

**COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF WOMEN PRINCIPALS OF
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

by

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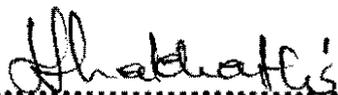
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DECLARATION

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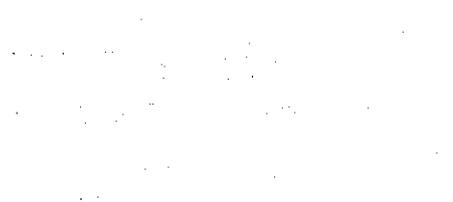
"I declare that *Communication strategies of women principals of secondary schools* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references."



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SUMMARY

This study focuses on the communication strategies of women principals in secondary schools. It highlights the role of communication in management by examining the purpose of communication, communication process, barriers to effective communication and the types of communication, which are verbal and non-verbal communication.

The study, further highlights that communication in management may be affected by the differences in communication styles of women and men. It further shows that while differences in communicative styles can be attributed to many factors, socialisation into gender positions is a major factor that leads to gender communication differences.

Though socialisation is one of the factors shaping communication of men and women, post-structuralists also argue that children who are socialised are not just passive recipients. During socialisation each person is active in taking up discourses through which she or he is shaped. The socialisation, starts at home, then to school and also the community. Children develop sex-appropriate speech in different communities.

A single case study explored the communication strategies of a woman principal in the Northern Province, South Africa. Reputational sampling was used for the selection of the participants and site. Data gathering was done by means of interviews [with the principal and six teachers], observation and document analysis. Findings suggest that a woman principal's communication is shaped by the context in which she is a woman, mother, wife, African, educational manager and as an individual with her own unique personality. Women managers in rural contexts experience cultural barriers to communication as women are not expected to talk much and should appear to know little in the presence of men. Women are also not supposed to communicate non-verbally by keeping eye contact, using more space and using facial expression. In this study, a woman manager emerges as a good communicator who overcomes cultural barriers by even practicing what is not traditionally acceptable.

The woman principal prefers personal encounters as channels of communication and as an African, she overcomes language barriers by using mother-tongue when speaking with staff and students. In general, this study found that the woman principal preferred human-oriented communication strategies, and endeavoured to conquer cultural barriers to communication.

(ii)

KEY WORDS

Managerial communication; Verbal communication; Non-verbal communication; Channels of communication; Barriers of communication; Gendered communication; Socialisation; Feminisms; Politeness.

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God, my creator, who gave me strength to overcome the most difficult stumbling blocks to my studies. Glory be to Him!

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to

MY DEAR HUSBAND DOVHANI,

BELOVED CHILDREN

MUSHAATHAMA, ANDANI AND DEMBE-TSHILIDZI

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM FORMULATION, AIM AND METHOD

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The world of management is largely a male world, and the position of a manager is by and large one which can only be imagined (by men and women) as being occupied by men (Adler, Lanley and Parcker 1993; Blackmore, 1993; Davies and Gunawardend, 1992; and Ozga, 1993). The obvious trend is that women are losing grounds in those few occupations in which they previously dominated. According to Marshall (1985:2), "personnel and teaching are two of the professions which started as female specialism which are not seeing an increased proportion of senior jobs because they are offered to men".

Like the rest of the world, South African women are also invisible in the higher echelons of management. A survey in 1990 on the top hundred companies in South Africa indicates that women form 36.6 percent of the workforce yet only 13 percent of management (Beijing Conference Report, 1995:24). South Africa had over a hundred women in parliament and so has one of the highest percentages of women parliamentarians in the world. In terms of government alone women are underrepresented among cabinet, deputy ministers and director generals, and no women provincial premiers. There are four ambassadors, and few chief directors while women make up half of the electorate of the country. Many women are employed in the public service as men, but very few of them are in management positions, and there is a virtual absence of black women. The same applies to civil society where women are not recognised as a political force like labour, business or civics (Beijing Conference Report, 1995:31). The report adds by saying that women are almost invisible and voiceless at the key leadership and policy-making levels within the sectors mentioned above.

Educational management is no exception because there are few women principals. In countries such as Britain, Australia, and United States of America, the number of women acquiring top level positions has not increased significantly (Blackmore, 1989; Swiderski, 1988; Ozga, 1993). Yet, Blackmore (1989:94) asserts that "the reduction of women in such positions over this period

suggests that the issue is more complex than merely a matter of numbers". This then raises questions about the development of women managers in their managerial positions in education.

Education management in South Africa too, has traditionally been and remains male dominated at the most senior levels of decision-making (Gender Equity Task Team Report, 1997), though there has been an improvement because of the equal opportunities policies introduced by the new government. The combined figures for both schools and technical colleges according to the Report of the Gender Equity Task Team of the Department of Education, South Africa (1997) indicates that men account for 36 percent of all teachers in South Africa, but hold 58 percent of principal posts, 69 percent of deputy principal posts, and 50 percent of head of department posts. The Report of the Gender Equity Task Team of the Department of Education, South Africa (1997:82) goes on to show that "in 1994 only 4 percent of all female teachers were principals compared to 11 percent of male teachers". This clearly indicates a preponderance of men in administrative and decision-making positions. Though the Teacher Audit (1996) points out that in the Northern Province, the majority of school teachers are men, there are clearly marked gender differences in rank, for example, in Venda (part of region 3 in the Northern Province) only six secondary schools principals out of the total of 199 are women.

The subordination of women is caused by unequal division of domestic responsibilities, lack of confidence and public exposure, and lack of supportive and encouraging environment to develop and improve leadership qualities (The Report of the Gender Equity Task Team of the Department of Education, South Africa 1997; Beijing Conference Report, 1995).

Still, when put in management positions, women tend to employ different management styles which, if not looked down upon, could render them successful. Most women tend to be transformational rather than transactional leaders though they are able to switch from transformational to transactional if participation does not work (Riley, 1994:95). This is also confirmed by Adler *et al.* (1993); Grinwood and Popplestone (1993) and Marshall (1985), who suggest that women prefer a different management style from men, preferring less hierarchical structures, and being more people orientated. Studies (Thakhathi, 1996), indicate that the different gender preferences in management styles stems from socialisation and past work experience.

Culturally, women lacked formal authority over others and over resources and have therefore to develop other ways of accomplishing their objectives. Rosener (1990, in Riley, 1994:95) argues that women had been able to derive satisfaction from helping others, including husbands, while men took on other attributes.

Women's communication styles also differ from those of men. According to Adler *et al* (1993), research has shown that women and men use language differently. They go on to show that women usually use signal of courtesy when they talk to people and they show respect by listening and remembering what has been said. Furthermore, Shakeshaft (1989) argues that when women communicate, their speech is less likely to be centred on impersonal subject matter, more likely on emotional and personal issues, and they talk less and listen more than men. In addition, Shakeshaft (1989) shows that women's communication style has been considered as 'deficient', and as a result women managers have been told to 'talk like men' in order to succeed.

Communication is an important managerial function of school principals, including women principals. Bredeson (1988) also indicates that communication constitutes the greater part of the principals' work life by citing studies mentioned below, which give empirical support thereto. Martin and Willower (1981) found that 84.8 percent of secondary school principals' total number of activities were spent in verbal encounters. Kmetz and Willower (1982) reported that elementary school principals spend about seventy percent of their time involved in personal contacts. March (1978) and Wolcott (1973) in their respective studies also indicated that the school principals' daily activities are dominated by verbal interactions.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

In the light of the above, there is a need to explore communication strategies used by women principals in secondary schools as a management function. The main research problem is divided into the following sub-questions:

- What is the role of communication in management?
- What are the characteristics of effective communication in management?

- What are the barriers to, types and channels of effective communication?
- How does gender affect communication? What are the social consequences of gender differences in communication?
- How do women school principals manage communication in secondary schools?
- How does a woman school principal in the Northern Province, region 3 manage communication in her school? What is her experience of effective and ineffective communication?
- What recommendations can I make to scholars, researchers, or anyone who would like to gain knowledge about communication for women in educational management, since there is limited literature in this area of study in South Africa?

1.3 THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The following were identified as the aims of this research:

- To show the role of communication in management.
- To show the characteristics of effective communication in management.
- To find out what the barriers to, types and channels of effective communication are.
- To explore how gender affects communication and to find out what the social consequences of gender differences in communication are.
- To explore communication strategies of a woman principal in a secondary school in the Northern Province region 3.
- To make recommendations to scholars, researchers, or anyone who would like to gain knowledge about communication for women in educational management, since there is limited literature in this area of study in South Africa.

1.4 MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

When doing research for the masters degree “Women in Educational management: A case study in the Northern Province”, 1996, I realised that most of these women seem to be succeeding in their management job. Here are some of the findings of the research:

- The few women who manage to enter managerial positions have a different management style from that of their male counterparts, one more concerned with interpersonal skills, and with participatory decision-making, and, whenever they employ a more autocratic style, it is because of their caring commitment for the pupils.
- It also became evident that women are not always powerless in the presence of men.
- The relationships of the principals with the pupils were complicated. Girls and boys were both at times positive towards the principals and at times uncooperative, yet also acknowledge the authoritative position of a principal.
- It also became clear that experiences of the women are shaped by the context of illiteracy, poverty, social problems and the rural location.

Thus one tends to wonder how these few women manage the schools taking into account that they have very few role models and support system.

As a teacher in the schools (1985 to 1986) and a lecturer in teacher training college (1988 to 1997) in a rural setting, and a government official (Educational Specialist from 1997 to date), I noticed on several occasions that most African women seem not to support their women leaders. For example, in some of the mentioned institutions, very able women who are in managerial positions were seen and suspected to have entered into personal relationships with the higher authorities in order to get those positions. In some cases, most lady teachers regarded their woman head of departments and principals as people who think they are better and, who do not even deserve the positions they hold. They would also find time to talk about it. This could have something to do with the culture that advocates a male as a leader and as a result female managers would be seen as deviants. However, the opposite seemed to be the case when white women lead African women. Even though they may gossip about her in her absence, they try by all means to please her by doing the work and they may even compete in that regard. This could also be attributed to the previous South African standing where white supremacy was advocated. Most of the experiences cited above manifested themselves through communication.

From my experience as a secondary school teacher and a lecturer at a tertiary institution, I realised that to a certain extent the verbal and non-verbal interaction amongst principals and their staff

members seem to be influenced by gender. This was partially confirmed when I was conducting research for MEd. I then felt that research in this area would illuminate a number of issues concerning the interaction of principals and their staff members taking into account that the South African Government is in the process of formulating gender equality policies which are to be implemented in education and other departments. The reading of literature, which suggests that women communicate differently from men, further triggered my curiosity to find out if it is the case with African women in a South African context.

Since there is limited literature in this area of study in South Africa, research on this issue would help scholars, researchers, or anyone who would like to gain knowledge about women in educational management.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

The empirical investigation is preceded by a thorough study of the relevant literature concerning communication in management as a preliminary step in the research. Here attention must be drawn to a particular function of a literature study as a preliminary step in a qualitative investigation. In this type of inquiry, the literature study is not only an exploration of the present state of research, but it also fulfils the function of identifying crucial issues in past research, of identifying different perspectives upon the subject of study, as well as discovering areas which have hitherto been neglected in the literature (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982:153). In this way the literature study allows new and speculative questions to emerge which can be further explored during the inquiry. Such questions are explicated in chapter two and three and form a useful framework for the in-depth interviews of communication strategies of a woman principal discussed in chapter five.

I used qualitative research methods because I hoped to understand the experiences of a woman principal with regard to communication as managerial function. My aim was to explore the verbal and non-verbal interactions of a secondary school woman principal using subjective accounts, observations, and document analysis. Qualitative interviewing was the appropriate tool for

drawing information, that is, for subjective accounts. In this case, I constructed open-ended questions to allow the principal and the teachers to say as much as they could.

1.5.1 Data collection

I drew information from both the principal and the teachers, and therefore, as indicated before, I used multiple research techniques by using a multi-instrument approach of informant interviewing, observations, and archival research (document analysis). By using this method, the data was triangulated (Le Compte *et al* 1992).

One school woman principal in a secondary school and six teachers working with her were investigated in depth for a period of one month. Thus, I conducted three in-depth interviews with a woman principal and teachers (male and female) who are working under the chosen principal. Semi-structured questionnaires with open-ended questions were used to allow the interviewees to say as much as they could. In all the interviews I used a tape recorder to record the interviews and I also took field notes.

I also attended the general formal meeting held at school and observations were noted. Informal discussions of particular events and activities were part of data gathering process. Apart from the days for interviews and informal discussions, some days in the school were scheduled for observations only. While shadowing the principal, data collection was accomplished by writing all activities and interactions chronologically through the day by using a combination of researcher shorthand and field notes. The notes were transcribed at the end of each day. Examination of selected written documents was also used to gather data. The school minutes book, information book, school journal and school policies were analysed.

1.5.2 Data analysis

In trying to make sense of the data, I organised it into themes, using the steps highlighted by Altricher, Posch and Someck (1993). Thus, after transcribing all the tape-recorded interviews, all the transcripts were read carefully identifying all the themes, which were colour coded.

1.6 CHAPTER DIVISION

Chapter one gives the background to the research. I highlighted the research problem, the aim of the research and my motivation for doing the research. It also described the research design.

Chapter two focuses on the role of communication in management. Thus, it looked at the purpose of communication, communication process, barriers to effective communication, types of communication and the channels of communication.

Chapter three shows that while differences in communicative styles can be attributed to many factors, socialisation into gender positions is clearly a major factor that leads to the differences in the way women and men talk. Thus it highlights different perspectives within feminism, key theories of gender socialisation and it also examines how gender differentiated communication is acquired through socialisation at home, at school and also in the community.

In chapter four, I map out how I went about doing the research, describing the qualitative methods of data collection and analysis.

Chapter five elaborates on the findings of the research, which was done thematically, using five broad themes. The description of the context where the research took place, a profile of the principal, and a brief description of the selected documents analysed were given in order to situate the interaction.

Chapter six provides synthesis of findings, recommendations and conclusions.

1.7 CONCLUSION

This study focuses on communication strategies of women principals in secondary schools. Gendered communication is worthy of study because it brings into sharper focus real-world imbalances and inequalities (Lackoff, 1973:73). In the past decade, research on gender and education has grown and the growth comes at a time when a large number of women are aspiring

to be managers. As the women take on management roles, men and women are curious to know about women's communication as managers. The curiosity is mirrored in the increase of literature about women's communication, the frequent reference to academic research on gender and communication that appear in books and magazine articles, and the heightened number of training workshops in communication skills for managers. It is critical that this area of study be explored seriously, in particular in African rural educational settings because effective communication is vital in management.

