external. Some internal barriers noted by Shakeshaft (1987:83) include low self-image, lack of confidence and lack of motivation or aspiration. De Witt (1988:551) lists the following as external barriers: Family and home responsibility, lack of support and counselling, working conditions, culture, recruitment policies, stereotyping and lack of role models and mentors.

Brinia (2012:186) claims that females' promotional chances are diminished by four main extrinsic factors among which are the break in service that some females experience and the difficulty they may have in gaining re-entry. Many females work part-time or have difficulty in gaining scale post status, as a result they do not have the necessary experience to gain promotion. Family commitments sometimes make it difficult, and supply teachers are not generally eligible for promotion. In some cases, their male peers and superiors in the school

would engineer female exclusion from the official promotion procedures by withholding their application documents. The career path followed by a female (or male) can constitute a barrier to professional progression. Career path, role models and mentoring are discussed in detail in the following sections.

2.4.6 Career path

Females are perceived to focus on marriage just after starting their careers unlike males that want marriage and career advancement simultaneously. This makes males' career paths to be clearer than those of females. Females' careers depend on their husbands at certain points. The female follows the husband whenever he is transferred but the husband will not allow the wife to go on promotion elsewhere.

According to Byrne (1978:152), by the time the girls reach adolescence, having gone through the hard part of earlier/initial stages of education, they will have exchanged clearly the irrefutable nature of child-centred logic for this subconscious growing internal conflict centred on their social and emotional domestic roles, education purposes, instant desires for work and pay, and dawning recognition of long-run needs. They do not know where they are going and the after school life road often seems to be related as between marriage, full time study, and work as the fast and straight girl from the village to the city. Byrne (1978:153) suggests that careers education from thirteen years onwards should teach girls and boys how to utilise all ways available to suit different destinations which are once in a while mutually exclusive and also lead to a career through life, paid or unpaid, permanent or intermittent. Career does not mean just work but it can be defined as a person's course or progress through life, a profession affording opportunities for advancement. Bledstein (in Shakeshaft, 1987:64) defines a career as a pre-established total pattern of organised professional activity with upward movement through recognised preparatory states and advancement based on merit and bearing honour.

Shakeshaft (1987:61) points out that the profile of the typical female principal differs in several ways from that of the typical male principal. One specific difference is that female principals in all levels of leadership are older than males in similar positions and are also likely to be married. The other differences are that these females are more often members of minority and ethnic groups, more likely to have been a teacher for a long period of time, politically more liberal and have lived in urban areas and also more likely to earn less for doing the same job as a male.

Females in educational leadership tend to be in their mid to late 40's. Females are more likely to go into leadership in the latter part of their lives because it is during the midlife period that many females become more focused on their careers as their self-worth and self-esteem have increased. In addition, during the latter part of their lives, many females have fewer demands as their children are much older than.

The studies of Gaetner (1981), Stockard (1984) and Ortiz (1982) as reported in Shakeshaft (1987:67) show that for females to enter leadership, the three most common ways to utilize are through specialist positions, supervisory posts and elementary principalships and they also found that the largest number of females in leadership hold the central office positions and these positions are more of staff rather than line jobs with a responsibility.

Kowalski and Brunner (2011:122) also support the point that females in management come from elementary teaching and that career paths of females include horizontal and vertical movement through both line and staff positions while males mostly travel vertically through the line positions.

Literature reveals different career paths for males and females, males starting their careers with less commitment to education and teaching whereas females mostly know from an early age that teaching is their career choice (Shakeshaft, 1987:70). Males are seen to move more quickly than females into graduate study where they major into various specialisations than do females. Males attain their initial formal leadership positions much earlier than females and in many of these positions, they start with less leadership experience (Paddock in Shakeshaft, 1987:71).

Males mostly get interrupted in the service if they go for further training to improve on their qualifications. This shows that males by and large have a steady path in educational leadership. Males are also sponsored more than females; which means that more doors are opened for males. For both sexes, leadership careers are largely unplanned, but females tend to plan less than do males (Shakeshaft, 1987:71).

Paddock (in Shakeshaft, 1987:72) states that males have more entry positions compared to females. Females mostly enter leadership positions using speciality they may have acquired.

Lumby and Coleman (2007:46) say females are to blame for their lack of progress as they are seen to lack confidence in applying for promotion and that the females were hesitant in making career plans.

Walby and Gottschall (in Gottfried, 2013:72) contribute to the debate of career choices by saying curricular choices based on gender essentialism no doubt have an influence on occupational segregation and related income disparities, females may regard themselves as less status-worthy and competent for leadership positions. Females may feel more conformable in caring professions.

2.4.7 Role models and mentoring

A role model treats you as an equal and is honest, trusting and mostly open minded (Bostock, 2013:55). To advance to leadership and management positions need role models because these role models will influence them to make right choices in life as they look up to them as having succeeded despite all the struggles and challenges. If females do not see role models, they are likely to suffer from “imposter syndrome” a phenomenon by which highly successful individuals fail to internalize their success and link their achievements to their performance (Simard, 2013:52) making many females less comfortable with self-promotion.

Mentoring is an understanding between two or more people. It is a way for people to learn from each other. Draft (2005:454) contributes by saying there are a few role models or mentors for women and minorities try to reach senior-level positions. Females and minorities feel they have no one to talk to about their fears, mistakes and even about ideas concerning the organisation. They remain isolated and perceived as aloof. Gupton and Slick (1996:65) agree that females lack adequate networks, positive role models and support systems in general. There is a scarcity of supportive sponsors and mentors among females in educational administration as well as executive positions across all professions. Gupton and Slick further state that females have not benefited from having sponsors and mentors to encourage and support their career advancement and that the network among males informally known as the “good old boy” system is strong and often used in selecting job candidates.

2.4.8 Adjustments needed to reduce barriers females face throughout their careers to attain leadership positions

Adjustments need to be made in order to help females attain leadership positions and also to help females retain these positions. The following section is about adjustments that could help:

2.4.8.1 Balance employment and family

Family and career are both challenging responsibilities because each demand commitment. One has to be fully committed to both. Female principals have to strike a balance in order to succeed in either of them. It has, however, been an uphill battle for females. Females need help from their spouses or other family members.

Eagly and Carli (2007:174) advise females to balance employment and family responsibilities. Females should bear in mind that though discrimination remains a serious obstacle, a major portion of the labyrinth derives from their family. Males as well as females can benefit from active involvement in family roles as well as paid work roles. Eagly and Carli (2007:179) say paternal involvement in child-care would not only reduce females' work load but would also enrich males' lives. Furthermore, there is greater mutual understanding if couples share family and employment responsibilities as this creates more similar life experiences. Gupton and Slick (1996:69) contribute by saying that besides family support and professional support, females also need supportive personal relationships.

Van der Westhuizen (2008:558) contributes to the debate by stating that females are said to be supplementary to their husbands; hence even their careers are regarded supplementary to their husbands' careers. In the researcher's opinion, this notion needs to be done away with.

2.4.8.2 Build social capital

Networks can be a source of emotional support and can also be a lead to job prospects, inside information and also information on job-related issues and this is what social capital is about. Women need to network more with men because more powerful networks are dominated by men. Eagly and Carli (2007:173) and Van der Westhuizen (2008:555) posit that females that create social capital by establishing good relationships with colleagues both inside and outside the organisation are likely to rise to a position of authority. Females are encouraged to join and participate in networks to create social capital.

2.4.8.3 Equal employment policies/Policy changes

Employment discrimination, organisation policies that favour males and inequalities in domestic responsibilities all contribute to females' lesser advancement. Eagly and Carli (2007:180) suggest that organisations, males and society generally must do their part to enable females and males attain true equality and gain the same paths to leadership. Lumby and Coleman (2007:44) posit that while legislation is necessary, it is insufficient to overcome

cultural influences such as patriarchy, to ensure equity for females. They further state that where a job is of prestige, more likely than not, it will be given to a male.

Processes of the organisation also slow females' progress towards workplace equality. Eagly and Carli (2007:187) further state that in organisations, females' limited access to males' networks and other sources of social capital can also hold females back. Hiring and promoting the most qualified individuals increases the chance of success.

Leithwood and Beatty (2008:116-117) commenting on policy change, say that the Department of Education brings about rapid change, like new guidelines, new standards, new programs, new forms of student assessment and at times without consulting principals/teachers, which can cause stress. Therefore, to enhance principal's working conditions, the Department of Education should slow down the pace of change. Principals (particularly female principals) are more likely to experience stress and have their emotions affected as a result of rapid policy changes.

2.4.8.4 Boost self-confidence

Eagly and Carli (2007:163-164) suggest that females should confront the obstacles in their path to leadership by: quelling doubts such as not being considered sufficiently agentic-or that they are not sufficiently communal, establishing an exceptional level of competence, being assertive while being kind, nice and helpful, and taking credit for compliments and telling others how competent they are.

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the theoretical framework underpinning the study which included transformational leadership, feminism and feminist theory. In addition to this, the chapter presented the history of principalship, roles of principals, skills required by principals, historical perspectives on female leadership, barriers to females' progression into educational leadership positions, leadership styles, how leadership skills for females can be enhanced and what could be done to reduce barriers to females' promotion to educational leadership positions. The next chapter presents the research design and methodology followed in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research design and methodology which was followed in the investigation. The aim of the chapter was to give a detailed explanation of the research paradigm and research approach, methods and methodology used in the study, the sampling methods, data collection and data analysis. The research methodology is outlined while bearing in mind the research questions.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:8) point out that research methodology refers to a design according to which the researcher selects data collection and analysis procedures, sample and sampling procedure, research instrument, validity and reliability of research to investigate a specific research problem.

The chapter outlines the research methodology used to investigate the perceptions and experiences of female high school principals in Mahikeng regarding their leadership roles.

First, the philosophical assumptions and worldview will be discussed, followed by the research design and methods, issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

3.2 PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND WORLDVIEW

Philosophical assumptions “consist of a stance toward the nature of reality (ontology) how the researcher knows what he or she knows (epistemology), the role of values in the research (axiology), the language of research (rhetoric) and the methods used in the process (methodology)” (Creswell, 200:16; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011:41).

The worldview, also referred to as paradigm, epistemologies, ontologies or research methodology thus refers to a way of viewing the world. The researcher chooses one paradigm over other paradigms because of certain assumptions he/she makes about the world (Maree, 2010:32).

In this study, a combination of worldviews, that is, social constructivism and pragmatism were used. The feminist perspective adds an important dimension to the interpretation and understanding of the experiences of the female principals under study as it provides a lens through which to observe social relations (Lumby & Coleman, 2007:4). In this study, the experiences of educational leadership and other related experiences of being a female

principal are integrated through a feminist theoretical lens, which, as Creswell (2007:25) puts it ‘centers and makes problematic women’s diverse situations and the institutions that frame those situations’.

The reason for adopting the social constructivist paradigm in addition to pragmatism was mainly because of the nature of the study which combines qualitative and quantitative components. The qualitative component seeks participants’ “understanding of the world in which they live and work...the subjective meaning of their experiences” (Creswell, 2009:8). Social constructivists attempt to understand phenomena through the meaning people assign to them. In this study, an attempt is made to understand female high school principals’ experiences and perceptions of their educational leadership roles. The pragmatic worldview offers the researcher freedom to use what works without necessarily committing to one method. As Creswell (2009:11) puts it, “pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality...it opens the door to multiple methods, different worldviews and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis.” Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011:41) contend that pragmatism is “typically associated with mixed methods research” and that it is embraced by many authors as the worldview or paradigm for mixed research.” (p.43).

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN: CONCURRENT EMBEDDED MIXED METHOD

The concurrent mixed methods research design was used in this study. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to investigate educational leadership roles from the perspectives of female high school principals who described their experiences and perceptions of these roles. The qualitative component dealt with experiences and the quantitative component dealt with perceptions.

The researcher used the concurrent embedded design (Creswell, 2009:214, Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011:71).

Two types of data, quantitative and qualitative, are collected concurrently but the weighting is not equal. In other words, priority is given to either the qualitative or the quantitative data of the study. In this study, qualitative data were given prominence, while the quantitative data were “embedded or nested” so that it plays a supporting role in the research. Similarly, Punch (2009:296) reiterates that in the embedded design, one data set plays a secondary role of being supportive in a study based primarily on the other data type. According to Creswell (2009:214) the concurrent embedded model may be utilized to serve a variety of purposes

and the researcher can gain broader perspectives as a result of using different methods as opposed to using one method predominantly. Hence, in this study, there was one data collection phase during which both qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously as Creswell (2009:214) describes the concurrent embedded mixed methods strategy.

3.4 METHODOLOGY

The term ‘methods’ refers to techniques and procedures used in the process of data gathering. According to Robert and Copping (2008:97), methodology refers to how the researcher will go about studying the topic or phenomena. Punch (2009:16) refers to methodology as methods used for studying reality and defines ‘methods’ as “appropriate ways of building knowledge of that reality”. Methodology refers to the approach or paradigm that underpins the research.

3.4.1 Qualitative approach

This study followed a predominantly qualitative approach and a minor quantitative component which was used to complement the qualitative data. The qualitative phase was intended to provide an in-depth understanding of the experiences of female high school principals, whilst the quantitative component sought to establish the perceptions of the principals regarding their leadership and management roles.

Qualitative research method according to Cohen *et al.* (2011:17) is research conducted with a view that the social world should be studied in its natural state, using qualifying words and descriptions to record and investigate aspects of social reality.

Leedy and Ormrod (2010:135) maintain that one of the purposes served by the qualitative method of research is to enable the researcher to discover the problem that exists within a phenomenon and gain insight into the nature of a particular phenomenon and develop new concepts of or theoretical perspectives on the phenomenon and also discover problems about the phenomenon. This is what they referred to as ‘interpretation’.

The qualitative approach requires that the researcher interacts with the participants in their natural settings. This enables the researcher to gain participants’ co-operation by establishing relationships with them, which therefore facilitates the production of high response rates. Denzin and Lincoln (in Maree, 2010:259) explain that in qualitative approach, the researcher approaches the truth or reality from a position that is constructivist, which allows for multiple

meanings of individuals. Qualitative data helps the researcher to know more about the problem and also obtain a more complete picture of the participants (Fraenkel *et al.*, 2012:425). In this study, the qualitative data was collected by conducting interviews which yielded an understanding of the experiences of female high school principals regarding their position.

3.4.1.1 *Participant selection*

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for this study. Punch (2009:162) states that purposive sampling in qualitative studies is purposeful or deliberate as the researcher already has what she/he is looking for in mind. In this study, the researcher focused on female principals of Mahikeng and surrounding areas in order to explore how they as females experience the phenomena under study.

3.4.1.2 *Data collection strategies*

Data collection strategies are techniques or strategies the researcher uses to gather information from the participants when in the field. Johnson and Christensen (2014:225) define data collection as a technique or method for obtaining data physically that has to be analysed. In this study the qualitative data was collected through interviews and the supportive quantitative data was collected using questionnaires which were closed-ended.

An interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participant questions to collect data and learn about the participants' ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours. Johnson and Christensen (2014:228) state that an interview is an interpersonal encounter and that it is important for an interviewer to establish rapport with the person she/he is interviewing. The aim of qualitative interviews is to view the world through the participants' eyes and this is said to be a valuable information source as long as it is provided correctly (Maree, 2010:87). Cohen *et al.* (2011:409) describe interviews as a widely used instrument for data collection. They further state that an interview is a flexible tool for data collection which enables multi-sensory channels to be utilised such as: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard. When the researcher interviews the participants, his/her aim is always to obtain descriptive data that is rich so that the researcher can understand the construction of social reality and knowledge as presented by the participants.

There are different types of interviews namely: standardised interview, in-depth interview, ethnographic interviews, elite interviews, life history interviews, focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews, group interviews, structured interviews, exploratory interviews

and information conversation interviews (Bogdan & Biklen in Cohen *et al.*, 2011; Le Compte & Preissle in Cohen *et al.*, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Oppenheim, 1992; and Patton, 1980).

The semi-structured interview was used as the main data collection method. It is used to gather data on subjects or participants' opinions, beliefs and feelings about the situation in their own words. Fraenkel *et al.* (2012:451) describe interviews as a form of conversation.

Maree (2010:87) states that semi-structured interviews corroborate data that emerges from other source and in this study it was data from the questionnaire. Maree further states that semi-structured interviews rarely span a long-time period and often require the participant to answer a set of predetermined questions. Semi-structured interviews allow for the probing and clarification of answers and the researcher is required to be very attentive. According to Graham (in Punch, 2009:148), the use of semi-structured interviews has become the principal way by means which feminists seek to achieve the active involvement of their respondents in the construction of data about their lives.

The semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with the female principals. Interviews need time to be conducted, hence careful listening is required. The interviews were conducted in the office and there were no interruptions because all the learners were out of the classrooms or even school because they were conducted in the afternoon. All the interviews were conducted in English because every participant was able to read and speak English very well. The data was collected over a period of five weeks. The researcher used a digital voice recorder to record the responses and also took notes.

Johnson and Christensen (2014:229) suggest the following ideas of how a researcher can go about interviewing participants, the steps that the researcher also followed: establish trust and rapport, listen carefully and be the repository of the information that is detailed, be armed with probes or prompts to use when greater clarity or depth is needed from the person being interviewed.

Cohen *et al.* (2011:414) say that the researcher needs to accept that the interview may provoke new insights and changes in the participants themselves. Cohen *et al.* (2011:442) further state that the researchers must make known the possible consequences of taking part as a participant.

3.4.2 Quantitative approach

Maree (2010:145) defines quantitative research as a process that is systematic and objective in its ways of using numerical data from any selected subgroup of a population and generalises those findings to the population being studied. The main elements of quantitative research are objectivity, numerical data, and generalisability.

In this study, the quantitative approach was used to complement the qualitative data.

3.4.2.1 Instrument development

Structured closed-ended questionnaires were used to collect data on perceptions of female principals of different aspects of their educational leadership and management roles.

The questionnaire was divided into sections: demographic data, qualification levels, years of experience, career preparation and advancement options, leadership and management roles, leadership skills, perceptions of level of skill, role perception, challenges and strategies, to deal with them, and leadership style.

The closed-ended questions offered respondents the choice of selecting one response from the list of options. The items for the instruments were derived from a review of the literature on educational leadership and management, roles of principals and female leadership.

3.4.2.2 Reliability and Validity

According to MacMillan and Schumacher (2010:179) reliability refers to the consistency of measurement, which is the extent to which the results are similar over different forms of the same instrument or occasions of data collecting. An instrument should measure what it is supposed to measure or perform as it is designed to perform. Validity refers to the accuracy of interpretations you make from the test scores (Johnson & Christensen, 2008:144). According to Gay *et al* (2006), the use of multiple data collection techniques and sources helps the researcher to minimize bias, and therefore assist to improve the validity and reliability of data. This procedure is known as triangulation. Gay *et al* (2006: 424), says “it is not likely that data derived from different sources and data collection strategies will be biased in the same, unnoticed way”. Maree (2010:151) suggests that for the results of an experiment to be considered trustworthy, there should be high degree for both internal and external validity. External validity which is the extent to which the results can be generalised from a sample to a population. According to Winter (in Cohen *et al.*, 2011:179), in quantitative data, validity may be improved through sampling carefully, and using appropriate instrument and

treating statistical data appropriately. Creswell (2009: 217) contends that this process helps the researcher to overcome the weaknesses and biases that usually characterise a single method. The above observation indicates that, no single research method is capable of capturing all the aspects of a phenomenon under investigation. It is therefore believed that interpretations that are based on triangulation are much more reliable than those based on a single study (Creswell, 2009:221). In this study to ensure reliability and validity, triangulation was preferred as it helps the researcher to verify data collected, piloting was also used to check the instrument, participants were purposively picked, selecting only participants in leadership positions and the questionnaires were given out at the same period of time.

Leedy and Ormrod (2010:111) state that a brief pilot study is an excellent way of determining the feasibility of the study, and that although it may take some time initially, it may also ultimately save time by letting one know which approaches will and will not be effective in helping one solve one's overall research problem.

Although a pilot study as described by Leedy and Ormrod was not conducted, the instrument was checked and rechecked by knowledgeable experts before it was pilot- tested for accuracy and clarity.

3.4.2.3 Data collection

In addition to the interview, a closed-ended questionnaire was used for data collection. The same participants who were interviewed completed the questionnaire. According to Johnson and Christensen (2008:170), a questionnaire is a self-report data collection instrument which each participant fills in. Researchers use questionnaires so that they can gain knowledge or information about what the feelings, thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, values, perceptions, personality and behavioural intentions of participants are. In this study, the Likert scale was used with the research questions in line with the questionnaire. The researcher used a five-point Likert scale because it easily provides an ordinal measure of a respondent's attitude (Maree, 2010:167). According to Johnson and Christensen (2008:185), a Likert scale is also known as a summated rating scale.

Likert scale is named after its inventor, a social psychologist Rensit Likert who first used it in 1932. This is a multi-item rating scale which has an advantage over a single-item rating scale because it is more reliable and more consistent.

The female principals were given these questionnaires. The items in the questionnaire were about their experiences in their educational leadership and management roles. The reason for using a structured questionnaire is that it offers the advantage of calculating percentages and other hard statistical data.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:367) describe data analysis as a systematic process of coding, categorizing and interpreting data to provide an explanation of a single phenomenon of interest. Qualitative data is not in numbers. Cohen *et al.* (2011:537) describe qualitative data analysis as an activity that involves organizing, accounting for and explaining data. It can also be described as making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities. Creswell (2009:181) indicates that the process of data analysis making sense out of text and image data. It involves preparing data for analysis, going deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data.

In this study, the researcher developed a coding system to organise data into units of meaning. Developing a coding system in this study involved searching through data for regularities and patterns as suggested by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:369).

Gibs (in Cohen *et al.*, 2011:537) state that qualitative data analysis is distinguished by its merging of analysis and interpretation and often by the merging of data collection with data analysis in an interactive, back and forth process.

Data from questionnaires was analysed descriptively. Descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages were calculated to represent data. Data results, were displayed in tables and discussed according to the items (Fraenkel, *et al.*, 2012: G-2).

Qualitative and quantitative data were triangulated. Triangulation is used to ensure cross validation of data sources and research methods and they emphasise that triangulation is one way of addressing issues of validity, it is the usage of more than one source of data so that one can check one's interpretation of one against the other (Lawson & Philpott, 2008:79, Maree, 2010:39, Durrheim & Painter, 2009:287).

In this study, triangulation of methods besides triangulation of data was utilised. Data collected by means of interviews was checked against what was collected from the support data which is data from the questionnaire. The data from the interviews were about the

experiences of female principals regarding their leadership roles while the data from the questionnaire were mainly on perceptions of these roles. The researcher then compared the data from the interviews and the data from the questionnaires to get a clearer view the females' perceptions and experiences of their educational leadership roles.

3.6 RESEARCHER'S ROLE

The researcher is an instrument in data gathering process. Maree (2010:79) states that qualitative studies accept the researcher's subjectivity as something that cannot be eliminated. McMillan and Schumacher (in Maree, 2010:41) give a role of the researcher as empowering to the researcher so that he/she can enter into collaborative partnership with respondents in order to collect and analyse data, with the main aim of creating understanding.

In this study, the researcher interviewed the participants face-to-face, handed out the questionnaires to the respondents and also analysed the data.

3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Robson (2011:534) defines trustworthiness as the extent to which one can have trust or confidence in the study and its findings. According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche` and Delport (2011:419) there are four criteria that are considered appropriate for qualitative studies, and that should establish the trustworthiness of the research, namely: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. (The quantitative trustworthiness is discussed in section 3.4.2.2).

3.7.1 Transferability

Bloomberg and Volpe (2012:113) state that although qualitative researchers do not generalise their research findings to other settings, lessons learnt can benefit people from other settings and they describe transferability as the fit or match between the research context and other contexts as judged by the reader. Maree (2010:299) states that transferability refers to the way in which a reader is able to take the study findings and transfer them to other context. In this study for the researcher to achieve this, conclusive information concerning the research sites and rich descriptions of perceptions of selected participants were presented.

3.7.2 Credibility

According to De Vos *et al* (2011:419) credibility is an alternative to validity that is internal and the goal being to demonstrate that the inquiry was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject has been accurately identified and described. A qualitative study is

considered credible if it presents accurate description and interpretation of human experiences that people sharing that experience would recognise the description. Ensuring credibility requires that research be conducted in a manner that shows that the phenomena are accurately identified and described. Robson (2011:523) describes credibility as the ability to demonstrate that the research was designed in a manner which accurately identified and described the problem to be investigated. It calls for a specification that is detailed and also justified. Maree (2010:114) contributes by saying that by allowing research participants and other people that may have interest in the research, to comment on the research findings, interpretations and conclusions may enhance the credibility of the study.

To ensure credibility in this study, the researcher shared the work with some of the respondents to afford them the opportunity of providing constructive criticism on the report. The researcher also used triangulation of data collection methods to make the study more credible.

3.7.3 Dependability

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2012:113), dependability refers to whether the researcher can track the processes and procedures used to gather and interpret data. De Vos *et al.* (2011:419) add to the debate by stating that to achieve dependability, the researcher asks whether the research process is logical, well documented and audited. The reader should believe and be convinced that findings as presented by the researcher are correct. This study was achieved by means of a detailed description of the research process including data collection and analysis procedures.

3.7.4 Conformability

De Vos *et al.* (2011:419) state that conformability is the final construct and that it captures the traditional concept of objectivity. Lincoln and Guba (in De Vos *et al.*, 2011:419) point out that it is necessary to place emphasis on asking whether the findings of the study could be confirmed by another and that by doing so they remove evaluation from some inherent characteristic of the researcher (objectivity) and place it squarely on the data themselves. In this study to ensure conformability, the researcher kept the raw data collected safe from the respondents. The raw data included field notes, recordings of interviews with the principal and the questionnaire used to collect the minor data which was the support data. Conformability was ensured by presenting the findings in a way that would facilitate their corroboration and confirmation by others. Furthermore, the tape-recorded data from the

interviewees will be kept for at least two years if possible. In doing so, trustworthiness will be assured.

3.8 ACCESS TO PARTICIPANTS AT THE SITE

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2013:263), in conducting any research, the usual ethical guidelines apply, including protecting participants from harm, voluntary participation, informed consent and the right to privacy for participants regarding anything they might reveal about themselves. Informed consent is one of the most important tools for ensuring respect for persons during research. Macpherson and Tyson (2008:68) explain that informed consent is for gaining permission appropriately from relevant authorities. These could be the school, educational department, parents or guardians.

In this study, the researcher obtained permission from the appropriate committee at the North-West University Mahikeng Campus and also from the educational region offices of Ngaka Modiri Molema. The consent forms were given to participants/respondents and they filled in these forms to demonstrate their willingness to voluntarily take part. The researcher also explained the purpose of the research so that everyone involved knew exactly what the research was about. Access to the participants was negotiated verbally, telephonically as well as with consent forms filled in and signed by each female principal. Data was only collected after having obtained permission to do so.

3.9 ETHICAL ISSUES

Johnson and Christensen (2014:134) define ethics as principles and guidelines that help us uphold the things we value. Johnson and Christensen further add that, deception in research is morally wrong and should under no circumstances be used because it involves lying to research participants.

Leedy and Ormrod (2013:263) state that if the researcher is working with human being or nonhuman animals, he/she must obtain permission from the Internal Review Board (IRB) which deals with human participants, from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), which deals with animal involvement in a research study. In this case, no animal was involved. Permission was sought from the university and the area office of Ngaka Modiri Molema before going out to schools to collect data.

In this study, the participants/respondents were female high school principals and they gave their own consent. All consent forms were in English because all the participants are well conversant in the English language.

In this study, all participants were told that taking part is voluntary. This ensures that maximum co-operation prevails and information given is rich.

3.9.1 Anonymity and confidentiality

It is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that the participants have been approached professionally and within limits, fully informed about the purpose and context of the research, about the confidentiality and anonymity of all individuals involved (Punch, 2009:249-250). Confidentiality is about not disclosing the identity of study participants to anyone other than the researcher and his/ her staff and anonymity is keeping the identity of the participant from everyone including the researcher. Researchers in attempting to ensure the privacy of research participants, keep collected anonymous information confidential (Johnson & Christensen, 2008:119). Creswell (2009:90) explains that the issue the researcher needs to realise is that some participants want to have their identity remain unknown.

Leedy and Ormrod (2013:107) state that any research study that involves human beings must respect participants' right to privacy and that under no circumstances should a research report, be it oral or written, be presented in such a way that other people become aware of how a particular participant has responded or behaved. Punch (2009:50) contributes to the debate by saying the researcher must assess the ways in which the study will intrude, come closer to people than they want because their privacy, confidentiality of the information and anonymity of their identity should be guaranteed.

In this study, to achieve confidentiality, no participants' real names were used and to achieve anonymity, no information given will be traced back to the owner.

3.9.2 Voluntary participation

Participants were not forced into taking part. This is an international standard which needs to be adhered to. Macpherson and Tyson (2008:55) say every participant must participate voluntarily. In this study, participants were informed it was voluntary; they were not forced to take part but did so at their own will.

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has given the outline of the research methodology of this study. It was done with research questions, problem as well as the aim and purpose of the study in mind. This chapter also outlined, in detail the research approach and processes used including research methods, data collection and analysis. Trustworthiness of the study as well as ethical issues were discussed in detail. The following chapter deals with data presentation, analysis and interpretation.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and analyses data collected from participants. The data was collected from five female high school principals in Mahikeng and its surrounding schools. The principals were interviewed face-to-face and they also responded to questionnaires.