CHAPTER 2

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN MANAGEMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter has been introduced to show the nature and the role of communication in management. This is particularly significant in this study because to look into gender and communication, it is important to have knowledge about communication in management and how contextual factors affect it.

All social systems require communication in order that meaning may be transmitted and information exchanged. Although the formal pattern of component parts and interrelationships may be established by the organising process, communication is required if these parts are to work together. As soon as work is split among several people, it is imperative that there is some kind of communication among the people doing the job, and among the workers and managers. If managers are unable to communicate their plans, and instructions for executing those plans to subordinates, they will probably fail as managers. It is also important that managers be effective in receiving communication because if they are not, they may have difficulty monitoring the progress of the organisation (Belasco, Hampton & Price 1981:113).

Thus, as Daft (1991:434-435) puts it, communication permeates every management task, for example, to execute the planning task, managers must gather information, write memos, letters and reports; and also meet with workers to explain the plan; when they lead, they must communicate with subordinates to motivate them. To organise, they have to gather information about the state of the organisation and communicate new structure to others. This indicates how basic communication skills are for every managerial activity. Thus an effective manager is also an effective communicator.

This also applies to educational management. "Communication skills are the most important tools principals have available to them as they interact with teachers" (Skow & Whitaker, 1996:90). A principal's ability to influence and manage people hinges on his or her ability to communicate in a variety of ways with different people throughout any given day. Research as pointed out in

Chapter 1 shows that managers spend most of their time communicating in one form or another. Bartol and Martin (1994:442) corroborate by saying that studies show that managers tend to prefer oral over written communication because oral communication is usually informal and timely.

What then is communication? Several writers (Elkins, 1980:335; Bartol & Martin, 1994:440; Daft, 1991:430; Flippo & Musinger, 1982:321; Boone & Kurtz, 1984:372) state that communication is an act of imparting an idea or understanding to another person. It covers any type of behaviour that affects an exchange of meaning. Boone and Kurtz (1984:372) define communication from an organisational perspective as “the transfer of information via an understandable message from a sender to others”.

However, the different writers when defining communication, show that the exchange of message or information between people should be for the purpose of achieving common meanings. Unless meanings are shared, managers and subordinates could find it difficult to influence each other.

2.2 THE PURPOSE OF COMMUNICATION

Communication as indicated earlier in paragraph 2.1 is significant in management. Effective communication is critical to all four major management functions. Boone and Kurtz (1984:373) point out the role of communication as providing informational system whereby management can, organise, motivate, direct, and control various segments of the organisation. They (Boon & Kurtz, 1984:373) go on to describe communication as “the very lifeblood of the organisation”. Hence, communication networks of an organisation should be strengthened.

Thus, communication is important to formulate and implement organisational plans as well as to effect different institutional activities e.g. decision making and budgeting; to motivate peers, subordinates and superordinates. The manager should use words that are clearly and persuasively communicated; and to effect change, managers must communicate (Bedeian & Glueck, 1983:578). To underscore this, Bartol and Martin (1994:442) express that although

communication is vital for the four managerial functions, it is particularly important to the leading function as it provides the necessary channel for influencing others.

Communication does not always work and it is a critical factor in some problem situation in organisations. Wrong information and unneeded information may demotivate the employees and as a result interfere with the job performance. Boone and Kurtz (1984:372) go on to say that "information that is misinterpreted can cause problems that otherwise would not have existed". It is, therefore, important to examine the communication process.

2.3 THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

The communication process takes place between the sender and the receiver. The sender is anyone who wishes to convey an idea to others, to seek information, to express a thought or emotion. The receiver is the person to whom the message is sent. According to Belasco *et al* (1981:113) the communication process includes at least two people who should use their thought process and their sense in a co-ordinated effort to transfer thoughts between themselves.

The communication process involves at least six steps, which are: sender's thoughts (ideas), encoding, transmission, receiving, decoding, and receivers thoughts (actions) (Belasco *et al*, 1981:113; Anthony, 1981:183; Daft, 1991:432; Elkins, 1980:335; Duncan, 1983:171; Bartol and Martin, 1994:444-446; Certo, 1983:294-295; Bedeian & Glueck, 1983:576).

2.3.1 Sender's thoughts (ideas)

The original thoughts that trigger the whole communication process is the very place to begin my examination. The manager's or any other person's thought process deals with many different topics every day. Some thoughts are communicated and some are not. The person must know what he or she wants to communicate before any communication is attempted. The sender must have a clear idea of what he or she wants to say or write. As Belasco *et al* (1981:170) put it, clarity of the thought affects the communication.

2.3.2 Encoding

Encoding is defined by Bartol and Martin (1994:444) as the process of translating the intended meaning into words and gestures. Bartol and Martin (1994:444) go on to show that the choice of words and gestures by the sender are affected by various contextual factors like a sender's encoding skills; assessment of the intended receiver's ability to understand various symbols, judgement regarding the appropriateness of certain symbols; past experience in similar situations; jobs status; education and emotional state at the time of the communication attempt. Duncan (1983, 170) also brings in the dimension of environmental context. This refers to physical surrounding cultural and attitudinal environment. Thus, when communicating with people, the background, cultural values and contemporary work group pressures have to be considered.

2.3.3 Transmission

Transmission has to do with choosing the right media for communicating your idea. One may use oral or written methods. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages. The actual transmission of the messages may cause problems in the communication process. Some people have speech problems e.g. talking too fast, the hand writing may be illegible, and many other situations that make the transmission of the message difficult (Belasco *et al*, 1981:114).

2.3.4 Reception

It is important that the receiver receives the message well. The sender must ensure that the receiver receives the message as intended while the receiver must listen. How well the message is received impacts on the quality of communication. According to Belasco *et al* (1981:115), if the receiver does not receive the same message that the sender sent, for whatever reasons, it brings about inaccurate communication. Thus, it is important that the receiver receives the message well.

2.3.5 Decoding

Again, Bartol and Martin (1994:446) define decoding as “the process of translating the symbol into the interpreted message”. It simply means the listener’s interpretation of the message, where the verbal message is converted into thoughts. The conversions of language into thoughts is a process which is ripe with the possibility for distortions because knowledge, attitude, and background filters into the process (Belasco *et al*, 1981:114). A word that means one thing to the sender may mean something different to the receiver. The imagery used by the sender may not create the same imagery for the receiver, or the complexity of the idea being transmitted may be lost in the transmission. Thus, the question to be answered is whether the listener is decoding the message properly so that the meaning the sender intended is indeed conveyed.

2.3.6 Feedback

Feedback is “the receiver’s basic response to the interpreted message” (Bartol & Martin, 1981:446). In this case the receiver responds to the sender’s communication with a return message, that is, the reversal of the communication process takes place where a receiver becomes a sender and a sender becomes a receiver. Feedback is important as it enables the sender to determine whether the receiver has interpreted the message correctly, thus, assessing the effectiveness of his or her communication attempts (Anthony, 1981:188).

2.4 BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is hampered by different factors. Sometimes the meaning which is received by the receiver may not be what the sender intended to send. I therefore want to look at some of the obstacles to effective communication. The barriers to communication will be grouped under four major headings, which are perceptual, language, environmental (context) and organisational barriers.

2.4.1 Perceptual barriers

Perception, according to Bartol & Martin (1994:174), is “the process that individuals use to acquire and make sense out of the information from the environment”. In other words, it is the means by which the world is made meaningful.

Communication is one of the most important reasons for most misconception. The way we perceive people is the starting point for how we communicate. As explained earlier when discussing encoding and decoding, when one wishes to share an idea with another the message is formulated based on references constructed from past events, experiences, expectations, current motivation, needs, personality and educational background. Thus, the receiver relies on a particular frame of references for decoding and understanding it.

For this reason, people rely on the context to assist the reality they perceive as meaningful (Duncan, 1993:176). This then indicates that it is easier to communicate if the frames of reference between people are more similar. The five aspects of perception are: selective reception, selective perception, organising, interpreting and selective retention.

Selective reception occurs when one exposes oneself to information he/she wants to hear or read. According to Anthony (1981:190), this is done to avoid “cognitive dissonance” which is uncomfortable to people. This may affect communication negatively because what one has selected may not be the only information needed to make meaning.

Selective perception is, according to Bartol and Martin (1982:447), a process where individuals acquire and make sense out of information from the environment, which compete for their attention. Once the information is received, it is often distorted to make it fit existing beliefs, and again to avoid cognitive dissonance. This is because each person sees the world through his or her own glasses. This, of course, leads to a situation where people sense only part of the total situation, and even if the perception is selective, the tendency is to behave as if it is complete.

Furthermore, the tendency is to organise the information into the patterns that they expect to perceive, that is, according to their frame of reference, causing managers to get cross with whomever brought bad news even if the person is not the cause of the problem (Bartol & Martin, 1994:448).

The stage, which follows the selecting stage, is *organising*. People have the tendency to organise the information into the patterns that we expect to perceive i.e. according to their frame of reference.

The next stage is *interpreting*. This is when individuals attach meaning to the information that has been selected and organised (Bartol & Martin, 1981:448). This stage is also important in communication because the meaning that has been made will determine the action of the receiver.

The last stage is *selective retention*. This is when a person remembers things he or she wants to remember and forget what he or she wants to forget (Anthony, 1981:190). There is a tendency of placing low credibility on something we disagree with that we don't act on the information and soon forget about it.

There are several other tendencies that distort perceptions, which are also applicable to managerial communication situations (Bartol & Martin, 1994:449). These tendencies are stereotyping, halo effect, projection, perceptual defence and self-serving bias. It is important for managers to be aware of these perceptual tendencies to avoid misunderstandings and distortions. The tendencies will be discussed briefly.

2.4.1.1 *Stereotyping*

Daft (1991:437) defines a stereotype as “a widely held generation about a group of people that assigns attributes to them solely on the basis of a limited number of categories”. Therefore, stereotyping can be seen as a tendency to attribute characteristics to an individual on the basis of an assessment of the group to which the individual belongs.

If the manager categorises the individual as belonging to a group whose members are perceived as sharing certain common characteristics, he draws conclusion about the characteristics of the individual based on the perceived common characteristics, instead of getting information about the person's characteristics directly (Bartol & Martin, 1994:448).

When generalisations do not apply equally to all members, the manager may communicate inappropriate expectations.

2.4.1.2 *Halo Effect*

This is the tendency to use a general impression based on one or a face characteristics of an individual to judge other characteristics of that same individual (Bartol & Martin, 1994:449). Thus, it is important to collect enough data to make reasonable judgement about person.

2.4.1.3 *Projection*

Projection is when an individual assumes that other people share the same feeling, thoughts and characteristics as hers or his. This may encourage managers to practice one-way communication because of the assumption that they know how their employees feel on various issues. Two-way communication would help manager know how their subordinates feel about different issues (Bartol and Martin, 1994:449).

2.4.1.4 *Perceptual defence*

Perceptual defence is when one distorts or blocks information, which threatens or challenges one's beliefs. This may lead to a manager getting cross at whoever brought bad news even if the person is not the cause of the problem (Bartol and Martin, 1994:449).

2.4.1.5 *Self-serving bias*

According to Bartol and Martin (1994:449) self-serving bias is when you perceive yourself as responsible for successes and others as responsible for failures. This causes serious communication problems since the principal/manager “may attribute subordinates’ successes to her own effective leadership but conclude that failures are due to the subordinates’ shortcomings” (Bartol & Martin 1997:449), vice versa.

2.4.2 Language barriers

Language barriers relate to the nature of language as the means of message transfer. Those barriers stem from semantics, verbal and non-verbal inconsistency, and lack of verbal skills.

2.4.2.1 *Semantics*

Semantics, according to Daft (1991:436) is “the meaning of words and the way they are used”. Semantics often cause communication problems. A major determinant of communication effectiveness is the extent to which communication assigns similar meaning to the same words. Because language is a symbol system, words are just labels we use to describe or symbolise our personal views of reality. As mentioned before, the meaning a person attaches to a message is determined by prior experience, individual needs, social background and other factors. Consequently, words do not necessarily have the same meaning for everyone (Badenhorst in Badenhorst et al, 1987:46).

As a result, semantics is one of the barriers of communication. Bartol and Martin (1994:449) talk about semantics net and block. People have their own semantics net which overlaps, but do not correspond exactly, with the net of others. In addition, there are semantic blocks which are difficulties arising from the choice of words. Semantics blocks are caused by the fact that receivers assign meaning to words in conformity with their own semantics. Therefore, managers should not assume that a word means the same thing to all people, instead, they should take care to select the words that will accurately encode ideas. Some people use technical or unfamiliar

words to impress the listeners, unaware that they are causing communication problems (Duncan, 1993:173).

Furthermore, words may evoke emotions that may bias interpretation of a message. For example, Bedeian and Glueck (1993:584) give this illustration, “the word capitalism, used by management to mean ‘private ownership of business ...equal opportunity for all,’ aroused feelings within 74 percent of the workers such as ‘the wealthiest people take over’, ‘big business has so much money they freeze out the little fellow, and even the dictatorship among the rich”.

2.4.2.2 *Lack of communication skills*

Lack of communication skills may hamper communication. A person with *muddled thinking* will experience communication problems. If one cannot think clearly of what he/she wants to communicate often experience communication difficulties. Some individuals have difficulties coming up with a complete thought before jumping to something else. (Anthony, 1981:185). In addition to this, Belasco et al (1975:122) mention that other people speak too fast and others speak too slow, at times writing or speaking using confusing or contradictory words. Again, *lack of verbal skills* can cause complications. Some people have very good ideas which can not be encoded properly because they seldom find proper words.

Bad timing is also problematic to effective communication. Boone and Kurtz (1984:375) express that a manager **must** know when to communicate. Boone and Kurtz (1984:375) go on to show that even if the manager communicates in good times, he might not give adequate information. If communicators are not in the receptive mood, for example, if emotionally upset or tired they tend to distort the information they are transmitting or receiving, but if the atmosphere is pleasant people tend to relax and talk or listen carefully to one another (Boone and Kurtz, 1984:375; Gannon, 1997:270).

2.4.2.3 *Feedback*

Managers also need strong feedback skills to be effective communicators. According to Bartol and Martin (1994:452), this is one of the critical skills as it was stated in the introduction that managers spend a greater part of their time communicating orally. The person who is skilled in giving feedback find it easier to guide the subordinates and increase the chances of mutual success. Likewise, a manager who is not skilled in giving feedback often finds it difficult to run his organisation with success. Added to giving feedback, the manager must also be able to receive feedback. It is easy for most people to receive positive feedback than negative feedback. The tendency for most managers is to react defensively if the feedback is negative which could hamper effective communication (Bartol and Martin, 1994; 446).