Qualitative and quantitative data are presented on the study which investigated educational leadership roles, perceptions and experiences of female high school principals. The qualitative data presented focused on information obtained from interview data on the following themes: attainment of leadership position, what leadership position entails, male and female attitude towards female leader, barriers to promotion, how barriers can be dismantled, aspects of leadership to be improved, advice to females on how to improve their leadership skills.

4.2 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The qualitative data was analysed by means of coding and then categorisation. The researcher followed three basic procedures when analysing qualitative data. These are transcribing data, reading and rereading transcripts. In line with the above procedures, the researcher immersed herself in her data to understand what was going on and also segmented and coded the data, counted words and coded categories (enumeration) and identified relationships and potential themes in the data. For quantitatively derived data, descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages as well as tables were used to analyse and describe data (cf Paragraph 3.5). Then a summary of responses was presented according to identified themes and interpreted.

4.3 PRESENTATION OF QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

For this study, the researcher used a qualitative method to obtain first-hand information from the high school female principals. In this chapter the raw data obtained from the audio recording of the semi-structured interviews and transcripts are presented. Furthermore, this chapter provided an analysis and interpretation of the data according to the purpose of an investigation.

This section presents views or responses of the female principals interviewed by the researcher, relating to the perceptions and experiences regarding their leadership roles, how

they attained their leadership positions, barriers to attainment of leadership positions and also how they can enhance their leadership skills. Below is how they responded. Principals' responses are indicated by the letter "P". The responses are also displayed in Appendix E.

4.3.1 How the leadership position was attained

Participants were asked to state how they attained their positions of leadership. The following are several reasons or motivations they gave as to what really made them accept the position of principal or apply for it. The one reason cited by all of them was that they needed to make a contribution and a difference. Being in a leadership position would enable them to understand education systems and policies. Other motivating factors are presented below:

Participants P2, P4 and P5 indicated that the position fell vacant while participant P1 indicated that she was approached by the department to fill the position as she was already acting in the same position. P3 indicated that she was redeployed to open a new school because of her good track record. Three of the participants (P1, P2 & P3) also indicated that they never really aspired to become principals, while two participants (P4 & P5) indicated that they applied and did indeed have aspirations of being the principal. All the participants also indicated that their families were very supportive of them to get the leadership position (see Appendix E).

From the responses of the participants, it is clear that most females are not motivated to enter leadership positions. Reasons for entering leadership positions emerged like family and friends encouraging them. Colleagues also play a part when they see one is capable of making a contribution and a difference in the running of the school. Here are some selected excerpts from the motivating factors expressed by the participants: *"I aspired to be principal, was also encouraged by staff and other people who thought I was suitable"*. *"The position alienates me from the classroom."* *"My parents encouraged me."*

It is obvious or apparent from the accounts shared by the participants regarding their motivation and what influenced them to attain leadership positions that it was based on intrinsic and extrinsic factors. While for some females motivation to attain a leadership position is triggered by a need for personal growth and to make a difference in the education system, for others it arises from the external force. They would not deliberately go for the leadership position but eventually take the position for the sake of the learners, friends or the school.

External factors that would discourage females from attaining leadership positions such as culture of blame, where if anything goes wrong, then it is blamed on the leader because of gender or having to reinvent the wheel when one becomes a leader. This is also a sentiment shared by Gupton and Slick (1996:xxix) who say that there is a myth which says that an ideal leader conforms to masculinity. This shows that people think males make better leaders and some females feel applying for leadership positions can never be a good idea because of such myths. Males are usually called upon to deal with difficult situations and if a female tries to solve the problem, she is labelled (cf Paragraph 2.4.2).

4.3.2 What their leadership position entails

Participants were asked to state what their leadership positions entail and what their perceptions of the leadership roles were. Participants stated several opinions on what they thought their positions entailed. Participant one (P1) stated that the position entailed encouraging people, developing people and that it is human-based driven. The second participant (P2) was of opinion that the position entails encouraging educators as they support her in running the school smoothly, building a strong team, which she said was very important and creating a strong bond among teachers, team spirit and positive attitude. The second participant also said the following:

- The position entails helping teachers have a positive attitude.
- See to the learners' welfare.
- Discipline the learners with the help of the teachers and policies we have in the school.

She further stated the following: *“The other perception I have about this position is that, you need to see good results being produced in the school because there is stiff competition among schools and I would also like to maintain the legacy of the previous principals.”*

The third participant stated that her perception of her leadership role is that it is about leading, administration and governance. The fourth participant on her perception of her leadership roles said that the position entails managing, leadership and management of the entire institution. She further stated that the position is fair if one manages time well and if one has resources. In conclusion the fourth participant said: *“One needs to be a role model because the whole institution needs direction and also the position can be very enriching, stimulating, as you work with a spectrum of personalities.”* Participant five (P5) stated that

the position entails convincing people to act in a certain way. She said the principal needs to lead by example and that the position also entails the principal keeping to deadlines and expecting others to follow.

Analysing all the responses by the participants, it is apparent that the position of principal entails or demands accountability to pupils, parents and the state.

In author's opinion, the position is an influential one because the learners, teachers and members of the community all look up to the principal. The moral conduct and professional conduct should definitely by all means be of a high standard. The emotional intelligence should also be good. There is need for leaders to have a large measure of emotional intelligence if they are to succeed in contested situations.

Goleman (in Preedy *et al.*, 2012:53) posits that emotional intelligence makes a difference between business or public success and failure. The position entails building relationships so that everyone feels part of the organisation and everyone can contribute to the growth of the organisation. The position of principal also entails the leader encouraging collegiality and professionalism which refer to the manner in which the staff members in the school interact and the extent to which they approach their duties as professionals (Marzano *et al.*, 2005:88), which is consistent with the results from the questionnaire. This in return will improve the results of the learners.

The females' perception of the role of principal was similar in some ways and also varied in others, they varied from naïve to critical. Their experiences also varied. Some found it challenging but manageable. Some experienced some resistance while some did not. This is consistent with the idea echoed by Eagly and Carli (2007:101-117). General negative perceptions such as the job is too demanding because there is also a family that needs to be taken care of, the position alienating one from learners, not being supported because of being a woman and the job being too difficult because learners are into social media, like cell phones and internet and it is hard to manage them. From the accounts of their perceptions and experiences of the post of principal, their role entails leadership, communication, accountability, organisation, delegation, consultation, and management of learners, teachers and the community. The PAM document is clear on wanting the education system to provide education of high quality and that the principal must be in the fore front to ensure that this objective is achieved (cf Paragraph 2.3.2).

4.3.3 The roles of a principal

Participants were asked to name their roles as principals and also indicate the role they considered to be the most important. Each participant named the roles which were consistent with (cf 2.3.2.2). The following are the roles they cited: Build a team, conduct meetings, make decisions, mentor new teachers, be the nurturer, monitor progress, act as a mother, and a social worker, do staffing, act as a psychologist, curriculum specialist and check syllabus coverage, moderate through class visits and encourage teachers lacking behind. More roles cited are as follows: Come up with recovery plan for those lacking behind, set up a year plan, budget with SGB and SMT, be accountable for everything that happens in the school, be accountable for finances in accordance with the policy/manage finances, be a parent, administrate, take initiative, manage personnel which are learners and staff members and manage infrastructure.

The participants quickly pointed out their most important role in their opinion. The first participant (P1) stated that developing a human being holistically by interacting and giving loving care was the most important role to her. The second (P2) and fourth (P4) participants cited accountability as the most important because the principal as the leader of a school should account for everything that happens or takes place at school.

The third participant (P3) cited supervision and mentoring as the most important roles. The fifth participant (P5) named managing learners as the most important role because a school is an educational institution. This is how they answered the question:

P1: Participant 1 said, *“Before being called a leader, I am a mother, mothering both the learners and the teachers.”* She said that some learners do not get love from home and that she gives it to them just to win them over. In doing so, it made her a social worker, she said. *I take care of their well-being. “I also carry out the duty of psychologist, I try to find out what really goes on inside rather than what is just seen from outside.”* She also said that she was a curriculum developer. *“I am always involved in the development and also how it is delivered. I want the learners to pass, so it puts me at the centre. The most important role according to me is to develop human beings holistically by getting, interactive and loving them.”* She said if she did not show them love, they would not trust her and they would not produce the best.

P2: Participant 2 said this, *“I monitor progress and if I see that they are not performing well, I put in place a catch-up program, if the learners are performing poorly due to the teacher,*

the teacher is helped through workshops and a catch-up or recovery program is put in place to help the learners.” She further said that she also moderates all assessments and results just to check where more input is needed, check progress of individual learners and whole classes through class visits. She said this gave her a full picture about how the learners are progressing. *“I check syllabus coverage and if I realise more time is needed, afternoons and weekends are utilised,”* she said. She added that making a year plan was done with her guidance and this is so because she wanted all activities to be planned well in advance so that they could be well executed when time came. She said that doing so also helped her know who was responsible for what. *“I am in charge of the budget with the SGB. I take the leading role in writing the school budget and I show the SGB which the school priorities are so that the allocation of funds are done correctly and also plan fundraising activities so that we meet our shortfalls,”* she said. The final point she made was that she was accountable for all finances, by providing proof of expenditure to the SGB although the bursar is the one who signs for the finances. The most important role according to her is accountability because the principal is accountable for everything that takes place in school.

P3: Participant 3 said, *“I am a teacher before being called a principal, I teach the learners but I also teach the teachers to be responsible for the learners. This makes me a supervisor, I supervise both the learners and the teachers. I am a monitor/mentor.”* She said that she monitors the teachers who help her monitor the learners, and also a mentor for both the learners and teachers. *“I help them believe in themselves and I always portray good example to them. I am also the school counsellor. Those experiencing personal problems I try to reach out to them. I become emphatic and try to get help for them from elsewhere if I am unable to help myself,”* she said. She also said that she was a parent besides being a principal. *“The soft part of me comes out when I act as a parent,”* she said. Lastly, she said that she was an administrator, the responsibility she took seriously because that was what her post entailed. When performing this duty, that is when she punished the learners and also the teachers, when necessary, she said. The most important roles according to her are, supervising and mentoring.

P4: Participant four said that she conducts meetings with teachers, support staff and all other stakeholders. She further said that during meetings she also takes care of matters arising from previous meetings, monitoring of all plans and objectives concerning the school. *Monitoring of all students’ performance is my responsibility. “Recovery plan for both learners and teachers is done with my supervision so that the learners pass at the end of their school*

career. I do moderation of education. I make sure the learners don't lose out on time meant for them to learn," she said. She said she was accountable for everything that happens in school and also for all equipment, takes the initiative when called upon accordingly and she is responsible for staffing. *"I go to the department for teaching staff and also approach the SGB for support staffing. The most important roles are accountability and staffing to ensure learners are taught,"* she said.

P5: Participant 5 said that she was responsible for managing personnel and learners and made sure everyone is at the right place doing the right thing. *"The learners come to school to learn so that is what they do and I make sure the teachers are in class teaching. I manage finances, the funds are not enough so I make sure I set priorities right. I also manage infrastructure,"* she said. Lastly she said that all the building are taken care of with necessary repairs done if need be. The most important role according to her is managing learners because it is an educational institution (see Appendix E).

The PAM states that the principal must implement all educational programmes and curriculum activities and also manage all educators and support staff. The principal has to be knowledgeable about the curricula in order to give proper advice to teachers as well as learners to the benefit of learners. (cf Paragraph 2.3.2.2).

4.3.4 Job challenges

The participants were asked to describe how challenging their job was and all of them had something to say about it.

The first participant (P1) indicated that her job was very challenging because of her race and gender. She said: *"It is very challenging because I am a wrong race, the present political situation does not favour me". "Politically I am not supported because I am white."*

Participant one also cited having no senior team management as being a huge challenge to her because this created work overload for her. She stated that the Department of Education and the SGB were not supportive of her. Short-notice meetings by the department were also a challenge because then she has to stop what was planned for that day to go for the meetings.

Participant two (P2) also said her job was very challenging because as a leader she wanted to see good being done, meaning that the curriculum was well covered and the learners developed all round. The participant also said that the job was challenging because she had to ensure teachers did their duty of maintaining order and discipline in school in the light of

some male teachers sometimes having affairs with school girls. She further stated that school girls became unruly when in an affair with teachers. To assist teachers that had affairs with learners, she said she always called the teacher/teachers involved and cautioned them seriously verbally and also warned them of the repercussions of being fired if reported to the department. Some of the teachers stop the affairs while others opt to go on transfer. This is a trend in many schools but these cases are never reported, she further said.

The participant cited punctuality on the part of the learners as a challenge. This leads to loss of time which in the end affects the performance and eventually leads to failure of learners. The participant had this to say: *“The learners that come late are punished after school and I have to make sure there is a teacher to supervise and teachers do not do it willingly because they also have to knock off late.”*

The participant also cited absenteeism on the part of the teachers as a challenge. The teachers have to fill in leave forms which can affect their bonus and teachers do not like it. The teachers that do not come for work without permission expect the principal to just let them continue with their habit without being reprimanded. She also said this: *“When you make them fill leave forms which are put in their files, they feel that they are being ill-treated and that as a principal I am being heavy-handed on them.”* This causes friction between the principal and the teachers concerned.

The participant remarking on funds said it was insufficient and that it was a huge challenge. *“The money is not enough for the needs that we have in the school, the school is a non-fee paying and the money given to the school by the government is not sufficient,”* she said.

Answering to how the work load is, the participant said: *“I have workload which is heavy, I have classes to teach, I have a school to run and I have the community to satisfy.”*

The last challenge cited by the participant was meetings held outside the school. She said these meetings take up her time because she leaves the premises and that travelling is always demanding.

Participant three (P3) said her job was a mammoth task, especially because she was a woman. She also said: *“It is challenging because of diversity of culture, age and gender, some men do not take instructions from me because their culture stipulates that women are not to give orders.”* According to some culture, females should take orders from males and not the other way round.

The participant said the community was not very accepting towards her and this is a challenge to her. The reason the community was not very accepting to her was that she was not from that community; hence she was considered an outsider. The participant also cited insufficient funds as being a huge challenge. The school has many needs but the funds are not enough. The facilities in the school are not enough and this is a huge challenge because it affects the learners' performance. She said they did not have a school hall where whole-school educational activities such as debates and quizzes could take place. She also said that the school did not have science laboratories where learners could test what they have learnt in theory.

The other challenge participant three cited was that her school was like a dumping ground for learners that had been suspended or expelled from other schools. *"However, I accepted the challenge and turned around these learners into good learners by being a mentor,"* she said.

The following situations were also cited, by participant 3 as being challenging:

- Discipline of the learners, some use drugs and are unruly.
- Punctuality was cited as a challenge, some learners and teachers come to school late.

The fourth participant (P4) stated that her job was challenging because learners are not stimulated enough due to lack of facilities. She said because of lack of facilities, the learners engaged in bad things as they were not occupied enough. She said there was a need for activities that stimulate learners and these activities can also translate into class performance. She said the school did not have a multi-purpose hall or sporting facilities.