At times managers may receive feedback and fail to determine what it means or misinterpret it. In both cases, the message does not reach the sender. Consequently feedback must be sent, received and properly interpreted (Anthony, 1981:190).

Related to feedback skills are *listening skills*. Listening skills are also particularly crucial for the same reason that managers spend their most time communicating orally (Bartol and Martin, 1994:446). Passive listeners often have problems when it comes to understanding feedback.

According to Elkins (1980:340), 'marginal listening' and 'evaluative listening' may distort the message being sent. Marginal listening occurs when the receiver is thinking of something else while the sender is communicating, hence, only part of the message is sent and effective. If only part of the message is received, the original message may be distorted.

Evaluative listening takes place when the listener attempts to contest the speaker or argue against the senders' message. Instead of trying to understand the message, the listener loses touch with part of the message by thinking about refutations and counter arguments to the speaker. "Evaluative listening is often indicated when the listener continually interrupts the sender with "but ...but" and similar attempts to get into the conversation" (Elkins, 1980:340).

2.4.3 Verbal and non-verbal inconsistency

Sending inconsistent cues between non-verbal and verbal communication is a barrier to communication. Body language and the tone of the voice should not contradict the words or else the receiver is most likely to interpret the non-verbal communication as the true message (Bartol & Martin, 1991:451). It is, therefore, crucial to pay attention to both verbal and non-verbal sides of the message being sent or received.

2.4.4 Organisational barriers

Organisational barriers pertain to the factors of the organisation as a whole. The following factors will be discussed briefly: status and power; organisation climate; organisation's task and absence of formal channels; hierarchical transmission and group size.

2.4.4.1 *Status and power*

According to Bedeian and Glueck (1983:580) and Daft (1991:438), status and power influence the direction and frequency of organisational communication. To this effect, Bedeian and Glueck (1983:581) show that there is evidence that:

- (1) People generally prefer to direct their communication to individuals of higher status;
- (2) Person of higher status generally communicate more with one another than they do with person of lower status;
- (3) The wider the status differential, the greater the likelihood that information will flow from higher to lower status person rather than vice versa;
- (4) A high status person generally dominates the conversation with lower status person;
- (5) Low status person often attempts to gain the favour of those with higher status by displaying respect, offering praise, and agreeing with views.

Furthermore, people who have low power may feel that it is not necessary to pass bad news up the hierarchy, therefore, giving wrong impression to the management. A problem might reach the

higher level when it has reached the crisis level. Likewise, high-power people may look at low status people as having very little to contribute (Daft, 1991:439). Managers should therefore note that their status affect their communication with their seniors and subordinates.

2.4.4.2 *Organisation climate*

Differences across departments or sections, in terms of needs and goals, may evoke communication difficulties since each section may perceive things in its own terms, for example, communication between production department and quality control department may be hampered by the non-trusting climate that exist between them (Belasco et al, 1981:122, Bedeian and Glueck, 1980:579; and Daft, 1991:440).

2.4.4.3 *Communication flow and the organisation's task*

Communication flow must fit the organisation task or else there will not be enough information circulated to solve the problems. For example, centralised circulation structure will not be effective if used for nonroutine duties (Daft, 1991:440). Furthermore, (Daft, 1991:440), goes on to show that the absence of formal channels may reduce communication effectiveness.

2.4.4.4 *Hierarchical transmission*

This is most prevalent in growing or developing organisations. As activities broaden, hierarchies evolve to facilitate the accomplishment of those activities. Much as hierarchical communication is necessary, it may cause communication difficulties since the message has to pass many levels. "The more levels the message pass through, the longer it takes to reach its destination and the less likely it is to be accurate" (Bedeian and Glueck, 1991:581). Some individuals distort hierarchical information through the following processes: condensation, closure, expectation and association (Bedeian & Glueck, 1991:581-583).

2.4.4.5 *Group size*

Related to hierarchical transmission is group size. If the work group size increases communication becomes increasingly difficult. This is because when the size increases, the channel of communication increases and the more likelihood for communication breakdown (Bedeian & Gluek, 1991:582).

2.4.4.6 *Other miscellaneous barriers*

(i) *Distrust*

Distrust and suspicion affect communication negatively. Distrust and suspicion between the sender and the receiver can increase defensiveness and decrease the frequency of open expression, as a result, impede effective communication (Bedeian and Glueck, 1991; 579).

(ii) *Credibility*

Credibility is closely related to trust. It is the perceived characteristics of an information source. Bedeian and Glueck (1991:580) express that credibility is composed of honesty or general trustworthiness, expertise, or competence, dynamism or enthusiasm, and objectivity or open mindedness. These characteristics are attributed to the sender by the receiver. Accordingly, individuals would most often choose to believe the person they perceive as credible.

A good sender recognises all the blockages to communicate and tries to overcome them during encoding. Whenever there are problems of communication in the organisation, the manager should not just blame the employees, but determine if he or she is not at fault.

(iii) *Beliefs*

Boon and Kurtz (1984:377) refers to beliefs and attitude as having influence to communication, which is not necessarily obvious. To avoid cognitive dissonance, the receiver might ignore the

message, which is not compatible with his or her beliefs, and hear or see in a message only what they want.

2.5 TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Communication takes two forms, which are verbal and non-verbal communication. The two types of communication are essential for the smooth running of the organisation or the school.

2.5.1 Verbal communication

Verbal communication according to Bartol and Martin (1994:440) is the written or oral use of words to communicate. Both forms of verbal communication are prevalent in organisations but oral communication may be the most prominent one. This normally happens on face-to-face basis, over the telephone or in a group or in meetings.

2.5.1.1 *Oral communication*

According to Anthony (1981:193) oral communication has four advantages: it is faster and more economical than other forms of communication; it is natural and simple human medium; provides the sender with the opportunity to get feedback, answer question and give more information for clarification; and it is less authoritarian. Oral communication is consistent with more human orientated approaches to the management task.

The disadvantages of oral communication, though, could be that it might be difficult to terminate the conversation, thus, consuming time. Another disadvantage could be the lack of written records as to what transpired in the communication process and it is necessary to make additional effort to record what is said if need be (Anthony, 1981:193).

2.5.1.2 *Written communication*

Written communication is also important for the accomplishment of the managerial task. It may be written on paper, business letters, circulars, memorandums, reports, resumes, written telephone messages, news letters, policy documents, message on computer screen or fax (Anthony 1981:193; Bartol & Martin, 1994:440). Written communication is vital to management as it allows the manager to carefully organise his or her thoughts, and provides record for future reference.

Badenhorst (in Badenhorst *et al*, 1987:56) cites the following advantages for written communication: the message gets transmitted to many people at the same time; there is limited chance for distorting the message; it can be attended to simultaneously at different communication points and it allows the sender to think through the intended message carefully.

On the other hand, written communication can be disadvantageous to the organisation. As Bartol and Martin (1994:440) and Dawson (1993:82) point out, written message is more impersonal and authoritarian in nature and it normally has delayed feedback.

2.5.2 *Non-verbal communication*

According to Bartol and Martin (1994:441), non-verbal communication is communication which takes place through elements and behaviours that are not coded into words. It is when people communicate through body language. Several authors (Bartol and Martin, 1994:441; Skow and Whitaker, 1996:91; Stephens and Valentine, 1986:60) indicate that 65 percent of the message is conveyed non-verbally. This kind of communication often clarifies, supplements, and amplifies verbal message (Boon and Kurtz, 1984:372).

Managers normally overlook non-verbal communication when they assess their own communication behaviours because they are usually less concerned about their body language and its impact on others (Skow and Whitaker 1996:91). To underscore this, Dekker (1982:84 in Badenhorst, 1987:50) says that "one does not always have to use words in order to speak loudly.

By merely ignoring someone you communicate with him very clearly. Apart from mere silence, you can always speak with your subordinate by using body language, especially to convey your feeling. Facial expression, the attitude of your head, your tone of voice etc, are all means of accompaniment to what is spoken orally”

It is therefore difficult to separate meaning between verbal and non-verbal communication. Non-verbal behaviours are according to Bartol and Martin (1994:441), divided into four categories, which are kinesic behaviour, proxemics, paralanguage, and object language. These categories are referred to as ‘immediacy behaviours’ by Skow and Whitaker (1996:92).

2.5.2.1 *Kinesic behaviour*

Kinesic behaviour refers to the body movement, like gestures, facial expression, eye movement, posture and other expression (Bartol and Martin, 1994:441).

(i) Smile and frowns

Communication with a person who frequently smiles is comfortable though smiling too much might suggest that the individual is hiding something (Stephens and Valentine, 1986:61).

(ii) Eye contact/face and eyes

Eyes can express both dislike and interest in what the person is saying. Stephens and Valentine (1986:61) suggest that people like to be gazed at (eye contact) approximately 50 percent of the time when communicating. Eye contact is good when positive, and in most cases, embarrassment, anxiety and nervousness cause avoidance of eye contact.

(iii) Gestures and structural shifts

Literature, according to Stephens and Valentine (1986:62) indicate that a moderate amount of postural shifting is necessary. Body movements and posture can reveal much of the speaker’s

attitude and feeling and thus, Montague (1971 in Stephens and Valentine 1986:62) points out that somebody who uses high amounts of gestures is perceived as young, liking the job better, easily approachable, considerate and intelligent.

2.5.2.2 Proxemics

Proxemics is according to Bartol and Martin (1994:441) the influence of proximity and space on communication. The environment and space in which a person works usually shows the character, personality, principles and attitudes of that person. The way the office has been arranged may reflect the managers' outlook of life.

Again, some managers prefer to have a sitting area, which is less formal and less intimidating where they hold talks with the subordinates. On the other hand, communication can be affected by what Stephens and Valentine (1986:62) call interaction distance. Interaction distance is described by the degree of familiarity between the communicators.

2.5.2.3 Paralanguage

Paralanguage refers to vocal aspects of communication that relate to how something is said than to what is said (Bartol and Martin, 1994:441). Vocal behaviour is composed of tone articulation control, rhythm-control, resonance, tempo, laughing, crying, whispering, shouting, snorting, swallowing and clearing ones throat (Badenhorst, in Badenhorst et al, 1987:51). Vocal actions, like actions mentioned earlier, convey emotions and attitudes.

2.5.2.4 Object language

Object language according to Bartol and Martin (1994:441) is the communicative use of material things, including clothing, cosmetics, furniture, and architecture. Dress tend to influence the outlook of the person and one needs to pay attention to the manner in which one is dressed when addressing people.

All the non-verbal behaviours discussed above say something about the approachability, availability, the closeness and warmth of the manager or communicator.

2.6 CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

Communication channels are patterns of organisational communication flow. They are called communication channels because they represent paths or conduits through which managers and employees pass messages to one another (Bartol & Martin, 1994:454). An organisation has both the formal and informal channels of communication. Both channels are important and communicators must know how to deal with both for communication to be effective.

2.6.1 Formal channels

Formal communication channels are those channels that are recognised and approved by the organisation (Boone & Kurtz, 1984:385; Daft, 1991:438). Communication flows both ways through the channels. There are types of formal organisational channels, which are vertical communication and horizontal communication.

2.6.1.1 *Vertical communication*

Vertical communication is when the message is passed between two or more levels of the organisational hierarchy (Boone and Kurtz, 1984:387). Boone and Kurtz (1984:387) go on to show that vertical communication can take place between the superiors and the subordinates or between several levels of hierarchy flowing in a downwards or upwards direction.

2.6.1.2 *Downward communication*

Downward communication is when the message is sent from top management to the lower level of the organisation hierarchy (Boon and Kurtz, 1984:387; Certo, 1983:305; Daft, 1991:436). This kind of communication usually takes the form of implementation of goals, strategies and objectives; job instruction and rationale; procedures and practices; performance, feedback and

efforts to encourage a sense of mission and dedication to the organisational goals (Bartol and Martin, 1994:455; Daft, 1991:436).

Downward communication is mostly preferred by traditionalists because they believe that conveying management orders and view points to subordinates will trigger the designed action (Flippo & Musinger, 1982:321). This kind of communication channel is extremely attractive to most managers and potentially damaging to effective communication. The channels that are satisfying to the managers tend to contribute to employee dissatisfaction. This is supported by a study conducted by Robert and O' Relly (1991) in Flippo and Musinger (1982:321).

2.6.1.3 *Upward communication*

Upward communication is according to Certo (1983:305) and Daft (1991:336), the transmission of information from the lower ranks of the organisation hierarchy to the superiors. It is according to Hoy and Miskel (1991:362), a way by which subordinates are made accountable. Managers are also provided with important information on what is going on in the organisation.

The tendency here is for subordinates to emphasise positive aspects of the message and withhold the negative information. They make sure that the superiors get only what they want to hear (Bartol and Martin, 1994:456; Hoy and Miskel, 1991:362). Upward channels of communication transmit information like problems and expectations; suggestions of improvements and changes; performance reports and progress on current work projects; grievances and disputes; financial and accounting reports; situations in which subordinates need assistance from the management and new developments arising within or affecting the work unit or organisation (Bartol and Martin, 1994:456; Daft, 1991:336).

2.6.1.4 *Horizontal/lateral communication*

Horizontal communication is the lateral or diagonal exchange of information across peers or co-workers (Bartol & Martin 1994:457; Belasco et al, 1981:118; Certo, 1983:305; Daft, 1991:339).

This type of communication can either take place by means of formal or informal channels of communication.

The purpose of horizontal communication is to request support and co-ordinate activities in the organisation (Certo, 1983:305; Daft 1991:339). Horizontal communication, according to Daft (1991:339), is divided into three categories, which are interdepartmental problem solving, interdepartmental co-ordination and staff advice to line department. In addition, Bartol and Martin (1994:457) express that lateral communication furnish managers with a means of connecting potential recogniser of opportunities for information; linking different areas of expertise; building coalition of individual and emphasising boundary spanning.

2.6.2 Informal communication

In addition to formal communication channels, there are informal communication structures. Informal communication structures are found outside formally authorised channels and do not adhere to organisation's hierarchy of authority (Daft, 1991:339). Formal and informal systems of communication are complementary. There are two forms of informal communication used in most organisations, which are 'grapevine' or 'bush telegraphs' and 'management by wandering around'.

2.6.2.1 *Grapevine*

Grapevine according to Bedeian and Glueck (1983:588) is "all informal, often secret, means of transmitting information from person to person" Bedeian and Glueck (1983:589) go on to show that grapevine exists because of the social and personal interest of employees and not because of formal organisation requirements. Thus, it is person centred rather than goal oriented and relies on the interpersonal trust inherent in the friendship structures.