With regard to finances, the participant said it was a challenge because some parents do not pay fees because they are unable to do so, while others want to pay slowly. She said funds are not enough to cater as a school for their needs. The school, she said, was always functioning on a tight budget.

A participant's remark regarding work load was: *"I have a huge work load and I also do the deputy's functions."* The participant said she had a lot of work to do because she did not have a deputy in school. *"All the duties of the deputy are now my duties even though I delegate some of them to senior teachers,"* she said. The department was taking long to appoint someone in the vacant post though it has been advertised for some time. She also said that she had classes to teach besides all the administrative work.

The participant cited safety as a challenge because learners sneak out and get dangerous weapons. This is what she said: *“The learners are exposed to dangerous weapons and drugs as well. It is difficult for the principal and all the other teachers to control learners on drugs. Some learners belong to gangs and their performance is affected and this is a big challenge.”*

Participant four (P4) also cited finances being a challenge because it is not enough. The money given to them by the government is not enough and fundraising activities do not bring in enough to supplement.

The fifth participant (P5) said her job was very challenging because the current generation is influenced by technology and they abuse technology. She said the learners are easily distracted because they want to listen to music and also listen to the teacher at the same time. The learners are influenced by what they watch on television and what they see on the internet. Because of the media, discipline is challenging in school and this challenges the leadership.

The participant also said this: *“Discipline is a challenge because of diversity of students. They come from different backgrounds. Some learners come from difficult homes while others come from normal homes and this is always a challenge to me.”*

Regarding her workload, the participant said it was enormous though she was able to cope. She said this: *“Days are not the same, at times it is smooth. I have classes to teach but I still have to do all the other work that my position demands me to do.”* (see Appendix E).

In light of what all the participants stated, it is clear that the job is very challenging to these principals because of being women, diversity of the staff members, culture, family responsibilities, funding of schools and the learners they have in school.

Most of the participants indicated that safety was not a challenge in their school but one participant said safety was a big concern as some learners sneaked out and brought in dangerous weapons. Female principals are under enormous pressure to be accepted as good leaders and this is a challenge to them. They bear burdens and responsibilities for the decisions they make which is a challenge to them. Anything that goes wrong is blamed on leadership and females have to work twice as hard to prove a point because there is a belief that in times of crisis, a father figure is needed and not a mother figure (Eagly & Carli, 2007:90-91).

The budget is a problem or challenge that comes up continuously; the principals have to operate with shrinking budgets and resources and are expected to do more with less. This may lead to resentment among departments as the principal has to choose which departments in school receive more resources than the other. Time management, in author's opinion, is a challenge to female principals. They have to balance many demands including work, family and catch-up programs for learners that seem to be mixed up with technology and what their priorities should be at any given time. The female principals also have to deal with the professional development of staff members, making sure the syllabus is covered and also aligning all projects being done in school, and being accountable. Dual role of career and family is a challenge to female principals. Greater family responsibilities limit their careers, having children reduces labour force participation for women and increases it for men (Eagly & Carli, 2007:186).

Although many females have succeeded in balancing home responsibilities and career development, it has not been an easy road. Eagly & Carli (2007:49) concur that "*women's domestic responsibilities do contribute to their lesser access to power and authority in society*" and the fact that "*women are currently responsible for the bulk of domestic work, and this lessens their prospects for advancement through the labyrinth.*" Females are torn between home and work responsibility and most of them find it difficult to balance it.

4.3.5 Leadership style description

Participants were asked to describe their leadership style. All of them (P1, P2, P3, P4 & P5) indicated that they were democratic and always consultative before making decisions. They all said they involved others before making final decisions. They said they valued what others had to say though they made the final decision. Participant one said: "*I am democratic, I get all involved in decision making.*" The participant said that she calls for meetings often so that everyone is given the opportunity of contributing to the running of the school. She said she considers all contributions made then she makes the final decision.

Participant two (P2) said this about herself: "*I am very democratic. I always use 'we'. I consult. I hold briefing meetings to get opinion, I am democratic.*" The participant stated that meetings for all staff members and also meetings for senior teachers were important in her leadership because it was during these forums that she was able to show everyone that their opinions mattered.

Participant three said: *“I consult. I also give instruction which makes me autocratic at times. I also use laissez-faire type of leadership.”* Like the other participants, participant three indicated that being consultative was one way of showing how democratic she was. She said that she never arrived at any decision without the input of staff members. The participant said that she also uses laissez-faire type of leadership when she wants to show appreciation to her staff after working so hard with diligence. She said that this is in the form of favours like allowing them to knock off before time or not making them sign leave forms when they ask to be absent to run personal errands.

Participant four said: *“I am authoritative. I am also democratic.”* The participant stated that she applies an authoritative type of leadership because that is the only way she could have work done by teachers. She said that some teachers take advantage of her because she is a female. However, she also said that she was democratic enough to listen to the views of all staff members. She said that she called meetings often to listen to different views.

Participant five said: *“I am democratic but autocratic at times. I believe in sharing and giving opportunity to others.”* The participant said using these types of leadership styles was good for leadership so that all teachers were aware of what they were supposed to do at any given time. She said that some teachers do not take their duties seriously and the only way the principal can get them to do their duties was by being autocratic. The participant also said that despite being autocratic, she was also democratic as she also listens to the teachers’ views before making final decisions (see Appendix E).

Asking the participants about their leadership style was necessary so that the researcher could compare what the literature says about female leadership style to what the females in the study say regarding their leadership style.

The debate about whether or not females have a unique leadership style is an interesting area in leadership research. A person’s style is usually a very personal and distinctive feature of his/her personality and character. Different styles may work equally well in different situations. In light of what the participants said about their leadership style, it is apparent that women are generally democratic in their leadership. This is echoed by Eagly and Carli (2007:125) who state that females are more participative and collaborative than males. Females take others’ opinion into account when making decisions.

While it cannot be denied that females have certain leadership qualities that differ from those of males', such as the one common almost in all which is being caring and nurturing, studies conducted so far have not yet provided conclusive evidence of the dichotomy between male and female leadership styles. However, studies reveal that females seem to have styles of leadership that are better suited to certain contexts than to others. Shakeshaft (1987:167) says that females use types of leadership that differ from those of males as they bring a culture and socialisation to the job which has not been well researched. Eagly and Carli (2007:121) state that different roles can foster different styles of leadership.

As much as females are democratic, mixing leadership styles will help them greatly. For example, the principal has to use bureaucracy when it comes to finances so that everything is done by the book. Studies have revealed that female leaders tend to be more transformational in their leadership style, characterised by participative management, team building and vision creation. These are towards more feminine styles of leadership which emphasise connectedness and collaboration. Collaborative leadership is experienced when the leader applies talents and resources of all staff to bring about change or generate solutions that are creative and adoptive (cf Paragraph 2.4.2.2).

4.3.6 Acceptance of authority by male and female teachers

Participants were asked to state whether male teachers react differently to them because of them being a female. Most of the participants indicated that male teachers accepted their authority. Most participants also stated that they relied more on male teachers for discipline. Below is how each participant responded.

Participant one said: *“Male teachers have accepted me because they are many, they have accepted me and we work together.”* The participant also said that the male teachers have accepted her authority because she is open, consultative and also shows respect to them. She said she always calls people aside if she feels the teacher has done something wrong. She further said male teachers accept her authority because she always accepts blame when she is wrong.

Participant two said: *“Male teachers have accepted my authority, I am closer to male teachers than to female teachers and I consult them more. Males are more helpful, especially when it comes to discipline. Female teachers are more productive when it comes to producing results.”* The participant said she is closer to male teachers than female teachers

because females talk too much. Females are full of competition among themselves but males only concentrate on their job.

Participant three said that not all male teachers react the same to her. She further said this: *“Younger male teachers are more accepting because they are modern. Older male teachers have reservations when it comes to my leadership.”* The participant stated that this generation is producing males that are less culturally rooted. They are more accepting of female leadership than their former generation of males that have rooted cultural beliefs of only males to lead. The participant said that the younger male teachers in her school looked up to her as a leader and also looked up to her as a parent. The females’ nurturing nature places her in a better position to be easily accepted by these young male teachers she said. She said the older male teachers because of how the culture has been, show resentment towards her leadership. She said this culture is too embedded in them that they find it difficult to change even if they see that females are also capable of taking the lead.

Both participants four and five stated that they are also accepted and also said they rely on male teachers’ ability and they worked with them as a team. The fourth and fifth participants said that disciplinary matters are better handled by men than women. They said that males can handle bad behaviour of learners better than can females. They said males are more cooperative than female staff. However, they both pointed out that females are more productive in class. They produce better results than males (cf. Paragraph 2.4.2.1).

The results in this study show that females’ leadership is easily accepted by males. However, Shakeshaft (1987:19) differed by giving an example of second female only being promoted seventy-five years after the promotion of the first female into administration. Almost all posts were filled by males. Most studies done show that most males resist females’ leadership (Eagly & Carli, 2007:102). Studies also show that males cause females to experience low self-esteem because of being undermined by men and being unable to lead. This is consistent with what Cubillo (in Cubillo & Brown, 2003:281) says that women’s so-called lack of confidence has more to do with unfamiliarity with the territory than a lack of faith in their abilities. Shakeshaft (1987:84-85) also agrees by saying that females have confidence in areas they have experience in while males have confidence in what they have participated in. She further states that what is seen as lack of confidence might be a consequence of a sex-structured society that generates a belief that females lack confidence. Eagly and Carli

(2007:108) concur by saying that females in positions of leadership often find themselves in gender-imbalanced groups which increases resistance to their leadership.

Females are underrepresented because of marginalisation, prejudice and male resistance to female leadership. Eagly and Carli (2007:102) state that males resist female leadership because they think females are incompetent.

4.3.7 Barriers to females' promotion into leadership positions

Participants were asked to state what they thought were barriers to females' promotion into leadership positions. They cited the following as barriers to females' promotion into leadership positions: Women are naive and timid, always apologetic when dealing with issues, they lack confidence, culture which states that women be under men, women's leadership is never easily accepted, stereotyping, family responsibilities, fear and patriarchal and traditional practices; men are perceived to be stronger than women; hence men are preferred.

Most of the participants also stated that culturally females should be house wives, soft and look after the children. Culturally women's primary responsibility has been raising children. Below are some responses of the participants:

Participant one said this: *"Culture states that women must be house wives, doing soft work, looking after the children, woman's place is in the kitchen."* The participant stated that culture allows males to lead over females and because of this, males brought the same mentality to place of work. The participant said that males feel that the job females are capable of doing thoroughly is taking care of children and also being in the kitchen preparing food for the family. This, according to the participant, is a notion that is deeply rooted in most males.

The participant also said family responsibility was a barrier because children are more important to females than the job is to them.

Participant two said females lack confidence and culturally males make good leaders. The participant said that females show that they lack confidence by the way they answer questions during interviews, always apologetic for no reason.

The participant said that family responsibility was a barrier to females; and that the government was very supportive of females. The participant also cited fear as a barrier to

females' promotion. Females are afraid of leading and also afraid of failing if given a chance to lead.

Participant three said: *“Women are naive and timid, they show insecurity on their faces when they come for interviews, women are apologetic when they want to state a point even when they are right, women lack confidence. The background/culture has an impact on women and they don't want to change. They want to continue in the ways they were raised. Men speak with confidence.”*

Participant four stated that males have a perception that they are better leaders. There is the stereotyping of females by males that believe that females are unstable. The participant also cited family responsibilities as the cause of females not attaining leadership positions.

Participant five said, *“Men are perceived to be stronger than women. She also said men get work done more easily than women because they are stronger physically”*. The participant also cited family responsibility to be a barrier to females' elevation to leadership position. Culture was also cited though the participant also said it was becoming less and less as people are becoming more civilised and more accepting of female leadership.

Looking at the responses, it is apparent that barriers to females' promotion are numerous but family responsibilities seem to top the list. Stereotyping, discrimination, culture and females not aspiring for leadership are the other barriers cited by participants and also in the literature. Howard and Tibbals (in Lumby & Coleman, 2007: 53) say although there was little support for the idea that females as a group are unequal in society today, paradoxically, most female respondents felt that they had experienced discrimination, either directly or through family and friends. The main concerns are a lack of support to combine work and family roles and sexism in their working, personal and social lives. Females may have less well-paid jobs, or not much more domestic work, but people see this as a result of individual choice and natural gender differences, rather than bias in society as a whole.

There is a widely held belief that society has changed sufficiently for females to be on a level playing field with males, able to cope as individuals, in accessing promotion, working alongside males for the same goal of work-life balance. If we look more deeply below the rhetoric that claims that the problems faced by females in accessing leadership are no longer of consequence, we can still trace the beliefs about the natural place of females and males in society that continue to form barriers in work and elsewhere (cf Paragraph 2.4.3).

4.3.8 How barriers could be dismantled

The participants were asked what they thought could be done to dismantle the barriers to females' promotion into leadership positions. They cited different ways, which are as follows:

- Females need to be motivated to apply for leadership positions.
- Females need to read books about females that have made it so that they get motivated.
- The media need to play a role in showing females in leadership so that others can be inspired.
- Forums need to be created for females.
- Females in leadership positions can help to encourage others and create networks.
- Institutions such as churches and other private institutions should help females by motivating them.
- Involve psychologists to speak to females.
- Females need to change their mind-set because they are also qualified.
- Females need to support one another.
- Shadowing of aspiring female teachers by other female principals.
- Early childhood sensitising, children must be taught that all are equal despite the difference in sex, and family to be entrusted with inculcating this at home.

Females need to be confident in their own abilities. Below is how each participant responded:

Participant one said: *“Parents must be involved, start in childhood, teaching the children that all people are equal. The children will grow up knowing that boys and girls are both capable of doing things just the same.”*

Participant two said that females need to be motivated and that females need to read books about females that have made it. She said the media need to play a role by showing females that have made it and how they made it. This she said would give hope to upcoming leaders or those aspiring. She also suggested forums to be formed to assist females to come together to discuss matters that affect them. The participant also suggested that female leaders need to encourage other females that want to attain leadership positions. The participant also stated that females need networks which could help them know of posts being advertised.

Participant three suggested that psychologists could help the females by talking to them. The psychologists would work with females and try to understand and solve internal problems that females may be facing. Psychologists will recommend what steps to take in order for the females to deal with any psychological problems.

She also suggested institutions such as churches and other private ones to motivate females to go into leadership and also help them become confident in their ability. The participant also said females need a mind-set change by believing that leadership is also meant for them and not for males only.

The participant also said females need unions for female leaders so that they support each other. She said females need to learn to support each other and stop opposing each other. The participant said shadowing can help; female leaders need to give chances to other females in committees to do administrative work to prepare them for leadership. In senior management team meetings, let all women have something to present which will help them familiarise themselves with leadership roles.