Although most managers do not like the grapevine, writers (Bartol & Martin, 1994:458; Bedeian and Glueck, 1983:589; Boon and Kurtz, 1984:390-391; Daft, 1991:338; Flippo & Musinger, 1982:323; Gannon, 1977:277) express the good side of the grapevine. They indicated that it is

more intrinsically satisfying as it emanates as a more spontaneous form of expression. It is therefore said to serve as a means of emotional release and provides management with important hints concerning the attitudes and feelings of the staff. It also fills in information gaps and clarify management decisions. Thus, Flippo and Mussinger (1982:371) mention that “if the grapevine should ever become silent, it is time to worry”. However, grapevine is advantageous if it pertains to business-related topics and not personal, vicious gossip (Daft, 1991:338).

It should also be borne in mind that even if advantageous, information provided by grapevine is accurate in some situations but inaccurate in others (Gannon, 1977:278). Moreover, active transmitters of grapevine could hold back information or distort it for their own reasons (Dennison & Shenton, 1987:154). They go on to indicate that grapevine could create an opportunity for opinion-leaders to work against organisational goals, which would encourage hostility to administration.

It is significant for managers to understand communication irrespective of whether it is viewed as a liability or asset. Grapevine is always present, fast, and largely accurate. The management should use it effectively as an additional means of communication, firstly, by tuning in and learning what is said and secondly, by finding out who are active transmitters of information and feed them with selected messages (Bedeian & Glueck, 1983:589). Furthermore, it is crucial for managers to use grapevine communicative channel to correct incomplete or inaccurate messages that were previously communicated (Bedian & Glueck, 1983:589).

2.6.2.2 *Management by wandering around*

Management by wandering around, according to Daft (1991:339), is a communication channel in which managers interact directly with workers to exchange information. In this kind of communication managers at all levels mangle and develop positive relationships with subordinates and learn directly from them about the department or section. Managers then get a chance to talk about cardinal issues and in turn learning about problems encountered by the staff (Daft, 1991:339).

2.7 USING ELECTRONICS TO FACILITATE COMMUNICATION

The growing need for effective communication requires more and more reliance on electronics. Consequently, electronics advances are providing managers with new channels of communication. The need for electronics channels arises because most organisations are growing. As organisations grow, the volume of information that is to be received and sent by the manager grows (Elkins, 1980:348). Electronic computers therefore have increased the capabilities of the managers to send and receive information (Duncan, 1993:180).

Stewart, *et al*, (1996:150) see the computer as lying at the centre of technology, whether it is word processing a report, faxing a letter, e-mailing, and printing. In addition Elkins (1980:348) points out that by using a computer some organisations do not only increase the flow of information, but also seem to have discovered new types of information that the computer is capable of supplying. Despite the fact that computers might increase the availability and accuracy of the information needed for decision making, they do make mistakes when information fed into them is erroneous (Elkins 1980:349). He (Elkins, 1980:349) goes on to say “the speed and volume of information generated are almost always worthwhile tradeoffs”

Thus, the growing need for effective communication will require more and more reliance on computers.

2.8 CONCLUSION

The manager is the communicator in most areas of administration and hence, must try hard to improve managerial communication. Again, competent managers are articulate communicators who communicate to inform, not to impress.

Knowledge about the nature of communication is a key factor in effective management, and the condition and principles for its effectiveness gives the manager an opportunity to be a good manager.

Communication involves receiving a message, and then responding to it in the right way. However, communicators are not just mechanical objects, but human beings, whose feelings, intelligence and cultural backgrounds will effect the way in which communication progresses. Thus, the context is critical to both the sender and the receiver.

Managers should also be concerned about managing formal communications in a downward, upward, and horizontal direction, also, the grapevine, which is used to supplement formal communication channels.

Good communication is an important prerequisite for well-managed organisation. Though difficult to achieve, effective communication will solve potential problems of management.

CHAPTER 3

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN COMMUNICATION STYLES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter shows that while differences in communication styles of women and men can be attributed to many factors, nonetheless, socialisation into gender positions is clearly a major factor that leads to the differences in the way women and men talk. What this chapter demonstrates is how powerfully women are positioned, in the society (families and workplaces), to accept gendered roles. Thus, as adults women must confront their 'inner voices' in taking up management positions, voices which suggest managers are male, as well as dealing with structural inequality in organisations.

Certainly, we live in a society in which there is substantial inequality, and some of this inequality is partly grounded in gender social relations and the construction of different gendered identities based on a male-female dualism (Davies, 1989:2). There are a number of competing explanations for this situation, and considerable controversy exists among different positions.

I concur with the broad concern of eradicating women's subordination, even if there are some aspects of feminisms that I find less easy to support. As Wolpe (1993/1994:1) notes that, in South Africa, there is antagonism towards feminism, an antagonism I must critique and confront in terms of my own personal knowledge and my research. Furthermore, Blackmore (1989:96) shows that there is no single feminist theory but a body of theories taking on different political hues.

While some feminists do not see the need for theories at all, some theorists think that feminist theory must reject all that is masculine and set up a framework in opposition (Blackmore, 1989:97). The issue, however, is that all world views are theory-ridden, the difference only comes on whether the theory is made explicit or not, and the level of theoretical generalisations.

Broadly speaking, feminist writers (Connel, 1994; Davies, 1989; Oakley, 1972; Ozga, 1993; Richardson and Robinson, 1993; Walkerdine, 1981; Weiner, 1994; Wolpe, 1988) challenge the

gendered status quo on the grounds that it is quite simply unjust. Feminists have insisted on the importance of looking critically at the taken-for-granted gender divisions, which they do not regard as 'natural'. They acknowledge that most societies prescribe different activities and characteristics for males and females, which may come to be seen as 'natural' by the people involved. But, they assert that the way children are brought up in the society and its social institutions is responsible for the vast majority of differences between the genders, thus differences in communicative styles.

It then follows that feminist research in education is committed to the view that the society plays a role in constructing, defining, and reinforcing gender roles and gender identity. Such research is critical of the role that the different social institutions play in gender socialisation and of the way those institutions disadvantage girls (Davies, 1989; Delamont, 1980; Measor & Sikes, 1992; Ozga, 1993; Walkerdine, 1981; Weiner, 1994).

At this point I wish to highlight the different perspectives within feminism. The critical point here is that there are feminisms, rather than one hegemonic feminism. There are liberal feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism and black feminism and post-structuralist and all represent different emphasis and perspectives.

I will also discuss the theories of socialisation. There are biological, social and psychoanalytic theories to explain the process of gender, construction and therefore I will give a brief overview of each.

I will then discuss how gender differentiated communication is acquired through socialisation starting with the home and moving on to the society as a whole. The differences in communicative competence affects the relationship between the women school principals and their staff.

3.2 FEMINIST THEORIES AND THEIR DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Feminism is not one theory, but has many perspectives within it. Feminism is usually divided into three main categories, liberal feminism, radical feminism, and socialist feminism. And, more recently, black and post structural feminisms have emerged.

3.2.1 Liberal feminism

According to Weiner (1994:52) liberal feminism has been the most acceptable and the most enduring of all the feminisms. Liberal feminists argue that for women to be emancipated, they must have freedom to choose their lives, to be able to compete with men on equal terms in the professional and political world, as well as in the labour market. They argue that women have reason to choose and they have the same worth as that of men (Friedman *et al.*, 1986:46).

Fundamental to this perspective is access to education based on the assumption that if both genders are provided with equal education, an atmosphere will be created in which individual women's (and men's) potential can be encouraged and developed. Liberal feminists also claim that equal opportunities for women can be achieved gradually by democratic political reforms, without the need for revolutionary changes in economic, political or cultural life, and, in this, their views are in contrast to those of other feminisms (Weiner, 1994:54).

As Acker (1994:45) puts it, liberal feminism focuses on three themes, the first of which is equal opportunities. She indicates that separate educational provision has usually meant inferior facilities and restricted features. The second theme is socialisation and sex stereotyping. In this case, children are socialised into traditional attitudes and orientations that limit their futures unnecessarily to sex-stereotyped occupational and family roles. Again, socialisation encourages patterns of interpersonal relationships between the sexes that disadvantage females who are placed in a position of dependency and difference, and also males who are forced to suppress their emotional and caring potential. Thirdly, she speaks about sex discrimination as another theme within liberal feminism. This centres around aspects of discrimination, rights, justice and fairness.

Here the impact of structures is taken into account, thus, recognising the impact of policies as well as attitudes in creating a structure that disadvantages females.

Liberal feminists are criticised for overemphasising individual freedom at the expense of the needs of the community. What the individual can achieve has a limit, and therefore the individual's rights must be reconciled with those of others in the society (Measor & Sikes, 1992:25). Other feminists, according to Measor and Sikes (1992:25), suggest that the view of the self as rational, autonomous individual, which is the heart of liberalism is in itself a very male view of the way people and society works.

Acker (1994:44) also mentions that liberal feminism is also accused of elitism because while liberal strategies may lead to few token women to have careers' and join the ranks of the powerful, the structures of oppression survive untouched.

3.2.2 Radical feminism

Radical feminism aims to first uncover the main cause of women's oppression, and would argue that the oppression of women is the root of all other forms of oppression and domination (Friedman *et al.*, 1986:47).

Radical feminism focuses on patriarchy as the social system which functions in a hierarchical and dominating way, such that individual women are subordinate to individual men. In addition, radical feminism argues that the personal is political. They assert that "it is patriarchy that oppressed women and their subordinate position stems from the social, economic and political dominance of men in the society" (Measor & Sikes, 1992:27).

Another assumption of radical feminism is that of the "universal oppression of women". This assumption raises a lot of questions. One tends to wonder if this is true for all the communities since there are other communities, which are matriarchal. According to Mahony (1985:66) in Acker (1993:50), radical feminists relate school life to the economy or the family. The term "reproduction" is sometimes used, where what is being reproduced is the domination of men over

women, denying girls and women full access to knowledge, resources, self-esteem and freedom from fear and harassment.

Radical feminists concentrate on two main themes. The first one is “the male monopolisation of culture and knowledge”. It is argued that all knowledge, decisions and activities of men were taken as human knowledge and women’s contributions were ignored (Spender & Sarah, 1980 in Acker (1992:50).

The second theme is “sexual politics of everyday life in schools”. This theme has to do with teachers attention unequally divided between sexes to the advantage of boys and the benefits of single-sex schools since the concern is the dominance of males over females in mixed-sex settings.

According to radical feminism, women are viewed as primarily sexual beings and sexual objects by men. Measor and Sikes (1992:27) in this regard show that radical feminists have focused on different forms of male domination like, pornography, prostitution, sexual harassment, and violence against women, and they have been prepared to fight politically against these problems in the society.

With regard to change, radical feminism asserts that the existing political and legal structures must be abolished to attain women’s liberations, fundamental and revolutionary revision of the social and cultural institutions is needed.

In respect of education, radical feminism looks at how the schools serve as grounds to reinforce patriarchy, and for this reason they have focused on the power relations between the genders in the school. Weiner (1994:66), argues that the role played by sexuality in the oppression of girls and women in the classroom and staff room, and in the schooling process in general, has been prioritised by radical feminism. Radical feminists also claim that school subjects are male-centred, and that there are patriarchal processes in schools.

3.2.3 Socialist feminism

Socialist feminism holds similar views with Marxist feminism. Socialist and Marxist feminists hold on to Marxist perspectives which argues that inequality is the result of economic, social, and political structures in which people live. However, Middleton (1993:41) points out that when socialist feminism emerged, it drew together the two positions of Marxist feminism and Radical feminism where Marxist feminism contends that women education serves to reproduce the sexual division of labour and the class difference between the women, while Radical feminism emphasise women's oppression by men and that schooling reproduces sexual subordination.

Again, socialists like Marxist feminists advocate that "freedom can only be achieved when people are released from a slog of work by technology or the appropriate development of the productive forces and when alienation and exploitation are eliminated by change in social relation in society" (Carter, 1988:169; Friedman *et al*, 1986:51).

Socialists reject biologically determined division of labour (Jagger, 1985:304). It is asserted that if the role of men can change over time or from one society to the other, then "the differences between males and females are not pre-givens, but rather are socially constructed and therefore are socially alterable" (Jagger, 1985:104).

Socialist feminism suggests that both patriarchy and capitalism have to be taken into consideration, and that both must be defeated. Thus Weiner (1994:67) contends that patriarchy has a materialistic and historical foundation in that capitalism is founded on a patriarchal division of labour. As a result, socialist feminism has focused on the relationship between production (the labour market) and reproduction (the family); the interrelationship of capitalism and patriarchy; and the complex interplay between gender, culture and society.

Socialist feminism class has an impact on gender formation. Willis (1997) and McRobbie (1978, cited in Weiner, 1994:68) show that there is "the formation of gendered class grouping in the schooling context, namely the process by which working class girls and boys become working class men and women".

To the socialist feminists, schools play an important role in reproducing gender and class inequality. They suggest that working class girls are in a doubly disadvantaged position as women, and as working class women. They are subjected to the same class inequality as their male counterparts, while at the same time they receive strong messages about female inferiority (Measor and Sikes, 1992:29).

3.2.4 Black feminism

In the early stages of the emergence of feminism, white feminism alienated poor and black women. It did not give potential solutions to minority women's problems (Hooks, 1984:68). Black women and black community saw feminism as a threat. Eventually, the juncture between anti-racist and anti-sexist struggles gave rise to black feminism (White, 1985 in Creedon, 1989:114).

The criticism which came from black feminism was that white patriarchal society triply oppressed black women on the basis of sex, colour and class and moreover, the oppressive nature of white women's movement had glossed over economic and social differences between women in its attempt to articulate an authentic, overarching female experience (Weiner, 1994:57).

The other concern of black feminism is that of the concept 'patriarchy. They claim that the word patriarchy has different meanings for black people (Weiner, 1994:58). This was underscored by Carby (1982:65) who said that "racism ensure that black men do not have the same relations to patriarchal/capitalist hierarchies as white men". The black male sexists found a convenient scapegoat from the labelling of white male patriarch as "chauvinist pig". They could join with white and black women to protest against white male oppression and divert attention away from their sexism, their support to patriarchy and their sexist exploitation of women.

Black feminists focused attention on the distinct needs and experiences of black women and a critique of sexism in the black community. It, however, at the same time acknowledged a deep connection to and solidarity with black men. "Black feminism has distinguished itself from mainstream white feminism by insisting that the simultaneity of oppression based on race, gender,

and class be the focus of inquiry” (Creedon, 1989:115). In addition, Middleton (1993:15) asserts that black feminists prioritised racism and colonialism as the basis of their oppression.