Participant four said: *“Women should develop confidence, women need to be involved in the running of the school and that women need to be part of decision making. Women need to avail themselves in running of the school.”*

Participant five said females’ mind-set needs to be changed because females are also well qualified to be in educational leadership. The mind-set of females needs to change because it works against them. They feel inferior to males when it comes to holding leadership positions, believing they are not as good as males. They need to believe in themselves.

Looking at what the participants said, it is clear that there are a number of suggestions that if followed, barriers would be reduced and help females attain leadership positions (cf Paragraphs 2.4.6, 2.4.6.1, 2.4.6.2, 2.4.6.3 & 2.4.6.4).

4.3.9 Aspects of leadership that need to be changed

Participants were asked to indicate aspects of their leadership they felt they needed to change. Most of them indicated they had a need to improve on some aspects of their leadership. One participant said, *“I am a perfectionist! I trust only myself to do a better job than anybody else.”* The participant feels she needs to change and delegate duties, trusting, that other people can also do the job perfectly well. She stated that other teachers cannot grow under her because she is not trusting enough. The other participant stated that she needed to learn to

be more patient and also improve on time management. The other participants also said that there was always room for improvement. They indicated their wish to learn new approaches to handling discipline and to acquire emotional intelligence. Below is how the participants responded:

Participant one said: *“My emotional intelligence. I need to learn patience. I need to improve on my time management.”* The participant felt she needed to learn how to work with people, be patient with people as people differ and also diverse. Time management is an area the participant needed to work on.

P2: Participant two said that females need to learn to build rapport among primary, middle and high schools. She said in building the rapport, they would be able to share how to deal with certain learners and also share about their academic performance. This was suggested because the females would have experienced the problems caused by certain learners and their strengths and weaknesses since they were in their school before her being promoted.

The participant further said that she needed to learn hand-over and bridging techniques. These techniques were required in order to close gaps in their academic performance and eventually improve the results. She said some learners performed poorly because the hand-over was also poorly done.

P3: Participant three said that: *“I am a perfectionist, I trust no one but myself to do a good job. I do not delegate because I do not trust.”* The participant indicated that she never delegated much, fearing the work would not be done; hence people or other females cannot be developed. She wants to change the belief that she was the only one that could do a good or perfect job.

P4: *“I am so impatient, I need to learn to be patient. I easily feel frustrated, I need to learn how to contain this. I need to improve on time management.”* The participant stated that she needed to learn how to solve problems without showing frustration. She said that in most cases simple problems escalated because she was not calm.

P5: *“There is always room for improvement, I need to learn how to handle disciplinary issues by learning new techniques of handling such cases.”* The participant stated that there is new literature available on how to handle disputes or disciplinary matters and she wanted to learn the new techniques. She said that females must always know that there are always new things that one needs to learn, there is always room to learn more (see Appendix E).

It is apparent that participants feel that there is always room for one to improve oneself on how to make a better leader. There is enough literature that females could use to learn about leadership. Reading about fellow females that have made it in leadership could help them. However, as much as literature is available, not much literature is available on females that have made it in educational leadership.

Female principals need to be encouraged to strive for better leadership skills; they need to be acknowledged for the commendable job in most cases. They need to interact more with other females in leadership so as to share their experiences. Eagly and Carli (2007:126) suggest that because of potential harsh reactions, females must avoid being criticised for applying a highly directive leadership style. Research shows females are democratic or allow participation in their leadership and they must continue to apply this type of leadership style.

4.3.10 How females can enhance their leadership skills and what advice they would give to other females

Participants were asked to state how female principals can enhance their leadership skills and also state the advice they would give to women that were aspiring to become principals. On how to enhance their leadership skills, participants indicated that communication and delegation were very important. They stated that principals needed to listen to other members of staff and also be available when teachers needed them. On the topic of delegation, participants said that when the principal delegates, other members of staff are developed and the principal also improves her own skills.

The females had a lot to say on advice they would give to other females aspiring to be in leadership. The following are some pieces of the advice they gave: work hard in the department, familiarise yourself with management roles, show interest in knowing how the school is run, always assist where managerial tasks are required, volunteer to do some tasks, be confident, meet challenges because there is a solution to every problem, do not give up on your aspiration, be honest, prove yourself to people around you and understudy the principal.

Principals need to delegate a lot so that others are prepared for the post in future. Below is how each participant responded:

P1: *“Women need to get involved, walk an extra mile. Be accountable. Show integrity. Those aspiring should show interest, ask to do some management tasks.”* The participant stated that females needed to volunteer to do some administrative work and do more than required

though they may not be paid for the work done. This will prove to everyone that they are ready to go into leadership. The females need to show accountability in whatever they are asked to do or even with materials given to them. They should also show integrity in their conduct, their spoken language and simply in the way they carry themselves generally.

P2: The participant said: *“Women need to improve, work hard. Show self-respect. Familiarize yourself with all management skills. To those aspiring to be in leadership, let them be knowledgeable about how the school is run. Always assist where managerial tasks are required.”* The participant said the females need to have knowledge of management skills and also be able to work out some managerial tasks.

Participant 3 said: *“Get advice, network, delegate a lot and those aspiring must understudy the principal, learn the policies and mechanisms.”*

Participant 4 said: *“Network with others, be accountable, be willing to listen and learn. Those aspiring need to prove themselves that they are capable.”*

Participant 5 said: *“Be straight forward, meet challenges, be confident, do not give up, and those aspiring must show interest, show confidence that they are capable of leading and also show integrity.”* (see Appendix E).

The results show that female principals suggest that females must develop confidence, network with others, become involved in the running of the school and be accountable. For a school to run smoothly, social capital and human capital need to be invested into. Alder and Kwan (in Preedy, *et al.*, 2012: 137) state that social capital concerns the relations among individuals in an organisation such as a school, and the principal needs to invest in social relations in order to achieve particular goals and enhance outcomes of practice. These new ways of relating, enable people to do things that would not be possible in the absence of these relations. The principals can achieve many things such as the policy implementation and school reform in general. Coleman (in Preedy *et al.*, 2012: 137) adds to the debate by saying social capital is a resource for action; it influences the flow of information in the school. The women can enhance their leadership skills if information is circulated to everyone in the school.

According to Preedy *et al.* (2012: 136), human capital refers to human resources, individual knowledge, skill and expertise that form part of the stock of resources available to an

organisation for doing its work. The females can benefit from such a resource and their leadership skills can be enhanced. The principal should be in the forefront in hiring staff so that the learners are taught by qualified staff. This is in agreement with the notion that principals need to be good communicators, good at empathising, collaborating and listening because they will receive the full benefit of their social and human capital.

The fourth world conference on women in Beijing 1995, amongst other things, focussed on the Commonwealth's endeavour to integrate gender issues, macroeconomic planning and policy making of its members. Each country submitted a country report outlining commitments and actions towards improving the situation of all women in all areas, including education. A gender-responsive budget was initiated in 1995 as a result of the conference. This initiative has workshops for women and it is during these conferences that some principal representatives come back with valuable knowledge which they can share with other women to enhance their leadership skills (cf Paragraph 1.1).

4.4 PRESENTATION OF QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

Quantitative data was also derived from the female high school principals. The principals responded to the questionnaire after the interviews and the researcher collected the questionnaires two days later. The research findings from this source are presented in the form of tables with a brief discussion on the findings. As stated earlier, this study is mainly qualitative with a minor quantitative component.

4.4.1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents show that one respondent (20%) was aged between 41 and 44. Two respondents (40%) were aged between 45 and 50. One respondent (20%) was aged between 51 and 54 while the fifth respondent (20%) was aged 55 or older. From the responses, it is clear that the females in this study entered leadership positions in the latter part of their careers. This may have been due to family responsibilities or due to being overlooked for promotion positions or even due to reluctance on the part of the females to apply earlier. It could also have been because females are believed to be more confident and have more self-esteem later in life (cf Paragraphs 2.4.3 & 2.4.4). Two respondents (40%) have Bachelor's degrees, one respondent (20%) has an Honours degree and two respondents (40%) have Master's Degrees as their highest educational qualification. Forty percent (40%) of the respondents reported that they have been in their current position

for a period of between four and six years while sixty percent (60%) of them have been in the position for longer than six years. Two respondents (40%) indicated that they do have networks while three respondents (60%) indicated that they do not have networks to share experience to improve their leadership skills. However, sixty percent of respondents (60%) reported that their network for improving their leadership skills is effective but females are not committed. The majority (80%) of the respondents indicated that they attend short courses organised by the Department of Education to enhance their skills. The responses from this section indicate that women are well qualified and they should also be considered for leadership similar to their male counterparts and this view is also evident in what the participants said during the interviews (cf Paragraph 4.3.8). The results also indicate that these female leaders have adequate experiences. On the question as to how they can improve their leadership skills, the respondents indicated that the Department of Education organises short courses and female principals attend. The literature also reviewed that the principal needs certain skills to achieve goals in school (cf Paragraph 2.3.3, 2.3.3.1, 2.3.3.2, 2.3.3.3, 2.3.3.4, 2.3.3.5 & 2.3.3.6).

4.4.2 Factors that facilitated attainment of leadership positions

The most influencing factor leading to the attainment of leadership positions was experience. Other factors that facilitated attainment of positions among the principals were reported to be 'post becoming vacant' and 'qualification'.

Table 4.1 Distribution of perceived barriers to females' promotion to leadership positions

Barriers to leadership positions	N	SA	A	U	D	SD
Work patterns and practices favour males	5	1	–	–	3	1
Females take care of family and domestic responsibilities	5	3	1	–	–	1
Stereotyping about females who should be submissive and not in leadership	5	–	3	–	1	1
People resist female leadership	5	1	1	–	3	–
Females lack confidence	5	–	–	–	4	1
Females do not have mentors	5	–	–	–	3	2
Females lack necessary qualities and skills to fill positions of responsibility	5	–	–	–	3	2
Work environments are unfriendly	5	1	1	–	2	1
Females are not exposed to networks of promotional opportunities as are males	5	1	2	–	1	1

-No response. N-Number. SA-Strongly agree. A-Agree. U-Undecided. DA-Disagree. SD-Strongly Disagree.

4.4.3 Barriers to females' promotion to educational leadership positions

Table 4.1 showed eighty percent (80%) reported that they disagree that work patterns and practices favour males. Eighty percent (80 %) of the females agreed that care of the family and domestic responsibilities were barriers to promotion to a leadership position. Sixty percent (60%) were in agreement that stereotyping deters opportunity to a leadership position. Another sixty percent (60%) disagreed that people resist women leadership which is also in agreement with what female principals indicated during the interview. All the respondents (100%) disagreed that females' lack of confidence, mentorship, qualities and skills were barriers to leadership position. Sixty percent (60%) of the respondents agreed that females are not exposed to networks of promotional opportunities as are males. Sixty percent (60%) of the females disagreed that work environments are unfriendly.

Table 4.2: Percentage distribution of respondents' perceived management roles

Perception on management roles	N	VI	I	NE	NVI	NI
Planner	5	80	20	-	-	-
Organiser of all school activities	5	60	40	-	-	-
Controller/allocator of resources	5	40	60	-	-	-
School budgeter	5	100	-	-	-	-
Advisor	5	100	-	-	-	-
Negotiator	5	100	-	-	-	-
Monitor teacher induction and mentoring	5	60	40	-	-	-
Motivator	5	80	20	-	-	-
Decision Maker	5	100	-	-	-	-
Curriculum developer	5	60	40	-	-	-
Delegator	5	100	-	-	-	-
Climate builder	5	60	40	-	-	-
Leader	5	100	-	-	-	-
Evaluator of programs and personnel	5	60	40	-	-	-
Representative of SGB	5	80	-	20	-	-
Coordinator	5	80	20	-	-	-
Communicator of in-coming and out-going information	5	80	20	-	-	-
Nurturer	5	80	20	-	-	-
Vision creator	5	80	20	-	-	-
Conflict mediator	5	80	20	-	-	-
Instructional leader	5	80	20	-	-	-
Mentor	5	80	20	-	-	-

N-Number. VI-Very important. I-Important. NE-Neutral. NVI-Not very important. NI-Important.

4.4.4 Perceived management roles

Perceptions of the respondents on their management roles are presented in Table 4.2. All the respondents reported that they perceived themselves to be planners, motivators, coordinators and leaders. The results showed that 100% of participants placed high on the list of management roles the following roles: advisor, decision maker, delegator, school budgeter, negotiator and leader. The results also indicated that 80 % of participants attach importance to their other roles of being planner, motivator, representative of SGB, nurturer and conflict mediator, vision creator, instruction leader and mentoring, curriculum developer, evaluator of programs and personnel and communicator of in-coming and out-going information.

The results further indicate that participants also place high on the list, management roles as these: organiser of all school activities, controller of resources, climate builder and monitoring teacher induction and mentoring.

Table 4.3: Percentage distribution of respondents' perception on their leadership and management skills

Perception on leadership and management skills	N	VI	I	Nu	NVI	NI
Communication to all stakeholders	5	80	20	-	-	-
Setting priorities when it comes to expenditure	5	60	40	-	-	-
Controlling and aligning what is going out of plan	5	60	40	-	-	-
Performance evaluation for teachers and learners	5	80	20	-	-	-
Intellectual development for learners	5	40	60	-	-	-
Collaboration among all stakeholders	5	-	100	-	-	-
Openness and collegiality	5	40	60	-	-	-
Performance, standards and improvement plans for learners and teachers	5	80	20	-	-	-
Equal opportunities / employment equity to apply when filling posts	5	60	40	-	-	-
Social justice, equity and cooperation	5	60	40	-	-	-
Managing conflict in times of change when different strong conflicting goals are often expressed	5	40	60	-	-	-
Inspirational vision	5	40	60	-	-	-

Nurturing, creativity and learning	5	80	20	-	-	-
Sharing power with members of the senior management team by delegating	5	60	40	-	-	-
Taking up responsibility when things go wrong	5	60	40	-	-	-
Encouraging teaching staff to use a wide variety of teaching approaches	5	40	60	-	-	-
Take risks as a leader to improve practice	5	40	60	-	-	-
Acknowledge and celebrate achievement	5	20	80	-	-	-
Make rules and policies to run the school smoothly	5	80	20	-	-	-
Work hand in hand with the SGB	5	40	60	-	-	-
Be consistent in applying all school rules	5	60	40	-	-	-
Providing academic development programs for students	5	80	20	-	-	-

VI – very important, I-important, Nu-neutral, NVI- not very important, NT- not important

4.4.5 Perception regarding their leadership and management skills

As shown in Table 4.3 the perception of female leaders regarding their leadership and management roles, all participants indicated the following aspects to be very important with 80% saying so: communication to all stakeholders, performance evaluation for teachers and learners, performance evaluation for teachers and learners, nurturing, creativity and learning, making rules and policies to run the school smoothly and providing academic development programs for students. All respondents (100%) also indicated that collaboration among all stakeholders was important. Sixty percent (60%) indicated that the following were very important: controlling and aligning tasks that are going out of plan, setting priorities when it comes to expenditure, sharing power with members of the senior management team by delegating, and taking up responsibility when things go wrong. Eighty percent (80%) indicated that acknowledging and celebrating achievement was important.