In South Africa not much has been done about black feminism. Scholars (Jordaan, 1987; Masenya, 1994a, Masenya, 1994b) have however written papers expressing their views about black feminism in South Africa. According to them, Black feminist theology views a black woman as a full human being created in God’s image irrespective of her race and gender. Black women in South Africa, unlike their white counterparts, suffer a trilogy of oppression, which is racism, classism, sexism, and also African culture which is patriarchal. Masenya, (1994a:35) and Tee (1995:47) further clarify black feminism by saying that black women in South Africa “have a strong feminism that is born out of the realities of racism, unemployment, denial of land, clean water, electricity, lack of education and others.

Furthermore, Hendricks and Lewis (1994:66) mentioned that there are few South African activists who call themselves feminists. They go on to show that black feminism also emerged through conferences like Natal University’s Conference on Women and Gender in Southern Africa (1991) and the Nigerian conference on women in Africa and Africans in Diaspora (1992); the formation of women’s research groups; the short-lived black women’s publishing house Seriti Sechaba; and in current issues of Agenda.

South African Black feminism also reflects black women’s reaction to male dominance in radical struggles as well as the dominance of the white women in the feminist movement.

In general, black feminism, throughout the world allowed for both difference and equality to become issues within feminist politics.

3.2.5 Post-structuralist feminism

It is useful to mention that post-structuralism and postmodernism share some positions. The two are critical of the universalising theories of modernism such as Marxist metanarratives (Winter and Wigglesworth, 1993:91). Post-structuralism and postmodernism stress the complexity and

heterogeneity of social identities and reject the essentialist notions of identity as being biologically predetermined. In fact, Nicholson (1990:23) points out that post-structuralism and postmodernism “reject any celebration of difference for its own sake”.

Hence, post-structural feminism came up with new ways of seeing and knowing. It grew out of Post-structuralism, which challenged structural conceptions of the system, driving the machine of society. Post structural challenged structuralism binary oppositions like men and women, heterosexual and homosexual, normal and deviant, subjects and object, etc (Winter & Wigglesworth 1993:87). For example, feminist post-structuralist particularly challenged the binary opposition of masculinity and femininity by showing that using it placed masculinity first, while making femininity second, and also “other” excluding femininity (Winter & Wigglesworth, 1993:87-88).

Broadly speaking, post-structuralism, drawing on the work of French philosopher Michael Foucault, argue against building universalising theories on unsound assumptions of ‘natural sexuality or eternal femininity’ (Davies in Ellis & Floherty, 1992; Jones, 1993; Weiner, 1994; Walton in Winter and Wigglesworth, 1993). Some feminists have adopted Foucault’s thinking to move beyond essentialism.

In addition, some post-structuralists advocate that cultures and individuals do not have “essential unity”, meaning that cultures and individual identity are not unified (Eagleton, 1983:171).

Another dimension brought by post-structuralism is the recognition of the importance of “agency” as well as structures in the production of social practices, where people are not socialised into their personal world, not passively shaped by others but rather, each being active in taking up discourses through which he or she is shaped (Davies in Weiner, 1994:64). Moreover, feminist post-structuralism argue that what it means to be a ‘woman’ and/or to be acceptably ‘feminine’, shifts and changes as a consequence of discursive shifts and changes in culture and history” (Davies in Weiner, 1994:64).

Post-structuralist debate thus opens up new possibilities for understanding women's socialisation in a way which goes beyond seeing girls and women primarily as 'disadvantaged' and socialised within patriarchal structures (Jones, 1993:157).

Structuralists attended to language as a system, but, post-structuralists shifted the debate from language to discourse. The shift involved a re-working of ideas about discourse, knowledge, power, control and ideology and the role of language in instating power relations in everyday life (Walton in Winter & Wigglesworth, 1993:90).

Discourses are, according to Kress (in Winter and Wigglesworth, 1993:90), systematic organised modes of talking which give meanings and values of an institution. Therefore, domination is achieved in social practices through discourse.

The language of discourse and subjectivities offers ways of talking about complexities and contradictions in understanding women's position (Jones, 1993:157). Davies in Weiner, 1994:55) add by saying that "the discourses through which the subject position "woman" is constituted, are multiple and contradictory". The point of such arguments is to provide alternative subject positions for women and girls (and men) in which they might at any one time be both powerful and powerless in different contexts, sometimes active, sometimes passive.

3.3 THEORIES OF SEX AND GENDER SOCIALISATION

To discuss gender socialisation theories it is imperative to first differentiate between the terms 'gender' and 'sex'.

Measor and Sikes (1992:5) define gender as "all differences between men and women other than the basic psychological ones. It refers to specific social and cultural patterns of behaviour, and to the social characteristics of being a man or a woman in particular historical or social circumstances. Gender is made by society". They go on to define sex as "the most basic physiological differences between men and women, differences in genitals and reproductive

capacities". All the differences in sexes other than the physiological ones are thus seen as produced by society.

Nonetheless, there are various disputes over the construction of gender. Some social scientists believe that gender differences are biological ('natural') (Garett, 1987:2), while feminist writers argue that the way children are brought up in the society is responsible for the vast majority of differences between the genders (Davies, 1998; Garett, 1987; Measor & Sikes, 1992, Walkerdine, 1981).

Much as I agree that girls/women and boys/men are physiologically different, I also agree that the differences in their behaviours, that is, accepted male and female behaviours, are the results of socialisation. Thus, the differences in communicative styles of women and men are also the results of socialisation. It is therefore, important to examine the key theories of gender socialisation, namely, biological determinism theories, socialisation theories, and psychoanalytic theories to understand why this is the case.

3.3.1 Biological determinism theories

According to Measor and Sikes (1992:8) biological determinism theorists assert that the gender differences between males' and females' attitudes, aptitude and temperaments are primarily the results of biological factors, such as chromosomes and hormones. In addition, they argue that chromosomes are also responsible for developing gender identity and sex differences in cognitive skills and personality. They also claim that human identity is fixed and unchanging for all time.

Oakley (1972:37), however, points out that biological determination theory does not clarify the historical and geographical positions of both sexes. What it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman have both differed greatly across societies and through histories. If the differences were only biological, there would be one universal form of sex. For example, in patriarchal societies, to be a woman means to be a subordinate to a man, while a man is a leader who has all the powers to decide in the family. On the other hand in matriarchal societies the opposite is the case.

3.3.2 Socialisation theory

Socialisation is defined by Berger (1979:62) as: “the process by which an individual learns to be a member of his or her society”.

It is the way we learn the patterns of thought and behaviour considered acceptable in our society.

Socialisation theory argues that the learning of gender roles takes place first through observation, then by imitation (Garrett, 1987:22). Societies have patterns of socialisation which encourage males to become masculine and females to become feminine. Parents and other adults (including teachers) differentiate between males and females in terms of their interaction with them (Davies, 1989).

According to Kelly (1981:73) children may either learn the appropriate behaviour through observational theories or through reinforcement theories. In observational theories children learn by imitating, and in reinforcement theories, parents and the other adults reward the appropriate behaviour, and children learn to anticipate what will produce approval, and so behave accordingly.

The second group of socialisation theories turn on cognitive development. Children are regarded as essentially self-socialising. They first develop the categories and then fit themselves into these same categories. Kelly (1981:74) indicated this clearly when she said that “children develop a number of categories into which they fit their world, and they form rules about the categories. Sex is one of the primary categories for people, and being secure in sex is one aspect of competence in organising experience. Society presents our image of what is feminine and masculine to children who then put together a cluster of attributes that they label as masculine or feminine and try to copy the appropriate cluster”.

3.3.3 Psychoanalytic theory

Psychoanalytic theory, according to Garrett (1987:4) and Measor and Sikes (1992:11), focuses on the emotional process at work within the child, and on the psychological dynamics of the

family. The development of both girls and boys is the same at the beginning in a sense that their love object is the mother. Freud, cited by Chodorow (1978:134-135), argues that the boy experiences a difficulty and painful experience when he gives up his first love object, the mother in order to become psychologically male. The boy has to 'cross the bridge' to be with the father who at first is the more distant figure, while the girl stays with the mother.

Chodorow (1978:135) argue that boys try to achieve manhood through the process of making themselves different and distant from women and femininity, and that one of the ways of doing this is by "attacking girls and things that are feminine".

3.3.4 Assessment of socialisation theories

As I have already indicated, the fact that males and females are different physiologically is inescapable. Much as I agree that both sexes are different from each other physiologically, I find it harder to agree that chromosomal inheritance alone determines gender differences. If the roles of men and women can change over time, or from one society to another, then it may well be true that a range of differences between women and men are indeed socially constructed.

However, I think that children who are socialised into gendered patterns of behaviour are not just passive ciphers. They also resist and refuse, as well as accommodate and collude. This is suggested in those cases of men or women who behave differently from accepted ways of behaviour, for example, gays, lesbians, tomboys, and strong heterosexual women or passive heterosexual men.

In this respect, post-structuralists like Jones (1993) Walkerdine (1981) and Weiner (1994) usefully provide new possibilities for understanding girls' socialisation, in ways which go beyond seeing girls only as 'disadvantaged' and socialised within patriarchal structures. Thus, I would agree with post-structuralists (Acker, 1993; Jones, 1993; Walkerdine, 1981, Weiner, 1994) when they argue that children who are socialised are not just passive recipients. Walkerdine (1981), for example, points out that during socialisation each person is active in taking up the discourses through which he or she is shaped. In addition, she suggests that what it means to be a 'woman'

and/or to be acceptably feminine shifts and changes in culture and history. Davies (1989:57) indicates that “post-structuralists theory offers possibilities of seeing the self as continually constituted through multiple and contradictory discourses that one takes up as one’s own in becoming a speaking subject. One can develop strategies for maintaining an illusion of a coherent unitary self through such strategies as taking of roles or through denial of contradiction, or one can examine the very processes and discourses through which the constitution of self takes place”.

The point of such argument as indicated in paragraph 2.5 is to provide alternative subject positions for women and girls (and men) in which they might at any one time be both powerful and powerless in different contexts, sometimes active, sometimes passive. Of course, also at issue here would be how women might reflectively develop their capacity to critique the patterning of gender relations in their own societies. To describe lack of awareness simply as ‘false consciousness’ is increasingly limited as an analytical tool. Women will at different times and in different ways be more or less aware of their gendered positioning (Weiner, 1994:64).

3.4 ACQUISITION OF GENDER DIFFERENTIATED COMMUNICATION THROUGH SOCIALISATION

By the time children go to school, they will have already acquired a set of attitudes and expectations about what girls and boys can and should do. They also have acquired gendered language. Wolpe (1993/1994:2), for example, asserts that the family is a major site for gender socialisation, mapping the paths girls should take in adult life.

Different societies have moreover acknowledged that education starts at home. French (1990:12) argues that very little research has been done on sex-socialisation. Nevertheless, the little research that has been conducted provides enough information to show how the family contributes in socialising children into their roles.

Generally, writers (Garret, 1987; French, 1990; Coates, 1996; Measor and Sikes, 1992; Grief, in Kramarae, 1980; Leaper *et al*, 1995) remark that the sex of the child affects the relationship of the child from the outset. Parents provide children with gendered toys and clothes. French

(1990:50) also highlights parents' gendered attitudes, while Connel (1994:53) indicates that the sexual divisions of labour in families also reinforces gender roles in children. As they get socialised, their development can be either successful as they grow up through stages of life or it can be deviant anywhere along the way.

It is **within this** context that children learn gendered communicative styles. Language is one of the means by which individuals locate themselves in a social space. As Coates (1996:161) puts it "speech is an act of identity: when we speak, one of the things we do is identify ourselves as male or female". This sex appropriate language is learnt during childhood and adolescence. However, sex differentiation in language does not exist in vacuum, it interacts in a complex way with other kinds of social differentiation.

Coates (1996:121) also asserts that when learning to speak, children learn the cultural role assigned to them on the basis of their sex. Thus, becoming linguistically competent, the child learns to be a fully-fledged male or female member of the speech community, while on the other hand, when children adopt linguistic behaviour considered appropriate to their sex, they perpetuate the social order which creates social distinctions. Most sex differences are found in the speech of children.

A number of authors (Buffery and Gray, 1972; McGlone, 1980; McKeever, 1987; Gottman and Levenson, 1988, in Holmes, 1995:7) point to a variety of explanations for gender differences in language use which are in line with the theories discussed in par. 3.3. They first talk about innate biological differences as well as differences in psychological orientation or temperament. Here it is believed that women are more concerned with making connections, seeking involvement and focus on the interdependencies between people. According to Holmes (1995:7) other scholars say that gender communication differences are brought about by the differential distribution of power in society. In this case men define and control situations, and male norms predominate in interaction because they have greater social power. Thus, women as subordinate group are likely to be more linguistically polite than men are. The third explanation is socialisation. In different societies, girls and boys experience different patterns of socialisation which lead to different ways of using and interpreting language.

Whereas communicative differences have been attributed to the three factors, differences in style tend to be attributed to social factors. Philips *et al* (1987:189) contend that the differences may even rise from the interaction of both the inborn differences and the environmental forces. They go on to say that no attempt is made to show that there are no inborn differences, however, even if there were differences in neuronatomical bases of language in males and females, there would be other obvious differences that, though not themselves linguistic, could have a differential effect on language development.

As indicated at the beginning of his paragraph (3.4), my intention is to examine the verbal and non-verbal interactions of children with parents, other adults and peers. The reason for that being that sociocultural information is generally encoded in the organisation of conversational discourse and that discourse with children is no exception (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986:3). Thus, Schieffelin and Ochs (1986:3) go on to show that most formal and functional features of conversational discourse carry sociocultural information, the lexicon, speech-act types, conversational sequencing, genres, interruptions, overlaps, gaps, and turn length. This means that part of the meaning of grammatical and conversational structures are sociocultural. This is underscored by Leaper (1995:307) when he asserts that when examining socialisation processes, sociolinguists have emphasised the significance of transmitting cultural practices. It can therefore, be correct to view the different communicative styles that parents and other adults use with their children as cultural lessons. Children's first lessons in the meaning of gender take place through interactions with the parents and then the other members of the society including the peers.

This led to the use of the term "communicative competence" which according to Coates (1987:96), Mills (1995:181) and Romaine (1984:2) was first used by Hyrnes (1972). Hyrnes, according to Mills (1995:181) advocated that the child does not just learn grammar but also a sense of appropriateness. For the purpose of this study it is imperative to look at the definition of communicative competence. It is, according to Hyrnes (1974:277 in Romaine, 1984:2) "the knowledge of sentences, not only as grammatical but also as appropriate. [The child] acquires the competence as to when to speak, when not and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where and in what manner". In addition, Milroy (198 in Mills, 1995:181) indicates that

communicative competence also involves “how to communicate and interpret meanings of respect, seriousness, humour, politeness or intimacy”.