Table 4.4 Percentage distribution of perceived job challenges

Perception on job challenges	N	SA	A	U	DA	SD
I feel my leadership is not taken seriously at meetings because I am a female.	5	-	40	-	20	40
Promoting gender equity	5	-	60	20	20	-
I have to display greater courage and resilience than male colleagues in order to ensure staff work together	5	-	60	-	20	20
Balancing family and career	5	20	40	-	20	20
Managing cultural diversity among staff	5		60	-	20	20
Responding to the needs of a large student population and student discipline	5	20	40	-	20	20
Assessing program quality	5	20	40	-	20	20
Maintaining high quality teaching/ learning at all times	5	40	20	-	20	20
Addressing issues of accountability	5	40	20	-	20	20
Delegating duties to the senior team management members and making sure they get the work done	5	40	20	-	20	20
Strengthening the curriculum by working with the committee involved	5	20	20	-	20	20
Managing the needs of the school in the face of increasing financial constraints	5	20	60	-	-	20
Devoting time to the overall mission and vision of the school considering family responsibilities	5	-	80	-	-	20
Assessing teaching effectiveness	5	20	40	-	20	20
Dealing with difficult staff members	5	-	60	-	20	20
Working with the SGB which can undermine my authority because I am a female	5	-	40	-	20	40
Dealing with unsatisfactory staff performance and helping them improve	5	20	20	-	40	20
Building an effective team of staff members despite being diverse	5	20	40	-	20	20
Building networks	5		40	20	20	20
Educators and parents expect me to be nurturing rather than decisive and assertive in my position as a leader in the school because I am female	5	20	60	-	-	20
Office administration	5	20	40	-	20	20
Personal management	5	20	40	-	20	20

-No response. N-Number. SA-Strongly agree. A-Agree. U-Uncecided. DA-Disagree. SD-Strongly Disagree.

4.4.6 Job challenges

Respondents' opinions on job challenges are indicated in Table 4.4. Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents agreed that devoting to the overall mission and vision of the school considering family responsibility is a challenge. Another eighty percent (80%) of the respondents stated that office administration as well as personal management were a challenge. Sixty percent (60%) of respondents agreed that promoting gender equity, managing cultural diversity among staff, managing the needs of the school in the face of increasing financial constraints and dealing with difficult staff members were challenges they faced. Twenty percent (20%) of the respondents indicated that women are taken seriously in their leadership positions and this shows that eighty percent (80%) indicated that women are not taken seriously in their positions. Looking at the responses, it is clear that managing the needs of the school in the face of increasing financial constraints, educators and parents expecting the principal to be nurturing rather than decisive and assertive in her position as a leader in the school, are challenging issues the female principal has to deal with.

Table 4.5: Percentage distribution of respondents’ strategies to address job challenges

Strategies to address job challenges	N	SA	A	U	D	SD
Have staff professional development workshops and networks	5	40	60	-	-	-
Focus on cooperation and consideration rather than being self-reliant and demanding.	5	40	40	-	-	20
Take full responsibility for activities that are taking place at school even when delegated to others.	5	40	60	-	-	-
Balance personal and professional activities	5	60	40	-	-	-
Be fair and transparent	5	60	40	-	-	-
Evaluate teaching and assessment techniques	5	40	60	-	-	-
As a leader I ask for input before making decisions and share the rationale for using or not using the input.	5	40	60	-	-	-
Evaluate the school performance continuously	5	60	40	-	-	-
Building strong support networks with other female principals to share experiences that have worked	5	60	40	-	-	-
As a leader, provide opportunities for meaningful participation to develop a school climate that emphasizes positive feedback, cooperation and caring.	5	60	40	-	-	-
Clearly specifying roles and responsibilities for HODs/ senior management team	5	40	60	-	-	-
Participate in leadership and management training workshops and seminars to keep track of current trend	5	60	40	-	-	-
Set clear, consistent and appropriate boundaries in form of policies and rules that shape behavioural expectations informally of students, educators, staff and community members so that everyone can interact safely and effectively	5	60	40	-	-	-
Participate in social events and programs focused on common areas of interest.	5	20	80	-	-	-
Establish ways of communication to ensure smooth running of the school and have minimal conflict	5	40	60	-	-	-

-No response. N-Number. SA-Strongly agree. A-Agree. U-Undecided. DA-Disagree. SD-Strongly Disagree.

4.4.7 Strategies to address job challenges

Respondents in this study indicated the extent to which they agreed that a given number of items were challenges to them in their job situation. The results on strategies to address job

challenges are displayed in Table 4.5. The results showed that sixty percent (60%) of the respondents indicated that they strongly agree that balancing personal and professional activities, having staff professional development workshops and networks can address job challenges. Being fair and transparent, setting clear, consistent and appropriate boundaries in the form of policies and rules that shape behavioural expectations informally of students, educators, staff and community members so that everyone can interact safely and effectively, as a leader, providing opportunities for meaningful participation to develop a school climate that emphasizes positive feedback, cooperation and caring can address job challenges. Eighty percent (80%) of respondents agree that participating in social events and programs focused on common areas of interest can help in addressing job challenges. Sixty percent (60%) of the respondents agree that taking full responsibility for activities that are taking place at the school even when delegated to others can address job challenges and also having staff professional development workshops and networks; and clearly specifying roles and responsibilities for HODs/ senior team. Sixty percent of participants agree that establishing ways of communication to ensure smooth running of the school and have minimal conflict, personal and professional activities, asking for input before making decisions and sharing the rationale for using or not using the input and participating in social events and programs focused on common areas of interest, can address job challenges.

Table 4.6: Percentage distribution of respondents’ perceptions on factors that enhance leadership skills

	N	SA	A	U	D	SD
Take full responsibility for activities that are taking place at school even when delegated to others.	5	80	20	-	-	-
Set clear, consistent and appropriate boundaries in form of policies and rules that shape behavioural expectations informally of students, educators, staff and community members so that everyone can interact safely and effectively.	5	100	-	-	-	-
As a leader I ask for input before making decisions and share the rationale for using or not using the input.	5	80	20	-	-	-
Clearly specifying roles and responsibilities for HODs/ senior team.	5	80	20	-	-	-
Be fair and transparent.	5	100	-	-	-	-
Balance personal and professional activities.	5	40	60	-	-	-
Evaluate the school performance continuously.	5	60	40	-	-	-

Assign responsibilities to non-senior team members for growth.	5	60	40	-	-	-
Participate in social events and programs focused on common areas of interest.	5	60	40	-	-	-
Have staff professional development workshops and networks.	5	80	20	-	-	-
Focus on cooperation and consideration rather than being self-reliant and demanding.	5	80	20	-	-	-
As a leader, provide opportunities for meaningful participation to develop a school climate that emphasises positive feedback, cooperation and caring.	5	100	-	-	-	-

-No response. N-Number. SA-Strongly agree. A-Agree. U-Undecided. DA-Disagree. SD-Strongly Disagree.

4.4.8 Factors that enhance leadership skills

The respondents in the study were asked to what extent they agreed on what recommendations can be made to improve the advancement opportunities of females into leadership positions in public high schools and what can be done to enhance their leadership skills. Table 4.6 presents respondents' perceptions on factors that enhance leadership skills. One hundred percent (100%) of the respondents strongly agreed on three factors: setting clear, consistent and appropriate boundaries in the form of policies and rules that shape behavioural expectations of students, educators, staff and community members informally so that everyone can interact safely and effectively; being fair and transparent; and providing opportunities for meaningful participation to develop a school climate that emphasises positive feedback, cooperation and caring. Eighty percent (80%) indicated that they strongly agree that as a leader, asking for input before making decisions and sharing rationale for using or not using the input; focusing on cooperation and consideration rather than being self-reliant and demanding and having staff professional development workshops and networks; participating in leadership and management training workshops and seminars to keep track of current trends and taking full responsibility for activities that are taking place at school even when delegated to others can enhance leadership skills. Sixty percent (60%) of participants strongly agreed that evaluating the school performance continuously, participating in social events and programs focused on common areas of interest and assigning responsibilities to non-senior team members for growth can also enhance leadership skills.

4.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the findings were presented according to each research question. This chapter has also presented an overview of how the data were collected and analysed. The qualitative data were collected through an in-depth interview method and captured by a digital voice recorder. The data presented is from high schools principals in Mahikeng and its surrounding schools. Five principals were the source of data and the same principals also provided the quantitative support data.

The data were analysed and the discussion of the findings showing participants' views were accordingly presented. The supporting quantitative data was also presented in form of tables. The main research question yielded the perceptions of female principals on their educational leadership roles and also their experiences. The secondary research questions yielded what female principals regard as their roles, barriers to women's promotion and also ways that could help females enhance their leadership skills.

The results revealed that their experiences vary. Most participants strongly agreed that cooperation reduces job challenges and also balancing personal and professional activities reduces job challenges. The roles considered to be very important are planning, motivating, leading, coordinating, giving an account for everything that happens in school and mentoring. The barriers to females' progression into leadership according to the findings are domestic chores, stereotyping and culture. The participation of females in educational leadership positions showed under-representation and suggestions were discussed on how to change this.

Yielding both qualitative and quantitative data was also for triangulation. The minor quantitative data supported the mainly qualitative data collected.

The next chapter presents a summary of the findings and links them to the literature. Conclusions based on the findings are also presented.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF STUDY SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of this study on the perceptions and experiences of female principals of their educational leadership roles. It includes combined findings from the literature and empirical study as well as recommendations based on the findings and recommendations for further research. The limitations of the study are also discussed and a final conclusion is made.

5.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Chapter one of the study highlighted in brief how the entire research was conducted. This chapter outlined the orientation and the statement of the problem and objectives of the study and also the aims which were to determine the perceptions and experiences of women regarding their educational leadership roles and how they attained these leadership positions. Definitions of concepts used in the study as well as limitations were also presented in the first chapter.

Chapter two reviewed literature, which assisted the researcher in gathering theories, concepts and previous findings relevant to the investigation of perceptions and experiences of female high school principals of their leadership roles. Journals, books and other sources from the internet were reviewed to gain insight into what other authors report about the topic being researched and how wide and deep the topic has been researched.

Chapter three discussed the methodology used. The researcher employed the qualitative method, mainly with a minor quantitative component, to collect data on the research topic which is: Perceptions and experiences of female high school principals of their leadership roles.

Chapter four focussed on the presentation and analysis of data. The chapter highlighted discussions and the interpretations of the findings from the empirical investigation. The quantitative data was presented in tables in line with the responses provided in the questionnaire. The study revealed that females acquired the educational leadership positions due to experience, the positions falling vacant and qualifications. The study also revealed that

female leadership is accepted by most of the male teachers and also that family responsibilities and culture were the main barriers to females' progression into leadership positions.

5.3 MAJOR RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this section, major research findings as per the research questions are presented. These are a synthesis of the qualitative and quantitative findings on key aspects of the study.

5.3.1 Findings from the interview

(a) The findings revealed that females are not motivated to enter leadership positions. The findings also show that women entered leadership because of post being vacant, qualifications and also after being encouraged by family to apply. (cf. Paragraph 4.3.1). However, Shakeshaft in her study (2011:217) points out that the lowered aspiration or motivation may be due to other reasons. She further states that if there is little opportunity, then aspirations adjust to fit perceived possibilities.

(b) The position of principal entails helping teachers in exhibiting a positive attitude, seeing to the learners' welfare, disciplining the learners with the help of the teachers and policies in the school, seeing to it that good results are produced in the school, leading, administration and governance, being a role model, providing direction to the institution; and stimulating learners and teachers to achieve (cf Paragraph 4.3.2.). According to the PAM, the position entails ensuring that the school is managed satisfactorily and in compliance with applicable legislation and regulations; and to ensure that the education of the learners is promoted in a proper manner and is in accordance with approved policies (Educational Labour Relations Council, Resolution: 8 of 1988). Building a strong team, creating a strong bond among teachers, enhancing team spirit and positive attitude, encouraging people and developing people.

(c) Participants indicated the role they considered to be the most important. The following are the major findings concerning the most important role of the principal: Developing a human being holistically by interacting and giving loving care, accountability, supervising all staff, mentoring learners and also monitoring learners' progress (4.3.3).

(d) The participants also cited the following as roles of a principal: Building a team, conducting meetings, making decisions, nurturing, staffing, being a curriculum specialist and checking syllabus coverage. Encourage teachers lacking behind and come up with recovery

plan for those lacking behind. Compile a year plan, budget with SGB and SMT. Being accountable for finances in accordance with the policy, manage finances and manage personnel which are learners and staff members. (cf Paragraph 4.3.3). This is in agreement with Motshekga (2014:7) who states that the core purpose of principalship is to provide leadership and management in all areas of school to enable the creation and support of conditions under which high-quality teaching and learning take place and which promote the highest possible standards of learner achievement (cf Paragraph 2.3.2). Duignan (2012:39) also echoes and says that promoting staff morale, keeping staff motivated, cultivating teamwork and providing opportunities to staff development are some of the challenging but vital roles a principal plays.

(e) On job challenges, the following situations were cited by the participants as challenging: Discipline of the learners as some use drugs, unruly behaviour of the learners, punctuality, some learners and teachers come to school late. The job was very challenging because of being a female, diversity of the staff members, culture and age. Finances are a huge challenge as the money allocated to them is not enough; hence budgets are always tight. Almost all the participants indicated that they were overloaded with work as they had classes to teach and also attend short notice departmental meetings. (cf Paragraph 4.3.4).

(f) The female principals are democratic and consultative in decision making. However, they are autocratic if a situation calls for such action. Laissez-faire type of leadership is also used at times just to show teachers appreciation after working very hard (cf Paragraph 4.3.5).

(g) The following are the findings about how men take or accept female principals' leadership: Male teachers accept female principals' authority and the female principals also rely more on male teachers than on female teachers for discipline. Younger male teachers are more accepting than older male teachers and are modern and do not care who is leading them. Older male teachers have reservations because of deeply rooted cultural beliefs that females must take instructions from men and not the other way round (cf Paragraph 4.3.6).

(h) The following are the findings about barriers to females' promotion into leadership positions: Females are naive and timid, females lack confidence, culture/background, stereotyping, family responsibilities and males being perceived to be stronger than females; hence males being preferred to females (cf Paragraph 4.3.7). Females are not motivated enough to apply for leadership positions. Females are not as confident as males are in their own abilities (cf Paragraph 4.3.8).

5.3.2 Findings from the questionnaires

(i) Females are well qualified and female principals go for short refresher courses organised by the department of education to enhance their management skills. Clusters where these female leaders could share ideas are non-existent and where they do exist, they are not effective because members are not fully committed (4.4.1). This could be in line with what Gupton and Slick (1996:91) point out that since females that enter leadership positions are seen as outsiders, they lack acceptance by those in the mainstream and they rarely have mentors as do their male counterparts, and their networks or clusters formed are casual. Gupton and Slick further state that these networks or clusters formed might only help females be on the edge of their profession instead of being helped to be in the centre of their profession.

(ii) Experience, posts falling vacant and their qualifications helped the female principals attain leadership positions. Results also show that these female principals only attained these positions after the age of forty, which is in agreement that females seek these positions after raising their children (4.4.2).

(iii) On what the barriers are to females' promotion to educational leadership position, the following are the major findings: Participants strongly agreed that family and domestic responsibilities were a major barriers to females' attainment of leadership positions and they agreed that stereotyping about females who should be submissive and not in leadership was also a barrier. The other findings are: Males accept female leadership, females have self-confidence and females have mentors (see Table 4.1).

(iv) On what female principals perceive as their management roles, the major findings are as follows: School budgeting, leading, delegating, planning, advising, decision making, coordinating, negotiating, climate building, monitoring, mentoring and nurturing. (see Table 4.2).

(v) On their perceptions on leadership and management skills, these are the major findings: Collaboration among all stakeholders and acknowledging and celebrating achievement were important. Nurturing, creativity and learning are very important. Communication to all stakeholders, carrying out performance evaluation for teachers and learners and performance, standards and improvement plans for both learners and teachers are also very important. Managing conflict in times of change when different strong conflicting goals are often

expressed and inspirational vision are important and also consistence in applying all school rules are important.(see Table 4.3).

(vi) On what the job challenges are, the following are the major findings: devoting to the overall mission and vision of the school considering family responsibility, office administration as well as personal management, managing the needs of the school in the face of increasing financial constraints; and educators and parents expecting the principal to be nurturing rather than decisive and assertive in her position as a leader in the school (see Table 4.4).

(vii) On what strategies female principals can use to address job challenges, the following are the major findings: balance personal and professional activities, be fair and transparent, evaluate the school performance continuously, as a leader, provide opportunities for meaningful participation to develop a school climate that emphasises positive feedback and build strong support networks. Establishing ways of communication to ensure smooth running of the school and having minimal conflict and also taking full responsibility when things go wrong were vital to addressing job challenges. (see Table 4.5).

5.4 SYNTHESIS OF SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

The major findings of the qualitative enquiry and minor quantitative enquiry presented in this chapter are synthesised below. Significant findings which emerged from the qualitative and quantitative investigations are synthesised and interpreted in relation to the research questions and aims posed at the beginning of the study entitled, “The investigation into educational leadership roles: perceptions and experiences of female high school principals.”

- Both qualitative and quantitative data reveal that: female principals attained their leadership as a result of the post becoming vacant and experience. However, the quantitative results also indicate that qualifications and self-motivation led them into leadership position, which they never mentioned during the interview. Literature echoes the point that females gain leadership positions because they are motivated to do so. However, Shakeshaft (1985) quoting from studies done from the late 1970s by (Baughman, 1977, Schmuck, 1976) points out that females have traditionally had little support, encouragement or counselling from family, peers, co-ordinators, or educational institutions to pursue careers in administration. Similarly in her later study, Shakeshaft (1987:86) confirms that although it is true

that females have applied less often traditionally for leadership positions and that females, more than males, need to be encouraged to enter leadership positions, there is little evidence that the reason for this can be found in lower aspirations and motivation. Eagly and Carli (2007:14) confirm that females are now attaining better qualifications that assist them with getting leadership positions than before.

- Results from the interview and questionnaire show that the roles of a principal are: Building a team, conducting meetings, making decisions, leading, delegating, coordinating, nurturing, staffing, being a curriculum specialist and checking syllabus coverage. Encouraging teachers lacking behind and come up with recovery plan for those lacking behind. Compiling a year plan, budgeting with SGB and SMT. Being accountable for finances in accordance with the policy, manage finances and manage personnel which are learners and staff members. This is in agreement with literature (Paragraphs 2.3.2, 2.3.2.2 & 2.3.2.1).
- On barriers that prevent females from gaining leadership positions, results show that family and domestic responsibility, culture and stereotyping are the major causes. Shakeshaft in her study (1987:72) confirms that the main barriers to the attainment of leadership positions are family and domestic responsibilities, stereotyping and lack of mentors.
- On how the female principals can enhance their leadership skills, results reveal that: communication and delegation are very important, the leader must communicate set boundaries clearly which should also be consistent in form of policies and rules. The leader should also listen to other members of staff by providing opportunities for meaningful participation and being fair and transparent. The female leaders to enhance their leadership, they must be cooperative and caring which means being available when teachers need them. Literature echoes these findings. Goddard and Miller (in Prytula *et al.*, 2013:4) explain that creating an organisational culture that supports a learning organisation requires a principal to possess different set of leadership skills, he/she must know how to model and how to dialogue.(Paragraphs 2.3.3.1 & 2.3.3.2).

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to:

- Females aspiring for leadership.
- Those already in leadership and management positions.
- Schools.
- Policy makers in educational departments.

5.5.1 Recommendations to females aspiring for leadership

As empirically recorded, there is supporting evidence that females empowerment and leadership training are of great importance to prepare females for educational leadership positions in high schools. It is recommended that females aspiring for leadership as well as those already in leadership and management positions:

- Build social capital by establishing good relationship with colleagues both in the organisation and the surrounding community.
- Balance employment and family.
- Involve oneself in managerial work to gain experience.
- Form networks with other females in similar positions and choose mentors.
- Strive to improve credentials in order to compete successfully for senior leadership positions, meaning that, females should be appropriately trained to develop and improve their professional self-image, self-confidence and self-esteem.

Female principals should attend conferences and workshops on leadership and management and do private studies to enhance their skills that could help them cope with the challenges and demands of their job. Furthermore, female teachers should undergo training to equip them with necessary skills and competencies in leadership positions.

5.5.2 Recommendations to policy makers in Education

In light of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made.

5.5.2.1 Training/Conferences

It is recommended that short courses that can help females enhance their leadership skills be conducted. Pre-service and in-service leadership and management training courses should be introduced to train and support aspirants with leadership potential. Gender programmes in

form of conferences also be promoted, this could be a yearly event where all female principals, HODs and females in SMT in the province meet and share their experiences; and the process network and identify mentors.

5.5.2.2 Mentorship

A recommendation is made for the establishment of mentoring, networks and coaching of females to enhance professional socialisation and growth. This will be strengthened by positive role models, mentors and effective network channels that create chances and opportunities for upward movement for females in their work places.

5.5.2.3 Pace of change

Department of Education are often sources of substantial change through their enactment of new policies and guidelines. Rapid change can cause stress if the principal is not consulted or if what the principal believes should be priority, is not considered. Hence, the Department of Education must bring in changes gradually so that female high school principals can have time to adjust.

5.5.3 Recommendations to school management

The recommendations are as follows:

- The school management to encourage the formation of leadership support networks for females.
- The school governing bodies must consider hiring staff on an equitable basis without favouring males over females and ensure there is equal gender representation in educational leadership.

Motivation: Leadership and Management requirements such as long working hours and workshops that require females to spend nights away from home should be flexible and also not be used as a base for promotion.

5.6 RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It is recommended that further research concerning female principals' perceptions and experiences of their leadership roles be carried out with a larger sample. Future research

might examine the influence of role modelling and mentorship on the professional development of female principals.

5.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study aimed at understanding the perceptions and experiences of a small group of high school female principals regarding their educational leadership roles. Female high school principals are generally under-represented in educational leadership and management of schools. Hence, the entire population of these principals in the selected district was utilised, as the limited pool made sampling unfeasible. Therefore no generalisation can be claimed from such a sample. However, because the study was predominantly qualitative, and such studies are not normally expected to generalise their findings, the detailed description of the methodology and findings would enable transferability of findings to other similar contexts.

5.8 CONCLUSION

This study has discussed the leadership experiences of female principals. Females are well qualified and understand the roles of principals. Their experiences vary but most of them indicated the job of a principal is challenging.

The roles of the principal are providing leadership and management in all areas of school to enable the creation and support of conditions under which high quality teaching and learning take place, promoting the highest possible standards of learner achievement, promoting staff morale and keeping staff motivated, cultivating teamwork and providing opportunities to staff development. Other roles of a principal are building school vision, managing safety, mediating conflicts, recruiting staff, making decisions, planning, organising, allocating resources and delegating duties.

In general females are still underrepresented in educational leadership positions, chiefly as a result of internal and external barriers such as marginalisation, prejudice, not being taken seriously as well as being perceived as lacking capacity to lead. Although it is generally assumed that female leadership styles may benefit organisations because these appear to be more attuned to most contemporary organisational types, there is still insufficient representation of female principals in school organisations. Female principals need models and mentors in their careers. They also need family and friends to support them throughout.

The challenge of balancing work and family responsibilities influences the effective performance of the duties of a principal.

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11 March 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm the **H.L. Ng'ambi (Student number: 22640606)** is a Med (Masters) student studying Educational Management at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus.

Research Topic: Perceptions and Experiences of Female High School Principals of their Leadership Roles She is collecting data for her research. We request that she be allowed to collect data from female Principals; Mafikeng Area Office in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District.

Any assistance given to her will be appreciated.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Du toit'.

Prof P. Du toit
Director: School of Postgraduate Studies
Mafikeng Campus



education

Lefapha la Thuto la Bokone Bophirima
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NGAKA MODIRI MOLEMA DISTRICT

Enquiries S.O. Molete
Telephone 018 - 388 – 3383

To : School Manager
From : Mr B.E. Monale
District Director
Date : 17 March 2014
Subject : *Permission to conduct a research in Schools in Mahikeng Area Office*

Permission is hereby granted to Ms H.L. Ng'ambi, a student for Master in Education in the North West University to conduct a research on **“Perceptions and Experiences of Female High School Principals of the Leadership Roles”**.

School Managers are requested to cooperate with her and provide her with necessary support during this project.

Your cooperation and support in this regard is highly appreciated

Yours in education

Mr B.E. Monale
District Director



“Towards Excellence in Education”

CONSENT TO BE A PARTICIPANT/ RESPONDENT IN RESEARCH

I consent to serve as a subject in the research investigation entitled: Perceptions and experiences of female high school principals of their leadership roles. The nature and general purpose of the research procedure and the known risks involved have been explained to me by the researcher, Hildah Lungu Ng'ambi.

The researcher is authorized to proceed on the understanding that I may terminate my involvement as I am doing it voluntarily.

I understand also that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in a research but I believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potentially unknown risks.

Signed _____

(Participant or respondent)

Date _____

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS

Thank you for agreeing to be part of this study and finding time to avail yourself for this interview. For the record, the contents of this interview are for study purposes only. Neither you nor your school will be identified or quoted in any way. Confidentiality is completely guaranteed. Please feel free and be frank by answering honestly.

1. How did you attain your leadership position?
2. What does your position as leader entail? In other words what are your perceptions of your leadership roles?
3. What are your roles as a principal? In your opinion which of these roles do you consider more important?
4. How challenging is your job?
5. How would you describe your leadership style?
6. Do you think males and females react differently towards you as a female leader? Please provide some examples to substantiate this.
7. In your opinion what are the barriers to females' promotion into educational leadership positions?
8. How do you think these barriers can be dismantled?
9. Do you feel there are aspects of your leadership that you would like to improve? Please share these with me.
10. What would be your advice to females who want to enhance or improve their leadership skills?

APPENDIX E

	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6	Question 7	Question 8	Question 9	Question 10
	Attainment of leadership position	Perceptions of leadership roles	Roles	Important roles	Challenges	Do males react differently toward your leadership?	What are the barriers to females' promotion into leadership.	How barriers can be dismantled	Aspects of leadership that need to be improved	Advice to other females
Participant 1	-I was approached by the department as I was acting in the position. -I applied for the position of deputy only. -Friends and family encouraged me though.	It entails encouraging people. -It entails developing people. -It is human based driven.	Mothering. -Social worker. -Psychologist. -Curriculum developer.	The most important is to develop human beings holistically by getting interactive and loving them	-It is very challenging because I am a wrong race. -Politically not support because I am white. -I have no SMT -I have work overload. -Short notice meetings by the department.	Male teachers have accepted me because they are many. -We work together.	-Culture: women must be a house wife doing soft work, looking after their children. A woman's place is in the kitchen. -Family Responsibility: Children are more important to females than the job is to them.	-Start in childhood, tell the children that all people are equal. -They will understand it better when started or told so at home.	-My emotional intelligence. -I need to learn patience. -I need to improve on my time management .	-Get involved, walk an extra mile. -Be accountable. -Show integrity. -Those aspiring should show interest, ask to do some managerial tasks.
Participant 2	-The principal transferred. -Position fell vacant.	Encourage educators as they support me run the school smoothly. -Encourage teachers to have a	Monitoring progress. -Moderate. -Check progress through class visits. -Check syllabus	The most important is accountability because the principal is accountable for everything that takes	Punctuality on the part of the learners and they have to be punished after school and I have to make sure	Male have accepted my authority. Males are more helpful especially when it	-Lack of confidence. -Culture: males make good leaders. -Family responsibility. -Fear	-Females need to be motivated. -Females need to read books about females who have made it.	-Learn to build rapport among primary, middle and high schools. -Learn to handover and bridging	To improve, work hard. -Show self-respect -Familiarise yourself with all management skills.