3.4.1 Developing sex-appropriate speech

All normal children learn to use the language made available to them by family members. We are now going to focus on how gendered language found in adult population is learned. It was asserted by Lakoff (1973:47) that both sexes first learn the female conversational styles from mothers and other female figures, e.g. maids, pre-primary and primary school teachers. As they grow older, girls retain the same while boys begin to shift to male forms, mainly because of peer pressure.

It is however, a general contention that girls acquire speech faster than boys (Coates, 1986:122; Mills, 1995:180). “At any given age, girls will be found to be superior in terms of comprehension, size of vocabulary, reading ability, handling of complex expressions such as the modals, and etc” (Coates, 1986:123). She goes on to show that these kinds of differences may not be necessarily relevant to the differentiated communicative styles found between adults of different sexes, many just reflect slower maturation.

3.4.1.1 *Differences in the speech of mothers and fathers to girls and boys*

Different studies were conducted to find out how the families influence the children to acquire a gendered communicative style. Most studies looked at the interaction between parents and children.

(i) Imperatives

According to the research conducted by Gleason in Philips *et al* (1987:4), fathers used many more imperatives especially when speaking to their sons than mothers did. The mothers were more likely to couch their imperative intentions in conventionalised polite forms. Thus, the syntactic differences was that the “mean length of utterance” of the fathers was less closely related to the

child they were addressing than that of the mothers mean length of utterance was to the child they were addressing.

(ii) Lexical differences

Gleason in Philips (1987:195) show that there are differences in the choice of lexical terms when fathers and mothers communicate to the children of different sexes. Fathers used rare vocabulary than mothers. In addition, fathers use discrediting terms of address, and they also have a tendency of threatening their sons. The study revealed that these features except the rare vocabulary were found in speech to boys than to girls. Fathers are also more cognitively demanding, and expect the boys to know the specifics, especially when it comes to topics perceived as in the men's domain, while mothers reflect the use of more general vocabulary, for example words like "thing" and "what is" (Gleason in Philips *et al.*, 1987:195).

(iii) Verbosity

At preschool stage, girls are more talkative than boys when talking to mothers and peers. This disappears at the age of four when girls observe that women talk less than men in mixed companies (Coates, 1986:129).

(iv) Politeness

Politeness according to Holmes (1995:4-5) is "behaviour which actively expresses positive concern for others, as well as non-imposing distancing behaviour ... politeness may take the form of an expression of good-will or camaraderie, as well as more familiar non-intrusive behaviour".

Sex differences are also evident in politeness. Coates (1987:130) and Gleason (in Philips *et al.*, 1987:196) allude that both mothers and fathers encourage both boys and girls to be polite. This is normally seen where children are taught to greet or to say "thank you". Though both parents encourage children to be polite, they supplied different models. Mothers tend to be more polite in their speech thus sending a message to children that it is females who should use polite

in their speech thus sending a message to children that it is females who should use polite language. This was also apparent in a study conducted by Walters in (Coates, 1987:130), when the children were more polite to the female researcher than the male researcher.

The use of the expression “I think” is also one way of being polite. In his study, Perkins (1983, in Coates, 1987:130) found that the expression was mostly used by girls who learn it from the women (mothers and other women) they interact with. She (Perkins, 1983 in Coates, 1987:131) mentions that “in acquiring communicative competence, girls learn to be unassertive.”

As part of politeness, children learn knowledge of the folklinguistic beliefs of their societies. The language is then used as a tool to convey sociocultural knowledge and a medium of socialisation (Coates, 1987:131; Romaine, 1984:164; Scheffelin & Ochs, 1986:3). Thus, in acquiring communicative competence, children acquire a worldview. This occurs through interactional routines. An interactional routine according to Schieffelin and Ochs (1986:81) is a sequence of exchanges in which one speaker’s utterance, accompanied by appropriate non-verbal behaviour which calls one or more other participants. When children learn interactional routine, they learn an understanding of social role appropriate to age and sex. Hence, swearing is mostly considered as masculine.

Words like, “adorable” are often spoken by women and “damnit” is mostly spoken by men. Expressions like “little girls don’t say that” mean that children are taught the sex-appropriateness of some linguistic items.

(v) Interruptions and simultaneous speech

Adults also influence children when it comes to interruptions or speaking simultaneously. Both Coates (1987:129) and Gleason (in Philips *et al.* 1987:197) mention the study conducted by Grief in 1980. Like in politeness, there were no obvious differences between boys and girls. What was more apparent was that both parents interrupted girls more than boys, whereas fathers interrupted their children more than mothers did. Fathers were likely to talk simultaneously with children than mothers. Interruptions and simultaneous speech are interpreted as a means to control

conversation. Thus, fathers control conversation more than mothers while both parents try to control conversation with girls more than with boys (Coates, 1987:130).

(vi) Directives

There are three forms of directives used by parents when speaking with children. Examples as given by Gleason (in Philips *et al.* 1987:197) are: Direct imperative: "Turn the bolt with the wrench". Conventionalised polite imperative: "Could you turn the bolt with the wrench?" Implied indirect imperative: "The wheel is going to fall off."

Mothers tend to use question forms (conventionalised polite imperatives) while fathers use more of direct and implied indirect imperatives. Therefore, according to Gleason in Philips *et al.* (1987:198) girls are expected to use more polite question forms and the boys to use direct and implied forms.

(vii) The influence of interactive context to gendered communication

It has to be noted, however, that acquiring communicative competencies may be affected greatly by the context. For example, as Ochs (1983:186 & Romaine, 1984:165) pointed out, children from different ethnic or class background may use language differently. Girls from working class community may speak differently from the middle class community even if they come from the same cultural background. The same applies to boys.

The marital status and the family ecology as a context also affect the acquisition of conversational competence. Generally, studies show that children of married mothers are less likely to have traditional stereotypes and play preferences (Kurdek & Siesky, 1980; Russel & Ellis, 1991; Stevenson and Black, 1988).

In the study conducted by Leaper *et al.* (1995) it was found that girls raised by single mothers demonstrate more social assertion than do those from two-parent families because mothers were

more likely to give supportive responses following collaborative speech acts from daughters than from sons.

Leaper *et al* (1995:322) also indicate that single mothers' sons and daughters are more apt to show cross-sex-typed behaviour than sons and daughters of married mothers because they are more likely to respond with supportive comments to their mothers controlling statements. The study goes on to show that sons from father absent homes are more likely to demonstrate non-traditional play behaviour and they show comforting prosocial behaviour with peers.

According to Colletta (1983 in Leaper *et al*, 1995:322), single mothers are more likely than married mothers to reciprocate children controlling speech acts. It has been suggested that compliance is mostly emphasised by single mothers more than married mothers. This compliance is seen as adaptive socialisation goals for a mother who is coping with the strains of single parenting.

Having looked at how children acquire gendered communicative styles, it is important to point out that socialisation of gender must be viewed as a construction that transpires during social interactions that are influenced directly by factors in the immediate interactive context. They are also influenced indirectly by developed adaptations to the family's social, economic, and cultural conditions.

3.5 GENDER DIFFERENCES IN COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Having discussed the acquisition of gendered communicative style it is imperative for the purpose of this study to look at gendered communication of adult women. It is even more important to explore these differences as there are social consequences of linguistic sex differences, which amongst others affect women principal's managerial work. It is also important to note that language is used to transmit inequalities between sexes which helps to maintain the bigger political-economic structure (Thorne & Henley, 1975:15).

Research indicates that men and women communicate differently. Women's communicative styles are often equated with powerlessness while men's communicative styles are often associated with professionalism and power (Sandler & Hall, 1988; Kramarae 1980; Lakoff, 1973; Thorne & Henley, 1975; Thorne et al, 1983; Holmes, 1995; Coates, 1987; Coates, 1996).

3.5.1 Linguistic politeness

Holmes (1995) in her book and Coates and Cameron (1988:123) refer to women as more polite than men when all the necessary reservations and qualifications have been taken into account. Politeness is referred to as 'woman style' by Coates (1986:102). Holmes (1995:2) goes on to show that women are better than men in terms of verbal skills, especially initially. She also underscores what I have noted earlier that males and females use language differently and that this is where differences in politeness can be observed. Politeness is therefore defined as "behaviour which actively expresses positive concern for others, as well as non-imposing distancing behaviour" (Holmes, 1995:5).

Politeness is expressed differently by different cultural and linguistic groups. It is thus, imperative to pay attention to social context when analysing conversational politeness. It is therefore important to look at the three theories of analysing conversational politeness as discussed by Holmes (1995:11-22). They are the solidarity-social distance dimension, the power dimension, and the formality dimension.

Relative social distance according to Brown and Levinson (1987 in Holmes, 1995:12) is one of the factors that determine the level of politeness in almost all societies. This means that factors like sharing and occupation or common membership of a sports club or religious community, belonging to the same social group, and belonging to the same gender category, may be relevant in assessing the social distance, though it must be assessed in context. Frequency of interaction and the roles people take in relation to one another in a particular situation, as well as how well they know each other, also determine social distance.

In addition Wolfson (1988) brings about the “bulge model of interaction” where she suggests that, generally, people tend to display frequent and elaborate speech behaviours if they are casual friends and acquaintances rather than between inmates or strangers. Coates (1987:110) and Holmes (1995:13) explain this behaviour in this way: “Strangers know where they stand with one another, as do inmates. There is little ambiguity in speech behaviour. Relationships with casual friends are often much less certain and more ambiguous, they are more dynamic and open to negotiation”. This may differ from culture to culture.

This model of interaction gives effect to two kinds of politeness, which are negative politeness and positive politeness. Positive politeness according to Coates (1987:110) and Holmes (1995:14) involves emphasising what people share, minimising the social distance, while negative politeness avoids intruding, and as such emphasise the social distance. This theory of social distance is important for analysing women and men’s communicative behaviours.

The second theory is power. Relative power is also used in analysing linguistic politeness (Holmes, 1995:17). This includes culturally constructed sources of power like age and gender, and also sources like knowledge, social prestige and role. Regarding this, Holmes (1995:17) postulates that power and social distance interacts.

Lastly she refers to formality as another social dimension for linguistic analysis. Speakers in a formal setting usually focus on transactional roles rather than personal relationship. In this case, negative politeness becomes devious. In the same way, positive politeness is prevalent if conversation takes place in a formal setting (Holmes, 1995:20).

As it has been pointed out at the beginning of paragraph 3.3.1, women more often than men, tend to use speech style that gives the impression of politeness. They often use hedges and boosters as devices of politeness. Hedges reduce the strength or force of an utterance, while boosters intensify or emphasise the force. Hedging and boosting are devices used by women to show that they are taking other people’s feelings into account. In this way they signal a wish not to impose (Coates, 1996:264; Holmes, 1995:74). The hedging and boosting devices are tag

question, questions, repetition, apologies, disclaimers, qualifiers and fillers (Coates, 1987:103-107; Coates, 1996:265 – 268; Holmes, 1995:74; Lemmer, 1996:57-58).

3.5.1.1 Tag questions

According to Holmes (1995:79), tags differ in polarity, information, syntactic derivation and in lexical form. This difference has been ignored by many language and gender researchers who treated tags as invariant forms.

Women use tags far more than men (Coates, 1987:105; Holmes, 1995:84). It is significant, however, to signal that there are four kinds of tags, the epistemic modal tags which express the speakers uncertainty; the challenging tags which are confrontational as they pressure a reluctant addressee to reply or aggressively boost the force of a negative speech act, facilitative tags which invite the addressee to contribute to the discourse, and softening tags which alternate the force of negatively affective utterances such as directives (Coates, 1986:104, Holmes, 1995:80-82).

Coates (1987:105) points out that 59 percent of tags used by women are facilitative while 61 percent of tags used by men are modal (compared with 35 percent for women). To confirm this, Holmes (1995:85), in her study of the use of tags in New Zealand, found that “men generally use...tag questions more often than women do to express uncertainty and ask for confirmation, while women use tag questions more often than men in their facilitative positive politeness function. Lakoff (1973:54), however, points out that there are situations or instances in which tags are the only legitimate sentence form.

Interestingly, as show by Cameron *et al* (in Coates and Cameron (1998:75), Holmes challenges Lakoff's view, which sees women's language as associated with weaknesses or subordination. Holmes (1995) in her book tried to modify Lakoff's view by indicating that men use tags as well, the difference only comes when women use more facilitative tags with affective meaning.

3.5.1.2 *Questions*

Women have a tendency of converting statements into questions when communicating (Coates, 1987:106; Coates, 1996:266; Lemmer, 1996:57; Mills, 1995:22).

Questions are very important as they give the speaker opportunity to evoke response. Instead of using questions only to get information, where one speaker can take a role for an expert, women use them for other reasons as well. They use questions to construct and sustain friendship, to draw speakers into conversation to sustain the conversation to check if what is said is still acceptable to everyone present. (Coates, 1996:265; Mills, 1995:22). It would therefore be correct to say that women use questions more at interactional level than at informational level, because they are facilitators. Consequently, they use questions as questions are much more less threatening than making an assertion.

In addition, studies (Spender, 1979; and Holmes, 1988; in Holmes, 1995:40-41) suggest that men ask more questions in public and formal contexts than women. I therefore find it important to look at different kinds of elicitations to understand better the differences between the contributions of women and men to discussions.

Elicitations as defined by Holmes (1995:41) are “both questions and comments, which were intended to elicit a response in the discussion”. She goes on to mention three types of elicitations (questions) which are supportive, critical and antagonistic. She (Holmes, 1995:43-45) defines the elicitations as follows: “Supportive elicitations imply a generally positive response to the content of the presentation, and invite the speaker to expand or elaborate on some aspects of it ...”.

“Critical elicitations are less whole-heartedly or explicitly positive and contain a hint of criticism. They often consist of a modified agreement or qualified disagreement, perhaps expressing a degree of negative evaluation or skepticism,...” and “Antagonistic dicitations generally involve challenging aggressively critical assertions, whose function is to attack the speaker’s position and demonstrate it is wrong”.

In the study conducted by Holmes (1995:45) both, women and men used almost the same proportions of supportive and critical elicitations. They only differed with antagonistic elicitations, where men expressed proportionately twice as much of the antagonistic elicitations as women did. This means that men explicitly disagreed with or challenged the speaker. It then verifies the notion that women are more polite because they are more sensitive to the face needs of the speaker than men are.

3.5.1.3 *Apologies*

An apology as defined by Mills (1995:155) is “a speech act addressed to B’s face needs and intended to remedy an offense for which A takes responsibility, and thus to restore equilibrium between A and B (where A is the apologiser, and B is the person offended).

Like it is the case with the previously discussed hedges and boosters, it is generally believed that women apologise more than men do. In fact, Lemmer (1996:58) points out that women apologise even for circumstances for which they are not responsible.

Mills (1995:154-176) conducted a thorough study in New Zealand about apologies and the finding try to explain the differences with regard to how often, and how different women and men apologise. The study did not show significant differences in the distribution of apologies used by females and males. This led her to exploring other social features of apology behaviour between women and men. Looking at apology strategies which are explicit exclusion of apology; explanation or account, and acknowledgement of responsibility; she found that women used strategies of expressing lack of negative intent and recognising the others right to an apology. On the other hand, men tend to use strategies, which focus on the relative status with the other, blaming and expressing self-deficiency.

Further, women and men were found to differ in the kinds of offences for which they apologies. Women particularly apologies for intrusions relating to a person’s personal space and infringements of the talking rights of others. Men were more concerned about inconveniences, which cost another person time or money, and faults that cause damage to another’s possessions.

The study (Mills, 1995) goes on to reveal that women may interpret situations differently from men, the 'same' behaviour may evoke apology from a woman but not from a man. Thus, often men apologise for heavily weighted offences, while women tend to apologies for less serious faults. This kind of finding is interpreted by Mills (1995) as a factor that may be contributing to the fact that women apologise more frequently than men.

3.5.1.4 *Disclaimers, qualifiers and fillers*

Women are said to use more of disclaimers, fillers and qualifiers (Lemmer, 1996:58). The following are examples of each as written by Lemmer (1996:58): disclaimers statements like "I think....", "I guess....", "I wonder...."; qualifiers are non-specific adjectives such as "awfully nice", "terribly nervous", or "really super"; fillers words or phrases like "ums", "you know", "er", or "like".

3.5.1.5 *Commands and directives*

Women are said to be less direct when speaking or giving instructions (Hung Ng & Bradac, 1993: 48; Goodwin 1980, in Coates, 1987:107 & Mills, 1995:22). In the study to observe the use of directives in same-sex talk of both girls and boys in Philadelphia streets it was found that boys and girls used different directive forms.

Goodwin goes on to show that the boys used "aggravated" directives, which are directives which explicitly establish status differences between participants, for example, "you shut up you big lips" or "leave me sucker". On the other hand, girls used directives which minimised status differences and which suggest rather than demand action, for example, "lets go to the shop", or "we could go play by my house".

According to Coates (1987:107), Goodwin indicates that it does not mean that girls are incapable of using more forceful directives in other contexts, such as in cross-sex arguments. She alludes that "the linguistic forms used reflect the social organisation of the group: the boys' group is hierarchically organised, with leaders using very strong directives forms to demonstrate control,

while the girls' group is non-hierarchical with all girls participating in decision-making on equal basis. (Coates, 1987:107).

This kind of communication behaviour was certainly brought up by the way adults interact with girls and boys. According to Coates (1987:108), fathers tend to give directions, while mothers are more likely to consult the child's wishes. She goes on to say that fathers are not only more directive than mothers, they are more directive with sons than with the daughters.

3.5.2 Interruption and topic control

Interruptions are according to Ziemmerman and West (1975, in Coates, 1987:99) violations of the turn-taking rules of conversation where the interrupter prevents the speaker from completing their turn, at the same time gaining a turn for themselves. There are different types of interruptions including simple interruptions, overlaps, butting in, silent interruptions, and talkovers (Gaig & Pitts, 1990, in Breshanan & Cai, 1986:173).

Research show that men tend to interrupt more than women (Breshnan & Cai, 1986; Coates, 1987; Holmes, 1995; Winter & Wigglesworth, 1993). Furthermore, men tend to interrupt women more than women interrupt men even where a woman has a high status (Holmes, 1995:52).

It has also been argued by some scholars that uninterrupted conversations signify liking, affiliation, and sensitivity to the interactive needs of others. Conversely, interruption suggests dominance, aggression, face threat, and conversational mis-coordination (Breshnan & Cai in Breshnan *et al.*, 1996:172). Thus, interruptions by men has been explained through factors such as male/female dominance social expectations, and cultural differences (Aries, 1976, Burgeon *et al.*, 1983; Craig & Evans, 1991; Esposito, 1979; Hawking, 1988, Kalvcik, 1975; Malts & Borker, 1982; Tannin, 1983, 1993; Thorne & Henley, 1975, all cited in Breshnan and Cai 1986:172).

Again, studies by Van Dyke (1992 in Breshnan, 1986:174) suggest that when women interrupted men with agreement interruptions, men rated them as more dynamic and competent but having low socio-intellectual status, while men using any kind of interruption were rated as having high

socio-intellectual status by their partners. She goes on to show that females tend to interrupt informative speech and are less likely to interrupt supportive talk. Also, research has found that women and men with masculine identity interrupt partners more than women and men with feminine identity.

Thus, Coates (1986:101) postulates that men use interruptions and delayed minimal responses to deny women the right to control the topic of talk.

Women and men use simultaneous talk differently (Breshnan, 1986, Coates, 1987). Women are said to produce simultaneous speech more than men (Mills, 1995:23). Simultaneous talk is when two people or more speak at the same time (Mills, 1995:23). It also takes place when speakers complete each other's utterances, or repeat or rephrase each other's words.

Simultaneous talk, which is superficially seen as an interruption may be disruptive or supportive (Holmes, 1995:54). But Mills (1995:23), does not see simultaneous conversation as a malfunction, to her it is a sign of active listenership, and it contributes to the production of a joint text.

3.6 NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

As discussed in chapter 2, interpersonal communication involves both verbal and non-verbal aspects. Gender differences in communicative styles are believed to prevail in both types of communication.

According to a study by Kramer (1977, in Briton & Hall, 1995:80), Spangler (1995:412), and, Kalbfleisch and Cody (1995:64), women seem to smile and laugh more than men, and to be more concerned about the listener. They go on to show that women claim less space, are touched more, and tolerate more spacial intrusions than men. On the contrary, men tend to speak loudly but less talkative than women.

Briton and Hall (1995:81) go on to show that women are believed to be better encoders and decoders, especially of facial expressions. In fact, women are more alert to non-verbal cues in general, and are even better at recognising the specific messages conveyed by non-verbal actions (Hall, 1984 in Briton & Hall, 1995:81; Key, 1975:112).

As part of gender socialisation, boys and men are instructed to suppress emotions while girls and women are encouraged to be emotionally expressive. Thus, non-verbal behaviours are consistent with societal stereotypes for females and males (Baird, 1976, in Sprangler, 1995:412; Key, 1975:107). "Therefore, men may see non-verbal part of emotions as relatively unimportant while women see non-verbal expressions as worthy of their attention" (Briton & Hall, 1995:81).

To this effect, Kalbfleisch and Cody (1995:64) made contribution to the theory that men's non-verbal behaviour is characterised by dominance and women's behaviour by submissiveness. Now lets look at the different aspects of non-verbal communication.

3.6.1 Smiling

As pointed out in the beginning of par. 3.4, there is a general belief that women smile often than men. Women smile to interact with others while men smile when they feel good (Spangler, 1995:413). Furthermore, Spangler indicates that women educators generally express a happy disposition, while men are more likely to smile only to accentuate a specific point or to convey a certain mood. What is more interesting is that, a study of smiling patterns revealed that nonsmiling women are often judged severely than men (Deutsch, et al 1987, in Spfangler, 1995:413).

3.6.2 Eye contact

When conversing, women tend to look at the other person more than men irrespective of the other person's sex (Kalbfleisch & Cody, 1995:66; Spangler, 1995:413; Thorne, 1975:194). The same applies to same-sex conversations.

The reason for maintaining eye-contact by women may be that they look for non-verbal behaviour because they are better decoders as mentioned in the beginning of par. 3.4. Thorne (1975:194) suggests that women may do that more than men because they value highly the kind of information they can gain through such activity.

Spangler (1995:414) pointed out that researchers suggest that if women fail to make eye contact, they are more likely to be interrupted by men because they are seen as having lack of interest or attention.

3.6.3 Touch

Culturally, for men touching is much more restricted to the opposite sex and its function is primarily sexual in nature (Lewis, 1972:237).

In general, touching is also related to status, for example, socio-economic status, sex and age. Hence, according to Kalbfleisch and Cody (1995:66), low status women are often unwillingly touched by men, but women of higher status are not. Moreover, men/women of higher status tend to touch those of lower status significantly more. Again, Henley and Harmon (in Kalbfleisch & Cody 1995:66) refer to the presence of more touch, pointing, and spatial invasion as a connotation of more dominance for males not for females.

It is therefore, not surprising to find that women are expected to accept as normal behaviour their violations, whereas, when they reciprocate, especially with men they are likely to be seen as conveying specific sexual intent (Thorne, 1975:192).

3.6.4 Proxemics

A definition of proxemics as given by Jenkins and Johnson (1975 in Spangler 1995:415) "is the study of how a man deals with the space around him". There are gender differences with regard to how space is used.

According to Spangler (1995:414) males tend to occupy more space and give the impression of ownership, while females use less space. A study by Baird (1976, cited in Spangler, 1995:415) revealed that mixed-sex pairs talk at a close range, followed by female pairs than male pairs. He goes on to mention that the biggest distance was more obvious with individuals of high status.

Again, Baird (1976, cited in Spangler, 1995:415) and Willis (1966, in Thorne, 1975:191) in their studies with regard to approaching and being approached, found that women were approached more closely than men by both men and women. Baird (1976 :183, in Spangler, 1995:415) points out that these findings may reflect the female's cultural role, where the expectation to be submissive, dependent, and passive, may have caused her to allow dominant other to approach her.

The other aspect to be considered is the sitting positions of leaders or managers at the table. Normally one who sits at the head of the table is interpreted as a leader. According to Spangler (1995:415) when a man is sitting at the head of the table, in a mixed-sex group, they are more likely to be interpreted as leaders, but a woman is less likely to be seen as a leader.

3.6.5 Kinesics

Spangler (1995:44) also discusses about kinesics. Kinesics is defined by Ellyson and Dovidio (1985:4, in Spangler, 1995:414) as the movement and gestures that involve the torso, head (but not the face), arms, legs, hands and feet". There are gender differences with regard to kinesics too. As noted in par. 3.6.4, male manner tends to occupy more space than women.

Men sit with their buttocks away from the back of the chair, while women keep their buttocks close to the back of the chair. Women keep their legs together whether crossing the legs at ankles or knees. In fact, Spangler (1995:414) asserts that "spread of legs, whether sitting or standing, is more characteristics of men".

Kinesics conveys meaning to the interaction between human beings. Speech acts cannot be understood correctly, or interpreted meaningfully without taking kinesics into account (Key, 1975:107).

3.7 SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF COMMUNICATIVE GENDER DIFFERENCES

It is now clear that men and women communicate differently. These differences may cause miscommunication between co-workers in any organisation. There are seven areas where miscommunication can take place in mixed conversations as elaborated by Coates (1987:152-155).

3.7.1 The meaning of questions

Because questions are used for conversational maintenance, men might interpret the questions as a simple request for information. On the other hand, women may be silenced by the way men ask questions.

3.7.2 Link between speaker turns

When taking turns in conversations women normally begin by acknowledging the contribution of the previous speaker, but, men do not find it necessary to link with the previous speaker, but, women find it necessary to link with the past speaker's contribution. In this case, most women become resentful at having their comments ignored, while men will miss the cut and thrust of conversations played according to their rules.

3.7.3 Topic shifts

Women discuss one topic for a long time, building on each other's contribution, on the contrary, men move from one topic to another. This might cause communication problems for both genders.

3.7.4 Self-disclosure

Women conversation is mostly therapeutic because they see it as an opportunity to share problems and experiences, and offer reassurance and advice, while men do not prefer discussing personal problems. Thus the response of men and women to another person's disclosure will be different, with men taking on the role of an expert, lecturing to the other speaker.

3.7.5 Verbal aggressiveness

Men are often involved in arguments, speak loudly, shout and swear. Women on the other hand try to avoid displaying verbal aggressiveness. In mixed-sex groups, women might find this kind of conversational behaviour disruptive, whereas men find it normal.

3.7.6 Interruption

Women use minimal responses such as, mm, eh, to show active listenership and men usually interpret this as conversational defect. On the contrary, men are always looking or waiting for a chance to talk (a turn) and they are most likely to be seen as denying the other speaker a right to speak. The consequence of this problem is that in mixed-sex conversations women are silenced.

3.7.7 Listening

Listening is an important part of communication style. As discussed in previous paragraphs, the women's style shows value for the role of listening. This is done by using minimal responses, not interrupting, and actively encourage others to speak through tags. Conversely, men seem to regard conversation as competition, aiming to be a speaker. This causes a lot of communicative problems. Coates (1987:154) puts it in this way: "Women's behaviour is seen by men as failure to assert their right to speak rather than as active listening; men's behaviour is perceived by women as insensitive to their right to speak as well as to listen". As a result, in mixed groups, women speak less.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter started by pointing out different feminisms, their emphasis and perspectives. The five kinds of feminisms alluded to are: liberal feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism, black feminism and post-structural feminism. These perspectives had to be highlighted because feminists have insisted on the significance of investigating the taken-for-granted gender divisions, which they do not regard as natural, which also have a bearing on the gender differences in communication styles.

The focus also briefly went to the theories of sex and gender socialisation, which are: biological determinism, socialisation, and psychoanalytic theories. The relevance of these theories lies in the fact that socialisation is one of the factors that bring about differences in communication styles of women and men, hence, the different communication strategies. Though socialisation influences the communication styles of men and women, post-structuralists argue that during socialisation, each person is active in taking up discourses through which he or she is shaped. This implies that women managers will at one time, show feminine communication styles, and sometimes masculine communication styles.

Acquisition of gender differentiated communication styles has also been deliberated upon in depth to show that, indeed socialisation has a stake in women's and men's communication styles.

The whole chapter clearly brings to light the differences in communication styles of women and men. Women tend to converse co-operatively, whereas male speakers organise their conversation competitively. Thus, according to Coates (1987:154), women tend to put far more effort than men into maintaining and facilitating conversations.

It is indicated by Hung Rig and Bradac (1993:48) that there is overarching belief that men are in some sense powerful speakers than women. He then goes on to show that there is the best evidence to show that women (in United States) are lower on the dynamism dimension of perceived power only. On the dimension of status and intellectual competence, there may be a

weak tendency for female language to produce higher ratings than does male language; in this sense, females may use a relatively powerful register.