		<p>positive attitude. -See to the learners' welfare.</p>	<p>coverage. -Encourage those lacking behind (teachers). -Come up with a recovery plan. -Make year plan. -Budget with SGB. -Account for all finances.</p>	<p>place in school.</p>	<p>there is a teacher to supervise. Absenteeism on the part of the teachers and they have to fill in leave forms which can affect their bonus and teachers do not like it. Insufficient funds is a big challenge. - I have workload which is heavy. -Meetings held outside the school take up my time.</p>	<p>comes to discipline. -I am closer to male teachers than female teachers and I consult them more. -Female teachers are more productive when it comes to producing results.</p>		<p>-Media to play a role by showing females who have made it. Forums to be formed to assist. -Female leaders to encourage others. -Females need networks. -</p>	<p>techniques.</p>	<p>-To those aspiring, let them be knowledgeable how the school is run. -Always assist where managerial tasks are required.</p>
Participant 3	<p>I was taken from a school to this one. -I was redeployed</p>	<p>This position entails leadership, administration and governance.</p>	<p>A teacher. -Supervisor. -Monitor/mentor. -Counsellor. -A parent. -Administrator</p>	<p>The most important role is supervising and mentoring.</p>	<p>It is a mammoth task especially that I am a woman. -It is challenging because of</p>	<p>-Not all males react to me the same. -Younger male teachers are more accepting</p>	<p>-Females are naïve, timid. -Females are apologetic. -Females lack confidence. -Background/culture.</p>	<p>Psychologists can help the females by talking to them. -Institutions to motivate females like churches</p>	<p>-I am a perfectionist, I trust no one but myself to do a good job. -I do not delegate because I do</p>	<p>-Get advice. -Network. -Delegate a lot. Those aspiring must understudy the principal. -Learn the</p>

					diversity of culture, age and gender. Some males do not take instructions from me because their culture stipulates that females are not to give orders. Community members are not very accepting. -Insufficient funds, hence facilities are not enough.	because they are modern. -Older male teachers have reservations when it comes to my leadership. -I have no serious issues by large.		and other private institutions. -Females need a mind-set change. -Unions about/for female leaders. -Females need to support each other. -Shadowing can help. Leaders need to give chance to other females in committees. -In SMT meetings, let all females have something to present.	not trust.	policies and mechanisms.
Participant 4	Position fell vacant; was asked by department. -I applied for position of deputy.	The position entails managing, learners and management of the whole institution. -The position entails	Conduct meetings with teachers, staff and all other stakeholders. -Monitoring. -Moderation of education. Accountability	The most important is accountability and staffing to ensure learners are taught.	Learners not stimulated enough because of lack of facilities. -Some parents do not pay fees.	-I am accepted. -I rely on their ability. -We are a team.	-Females are not accepted easily. -Males have a perception that they are better leaders. -Stereotyping. -Family responsibility.	Females should develop the confidence. -Females need to be involved. -Females need to be	-I am so impatient, I need to learn to be patient. -I easily feel frustrated, I need to learn how to contain this.	Network with others. -Be accountable. -Be willing to listen and learn. Those aspiring

		leading and modelling.	. -Taking initiative, staffing.		-I have a huge work load and also do the deputies functions. -Safety is a challenge, learners sneak out and get dangerous weapon. -Finances not enough.			part of decision making.	-I need to improve on time management .	need to prove themselves that they are capable.
Participant 5	-Position fell vacant. -I applied; I applied as I was deputy.	-It entails keeping deadlines and expecting others to follow suit. -convincing people.	-Managing personnel (learners and staff) -Managing finances. -Managing infrastructure because it is an educational institution.	The most important is managing learners	-Very challenging because current generation is influenced by technology and they abuse technology. -Discipline is a challenge because of the diversity of students. They come from different backgrounds .	-Male teachers have accepted my authority.	-Probably men are perceived to be stronger than women. Family responsibility. Culture: though is it becoming less and less of a factor.	-Females' mind-set needs to be changed because females are well <u>qualified</u> to be in educational leadership.	-There is always room for improvement, I need to learn how to handle discipline issues by learner's new techniques.	-Be straight forward. -Meet challenges. -Be confident. Do not give up And those aspiring must show interest, show confidence that you are capable of leading show integrity.

					<p>-The workload is enormous though able to cope. Days are not the same, at times it is smooth.</p>					
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APPENDIX F

SECTION A

Demographic Information

In all cases place a cross (x) in the appropriate box. Select one option only, unless otherwise indicated.

1. Age group

30-34	1	
35-40	2	
41-45	3	
48-50	4	
51-55	5	
55+	6	

2. Level of education (please indicate your highest qualifications only)

Diploma	1	
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	2	
Honours degree or equivalent	3	
Masters degree	4	
Doctorate	5	

3. Are short courses made available for you?

Yes	1	
No	2	

4. Number of years as Principal

Less than 1	1	
1-3	2	
4-6	3	
More than 6	4	

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Serial Numbers

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1-3

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4

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5

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6

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7

SECTION B

Career preparation and advancement options

5. What do you think helped you get to your present position? Check all that apply.

Self- motivation	1	
Support of family	2	
Encouragement by colleagues	3	
Encouragement by mentor	4	
Networking	5	
Employment equity	6	
My experience	7	
Post becoming vacant	8	
Qualifications	9	

6. Do you have any networks in your cluster where you and other female principals share your experiences to improve your leadership skills?

Yes	1	
No	2	

7. If yes, how effective is the network? (Please check all that apply)

Very effective	1	
Effective but females not fully committed	2	
Not effective, a formal managerial training is a better option	3	

8. Do you go for short courses arranged by the educational department to enhance your leadership skills?

Yes	1	
No	2	

	8
	9
	10
	11
	12
	13
	14
	15
	1

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17

18-20

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21

SECTION C

Skills necessary to be a good educational leader

9. In your opinion how important are these skills to you in your position as principal? Please use the scale below to indicate your response.

Scale:

1. Very important.
2. Important.
3. Neutral.
4. Not very important.
5. Not important.

		Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not important	FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
		1	2	3	4	5		
9.1	Verbal and written communication							22
9.2	Problem analysis							23
9.3	Listening to all stakeholders							24
9.4	Organisational skills							25
9.5	Motivating teachers and learners							26
9.6	Collaboration							27
9.7	Problem Solving							28
9.8	Conflict Resolution							29
9.9	Stress Management							30
9.10	Good judgment							31
9.11	Team building.							32
9.12	Decisiveness							33
9.13	Negotiating							34
9.14	Transformational leadership							35
9.15	Engaging the community							36
9.16	Time management							37
9.17	Knowledge of self							38
9.18	Monitoring and evaluation							39
9.19	Delegation							40
9.20	Mediation in disciplinary matters							41
9.21	Working with support staff							42
9.22	Interpersonal skills							43
9.23	Creating vision							44
9.24	Managing resources such as people, money and building							45
9.25	Leading people							46
9.26	Defining objectives clearly and implementing what has been agreed.							47

SECTION D

Perception of your skill level as female principal

10. Please indicate your perception of your skill level, from high to low.5 being very high and 1 being very low. Please use the scale below to indicate your opinion.

Scale:

1. Very low.
2. Low.
3. Average.
4. High.
5. Very high.

		Very low	Low	Average	High	Very high	FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
		1	2	3	4	5		
10.1	Verbal and written communication							49
10.2	Implementation of set goals							50
10.3	Listening to all stakeholders							51
10.4	Empathising							52
10.5	Helping teachers and learners gain/ improve their confidence							53
10.6	Collaboration							54
10.7	Problem Solving							55
10.8	Conflict Resolution							56
10.9	Stress Management							57
10.10	Organisational ability							58
10.11	Team building							59
10.12	Decisiveness							60
10.13	Negotiation							61
10.14	Planning							62
10.15	Controlling and monitoring resources							63
10.16	Organising resources from the suppliers							64
10.17	Teaching							65
10.18	Consultative							66
10.19	Delegation							67
10.20	Mediation in disciplinary matters for teachers and learners							68
10.21	Working with support staff							69
10.22	Maintaining detailed records							70
10.23	Creating vision							71
10.24	Managing resources							72
10.25	Leading people							73
10.26	Understanding my roles as a leader							74

SECTION E

Job Challenges as female principal

11. There are challenges female principals encounter. What is your perception of your current job situation? Please use the scale below to indicate your response.

Scale:

1. Strongly agree.
2. Agree.
3. Undecided.
4. Disagree.
5. Strongly disagree.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
		1	2	3	4	5		
11.1	I feel my leadership is not taken seriously at meetings because I am a female							75
11.2	Promoting gender equity							76
11.3	I have to display greater courage and resilience than male colleagues in order to ensure staff work together							77
11.4	Balancing family and career							78
11.5	Managing cultural diversity among staff							79
11.6	Responding to the needs of a large student population and student discipline							80
11.7	Assessing program quality							81
11.8	Maintaining high quality teaching/ learning at all times							82
11.9	Addressing issues of accountability							83
11.10	Delegating duties to the senior team management members and making sure they get the work done							84
11.11	Strengthening the curriculum by working with the committee involved							85
11.12	Managing the needs of the school in the face of increasing financial constraints							86
11.13	Devoting time to the overall mission and vision of the school considering family responsibilities							87
11.14	Assessing teaching effectiveness							88
11.15	Dealing with difficult staff members							89

11.16	Working with the SGB which can undermine my authority because I am a female							90
11.17	Dealing with unsatisfactory staff performance and helping them improve							91
11.18	Building an effective team of staff members despite being diverse							92
11.19	Building networks							93
11.20	Educators and parents expect me to be nurturing rather than decisive and assertive in my position as a leader in the school because I am female							94
11.21	Office administration							95
11.22	Personal management							96

SECTION F

Strategies female principals can use

12. Listed below are useful strategies female principals could use to address the job challenges named in the previous section – question 11. Please use the scale below to indicate the extent to which you agree that the strategies would be useful to you in your current position.

Scale:

1. Strongly agree.
2. Agree.
3. Undecided.
4. Disagree.
5. Strongly disagree.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
		1	2	3	4	5		
12.1	Have staff professional development workshops and networks							97
12.2	Focus on cooperation and consideration rather than being self-reliant and demanding.							98
12.3	Take full responsibility for activities that are taking place at school even when delegated to others.							99
12.4	Balance personal and professional activities							100
12.5	Be fair and transparent							101
12.6	Evaluate teaching and assessment techniques							102
12.7	As a leader I ask for input before making decisions and share the rationale for using or not using the input.							103
12.8	Evaluate the school performance continuously							104
12.9	Building strong support networks with other female principals to share experiences that have worked							105
12.10	As a leader, provide opportunities for meaningful participation to develop a school climate that emphasises positive feedback, cooperation and caring.							106
12.11	Clearly specifying roles and responsibilities for HODs/ senior team							107

12.12	Participate in leadership and management training workshops and seminars to keep track of current trend							108
12.13	Set clear, consistent and appropriate boundaries in form of policies and rules that shape behavioural expectations informally of students, educators, staff and community members so that everyone can interact safely and effectively							109
12.14	Participate in social events and programs focused on common areas of interest							110
12.15	Establish ways of communication to ensure smooth running of the school and have minimal conflict							111

SECTION G

Leadership and management

13. What is your perception about the extent to which the following are **important** in the management and leadership of your school/department? Please use the scale below to indicate your response.

Scale:

1. Very important.
2. Important.
3. Neutral.
4. Not very important.
5. Not important.

		Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not important	FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
		1	2	3	4	5		
13.1	Communication to all stakeholders							112
13.2	Setting priorities when it comes to expenditure							113
13.3	Controlling and aligning what is going out of plan							114
13.4	Performance evaluation for both teachers and learners							115
13.5	Intellectual development for learners							116
13.6	Collaboration among all stakeholders							117
13.7	Openness and collegiality							118
13.8	Performance, standards and improvement plans for both learners and teachers							119
13.9	Equal opportunities / employment equity to apply when filling posts							120
13.10	Social justice, equity and cooperation							121
13.11	Managing conflict in times of change when different strong conflicting goals are often expressed							122
13.12	Inspirational vision							123
13.13	Nurturing, creativity and learning							124
13.14	Sharing power with members of the senior management team by delegating							125
13.15	Taking up responsibility when things go wrong							126
13.16	Encouraging teaching staff to use a wide variety of teaching approaches							127
13.17	Take risks as a leader to improve practice							128

13.18	Recognise and celebrate achievement							129
13.19	Make rules and policies to run the school smoothly							130
13.20	Work hand in hand with the SGB							131
13.21	Be consistent in applying all school rules							132
13.22	Providing academic development programmes for students							133

SECTION H

Tasks and functions of educational leaders

14. Listed below are some of tasks and functions identified in the literature as being performed by principals. Please indicate the degree of **importance** of each task to your current position. Please use the scale below to indicate your response.

Scale:

1. Very important.
2. Important.
3. Neutral.
4. Not very important.
5. Not important.

		Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not important	FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
		1	2	3	4	5		
14.1	Recruit and select staff							134
14.2	Recommend promotion of teachers							135
14.3	Evaluate and appraise teacher performance							136
14.4	Work with SGB to come up with fundraising activities							137
14.5	Seek the involvement of the community by consulting them on matters that can develop the learner morals							138
14.6	Manage the department/ school budget and resources							139
14.7	Fosters good teaching in the department							140
14.8	Promote teacher development by soliciting further training or short courses							141
14.9	Identify learners with social problems and counsel them							142
14.10	Communicate the gains made by the school and highlight failures as well							143
14.11	Conduct meetings							144
14.12	Maintain essential school records including records of all learners							145
14.13	Organise teaching and assessment standards							146
14.14	Represent school in important general meetings at provincial or national level							147

14.15	Communicate the demands of teacher union to all teachers							148
14.16	Develop and implement long-term strategic plans for the school							149
14.17	Implement equal employment opportunities / employment equity when filling up vacant posts							150
14.18	Serve as link to external interest group							151
14.19	Document all activities in the school for monitoring and assessment purpose							152
14.20	Assign responsibilities to non-senior team members for growth							153

SECTION I

Role perception

15. In your opinion how important to you is each role in your current position as Principal?
Please use the scale below to indicate your response.

Scale:

1. Very important.
2. Important.
3. Neutral.
4. Not very important.
5. Not important.

		Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not important	FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
		1	2	3	4	5		
15.1	Planner							154
15.2	Organiser of all school activities							155
15.3	Controller/allocator of resources							156
15.4	School budgeting							157
15.5	Advisor							158
15.6	Negotiator							159
15.7	Monitor teacher induction and mentoring							160
15.8	Motivator							161
15.9	Decision Maker							162
15.10	Curriculum developer							163
15.11	Delegator							164
15.12	Climate builder							165
15.13	Leader							166
15.14	Evaluator of programs and personnel							167
15.15	Representative of SGB							168
15.16	Coordinator							169
15.17	Communicator of in-coming and out-going information							170
15.18	Nurturer							180
15.19	Vision creator							181
15.20	Conflict mediator							182
15.21	Instructional leader							183
15.22	Mentor							184

SECTION J

Leadership style

16. The following leadership traits listed here describe style of leadership, to what extent do you agree? Please use the scale below to indicate your response:

Scale:

1. Strongly agree.
2. Agree.
3. Undecided.
4. Disagree.
5. Strongly disagree.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
		1	2	3	4	5		
16.1	Directive / authoritative							185
16.2	Coercive							186
16.3	Participative / consultative							187
16.4	Collaborative							188
16.5	Democratic							189
16.6	Autocratic							190
16.7	Laissez-faire							191
16.8	Task – oriented							192
16.9	Centralized							193
16.10	Decentralized							194
16.11	Bureaucratic							195
16.12	Situational leadership							196
16.13	Transformational							197
16.14	Visionary							198
16.15	Coaching							199
16.16	Transactional							200

SECTION K

Barriers

17. Females find it more difficult to gain leadership positions than males. How do you rate the following barriers?

Scale:

1. Strongly agree.
2. Agree.
3. Undecided.
4. Disagree.
5. Strongly disagree.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
		1	2	3	4	5		
17.1	Work patterns and practices favour males							201
17.2	Females take care of family and domestic responsibilities							202
17.3	Stereotyping about females who should be submissive and not in leadership							203
17.4	People resist females leadership							204
17.5	Females lack confidence							205
17.6	Females do not have mentors							206
17.7	Females lack necessary qualities and skills to fill positions of responsibility							207
17.8	Work environments are unfriendly							208
17.9	Females are not exposed to networks of promotional opportunities compared to males							209

Thank you for taking time to answer this questionnaire.