Thorne *et al* (1983) postulates that the “powerlessness” of the speech pattern women more often use exists only relative to the power of so-called masculine patterns. When only women are told to change their behaviour, and essentially to adopt “male forms”, the characteristics of male forms are ignored, and the assumption of power as domination is reproduced”. Thus, Kramarae suggest that the women’s communicative style may be proper but not the most effective style of communication. It may be useful not to completely dismiss the female conversational style, but also to give attention to the positive aspects of female speech. In this way men could also benefit from the positive characteristics incorporated into their communication patterns.

It is, therefore, essential for both females and males to adopt each other’s positive aspects of communication. For example, women are more self-revealing and supportive while men are more assertive and forceful. In this regard, Kramarae (1980:207), in her study, suggests that effective communication can be both self-revealing and forceful, supportive and assertive, if the two styles are combined.

The differences in communication styles of women and men may cause misconception in conversations. The misconceptions are not only found in mixed conversations. Due to other factors involved in communication, like culture, class and age, as well as lack of knowledge about effective ways of communicating, miscommunication can occur not only in mixed-gender talks, but also in same-gender talks. Consequently the managers should acquaint themselves with the differences in communication of men and women in order to avoid miscommunication.

It is on the basis of this evidence that I want to explore the managerial communication of women managers in secondary schools. Are the dynamics of communication amongst women principals caused by the fact that they are females, or is it because there are other factors involved? The following chapters will dwell on the real conversational interactions in secondary schools.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to explore communication strategies as managerial function amongst women principals of secondary schools and their staff. This study is intended to examine how the principal's managerial task is affected by how communication takes place. As such, I have chosen to use qualitative research approach.

As it has been indicated in Chapter 1, the aim of this research is to show the role of verbal and non-verbal communication in management, the gender differences that exist and how the contextual factors contribute to the differences that exist; to find out the position of women in educational management; to explore the communication experiences of a woman principal in a secondary school in the Northern Province, Region 3; and to make recommendations to scholars, researchers, or anyone who would like to gain knowledge about women in educational management.

4.1.1 Theoretical framework

Interestingly, one of the approaches (theories) in qualitative research is symbolic interactionism. This theory will underlie the qualitative research that I will conduct.

Symbolic interactionism is characterised by three principles which are: (a) human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them, (b) the attribution of meaning to objects through symbols is a continuous process, and (c) meaning attribution is a product of social interaction in human society (Le Compte *et al*, 1992:338). This approach deals with small-scale everyday life, seeking to understand processes, relationships, group life, motivations, adaptations, and so on.

According to Le Compte *et al* (1992:348-360) using symbolic interactionism in qualitative research has methodological implications which are:

4.1.1.1 *Respecting the empirical social world*

Empirical social world is the minute-by-minute, day-to-day social life of individuals as they interact together, as they develop understandings and meanings, as they engage in joint action and responding to each other as they adapt to situations, and as they encounter and move to resolve problems that arise through their circumstances (Le Compte *et al.*, 1992:348-350).

4.1.1.2 *Layers of reality*

This means that life is complex in its range and variability and it is also deep with regard to operating at different levels. Furthermore, it means that the researcher must maintain certain openness of mind, not prejudging the matter under investigation, plenty of time is needed to investigate; and lastly, the investigation cannot take place outside the actual situation of the object of study. (Le Compte *et al.*, 1992:350-351).

4.1.1.3 *Taking the role of the other*

To understand social life, what motivates people, what their interests are, what links them to and distinguishes them from others, what their cherished values and beliefs are, why they do as they do and how they perceive themselves and others, it is important for us to put ourselves in their position and look out at the world with them. As Le Compte (1992:351) puts it, "their reality may not be our reality".

This of course, shows how important observations are in qualitative research.

4.1.1.4 *Appreciating the culture*

When interacting groups develop symbols with interrelated meaning which form a culture or subculture. Therefore, the qualitative researcher tries not to interpret the researcher's behaviour only through her own perspective, he/she must capture the meanings that permeate the culture as understood by the participant. (Le Compte *et al.*, 1992:354-355).

4.1.1.5 *Situating the interaction*

It is important to understand the context within which the interaction is taking place because the situation can affect perspectives and behaviour and perspectives can affect behaviour. For this reason, the description of the principals, schools, and the interview processes will be given. (Le Compte *et al*, 1992:358-35).

Qualitative ethnography will be used because I will be doing a single case study. I will use a single site study because I want to understand in depth one phenomenon, which is communication strategy used by a woman principal. Moreover according to McMillan and Schumacher (1997:394), case study design, because of its flexibility and adaptability to a range of contexts, processes, people and foci, provides some of the most useful methods available in educational research.

4.2 SAMPLING AND SELECTION

I used criterion-based selection procedure for the research as explained by Le Compte and Preissle (1993:69) who show that criterion-based selection is the starting point for all researchers. The function of criterion-based selection is to identify the population, and, as the study unfolds, it is also used to identify new phenomena to be examined.

It is however, important to note that, setting boundaries in qualitative research sampling is important. As a result, the aspects of my research that I will study within the limits of the set time and means will be defined.

4.2.1 Single case study

A single case study will be used here and it is valid in that the phenomenon being studied, that is, "communication" is elusive, and one would need to do in-depth study. Therefore, one school principal and teachers in that school will be investigated in depth for a period of one month.

Hammersley (1992:184) defined a 'case' as the phenomenon located in space and time, about which data are collected to which the main claims of the study relate.

There is, by and large, a concern about generalisation of qualitative single case study as an epistemological issue. It is important to indicate that qualitative study does not generalise. It only produces context-bound generalisations, which may be extended in subsequent research with additional case studies or more structured designs. In fact, Wolcott (1995:173) asserts that whatever can be learned from a well-contextualised study of a single case is a contribution that each of those studies has to offer.

Therefore, no claims are being made here that we might generalise from the findings of this single site case in Region 3, Northern province. Rather, I am also arguing my case in terms of "naturalistic generalisation" (Stake, 1995:86). Naturalistic generalisation is important because it is embedded not so much in the writer's generalisation but in the reader, whether verbalised or not. The interpretations of the reader are largely based on their own experiences and accounts and observations will resonate to a greater or lesser degree with the reader's own life. Thus, Stake (1995):86) argues that: "Our readers often are more familiar with the cases than we researchers are. They can add their won parts of the story. We should allow some of this input to analysis to help form reader generalisations. The reader will take out both narrative descriptions and our assertions: narrative descriptions to form vicarious experience and naturalistic generalisation, assertions to work with existing propositional knowledge to modify existing generalisations".

4.2.2 Site selection

Region 3 in the Northern Province has been chosen as a site where the research will take place. Region 3 is divided into six areas, which are Soutpansberg, Malamulele, Mutale, Thohoyandou, Vuwani, and Sekhusese. I chose the site because:

- (1) It is one of the provinces in South Africa with few women educational managers. For example, there is about 4 percent of women principals in secondary schools and about 4 percent of women principals in primary schools;
- (2) Concerning cultural embeddedness, I want to find out if culture influences the dynamics of communication of principals and their staff. This means examining if there is particular way in which they are expected to communicate as an ethnic group and if that influences the way they communicate;
- (3) Little research on gender and educational management has been done in the Northern Province, let alone in South Africa;
- (4) My own familiarity with the context, especially culture and the language used by the principal and the staff of that particular school. As a person who was born and bred in the Northern Province, I am familiar with the three main languages spoken in that area. Though our cultures are not completely the same, our cultural attitudes are similar. Thus, as an insider to the Northern Province community in terms of the language and the culture, I am in a better position to understand their communicative interaction.

Within the Region, secondary schools, which are led by women principals were identified. Only one school has been identified by reputation and that is where the actual research took place (cf par. 4.2.2).

4.2.3 Participant selection

Purposeful sampling will be used in order to identify information-rich key informants. Thus, purposeful sampling is according to McMillan and Schumacher (1997:997) when one wants to understand something about those cases without needing or desiring to generalise to all such cases. The advantage of purposeful sampling lies in that few cases studied in depth provide many insights about the topic.

I have used purposeful sampling strategy as advocated by some writers (Le Compte & Preissle, 1993; McMillan & Schumacher, 1997; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Sampling was done according to case type where reputational-case sampling strategy was used.

This sampling strategy was used, most importantly because the researched populations are 'artificially bounded' (groups identified by scholars, researchers, or policy makers as collectivities of individuals sharing common attributes, but not forming socially designated group) (Le Compte & Preissle, 1993:61).

4.2.3.1 *Reputational case*

Reputational case selection is often a variation of extreme-case or unique case selection. Here, the researcher chooses instances of study populations on the recommendation of experts.

In my study, one school in the region has been identified by reputation. Though, initially I did not have an idea of asking for nominations by the officials in the department, when talking with one of the deputy directors in the region, he mentioned one principal with the best managed school with good results in the region. He emphasised that it would be useful to go and do research at that school as, according to him, I could get good data. Though being a well managed school does not guarantee getting good data for my study, I felt it would be good to choose it as a site for my study

Again the school headed by the woman principal was chosen because gender is one of the factors that will be looked at. Gender and culture are some of the factors that have influenced the choice of informants.

By and large, I have interviewed and observed one woman principal. Six teachers, Three women and three men working under the principal were interviewed too.

For the purpose of anonymity and confidentiality, the school's name, the area's name and the principal's name will not be mentioned. Pseudonyms will be allocated to each of them.

TABLE 1: SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

PSEUDONYM	POSITION	AGE	GENDER	NUMBER OF YEARS AT SCHOOL
Martha	Principal	52	Female	11
Linda	Teacher	28	Female	5
Derby	Teacher	35	Female	10
Nyawa	Teacher	35	Female	11
Bele	Teacher	37	Male	2
Mateosi	Teacher	39	Male	5
Itani	Teacher	36	Male	9

4.3 DATA COLLECTION

As indicated in paragraph 1.5, I would like to draw information from both the principals and the teachers and other people in the school (if available) for example, secretary, and therefore, I intend using multiple research techniques (triangulation). This will be achieved by using a multi-instrument approach of informant interviewing, observations, and archival research (document analysis).

4.3.1 Interviews

An interview has been chosen as a technique/tool for gathering data mostly because of its adaptability. It is much easier to use because according to Bell (1993) an interviewee can follow up ideas, probe responses, and investigate motives and feelings, which would not be easy or even not possible to do when using other techniques. Thus, I used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions in appendices A to E for the reason that such interviews seek the words and the language of people being studied so that the researcher can understand their situations with increasing clarity. Furthermore, semi-structured open-ended questions allow the interviewees to use their unique way of defining their world and also to raise other important issues that are not contained in the schedule (see Bell, 1993; Ely *et al.*, 1991; Silverman, 1995; Walker, 1985).

I have conducted in-depth interviews with a women principal and selected six teachers (male and female) who are working in the chosen school.

4.3.1.1 *Interviewing the principal*

I had three sets of semi-structured questions for the principal and one set of questions for the teachers. The first one was career and life history interview and it was meant to obtain data about the principal's culture, and to find out how socialisation has shaped her acquisition of communicative competence (refer to appendix B). To complement the first set of questions, I gave the principal a questionnaire which needed her to provide me with biographical details (refer to appendix A).

The second interview was mainly about communication between the principal herself and the teachers (refer to appendix C). I used a few broad questions as guidelines for the interviews. Further questions were generated in the third interview to find out more about the principal's story, more so, because I seemed to have established trust in the first and second interview sessions (refer to appendix D).

Meetings with the principal for the purpose of interview were held at school in her office. In all the interviews, I used the tape recorder to record the discussions and I also took field notes.

4.3.1.2 *Interviewing the teachers*

As it has been mentioned in par. 4.3.1.1, six teachers were interviewed. All the teachers were interviewed in the office that was allocated to me in the school. I used it when writing some notes and analysing selected documents. I had one interview with each of the teachers using the questions that were used for interviewing the principal but slightly adjusted to suit the teachers (Refer to appendix E)

4.3.2 Observations

As a single case study, observations took place on daily basis for a period of one month. An observation grid developed specifically for this study was used as a guideline during observations (refer to Appendix F). As an ethnographic research, I used participant observation. Participant observation is referred to as a combination of techniques of research (Ely, *et al.*, 1991:42; Woods, 1986:33). Thus, participant observation is seen as a combination of ongoing processes of intensive observing, listening, and speaking. In addition, Ely, *et al.* (1991:42) indicate that some researchers use it as an umbrella term for all qualitative data. However, participant observation is often used to designate only one of the techniques. Therefore, participant observation joins the other techniques like interviewing, filming, and the analysis of records or documents.

To complement the interviews, I observed the principal and the teachers, and the focus was on the principal. I also attended one staff meeting that was held in my presence at school.

I was also fortunate to attend one of the awards giving ceremonies where learners were awarded certificates for participating in the Science Olympiad.

Most of the observations took place in the principal's office where most of the interaction between her and the teachers took place. I also attended their morning assembly twice.

According to Le Compte *et al.* (1992:29-21), observation and interviewing yield complementary rather than comparable data. What people say tends to reveal how they believe things should be, and what we ourselves observe firsthand, is more likely to reveal how things are (Le Compte *et al.*, 1992:20-22).

4.3.2.1 *Corroborating field observations*

To ensure reliability and validity I did corroborate field observations. This was done by obtaining data from multiple sources as advocated by McMillan and Schumacher (1997:443), that is looking

at different people at different types in different contexts. The following strategies were used: Multiple methods, multiple participants and multiple situations.

(i) Multiple methods

I observed both the principal and the teachers and other important informants like support staff. I also conducted casual observations and recorded down whatever was happening. Focused interviews were also conducted though I also noted down important information that could only be said outside the formal interview.

In addition to interviews and observations, selected documents were investigated and examined. Therefore, the communication school policies, staff minutes book, information book and school journal were examined.

(ii) Multiple participants

Multiple participants strategy was taken care of in the sense that the researched where the principal, teachers and support staff.

(iii) Multiple situations

Observations were done in the morning assemblies, during tea breaks and lunch time, in the staff meetings, in the principals office, and also in the staff room/office. I also attend the staff functions that were held, like, Science Olimpiad award giving ceremony.

By looking at the above three strategies, my data was triangulated.

4.4 RESEARCHER ROLE

Regarding events that transpired my purpose was to ask observe and record, rather than to judge and I remained the observer. I adopted the two kinds of participation, which have been cited by

Le Compte and Preissel (193:93-94) which are "participant-as-observer" and "observer-as-participant".

According to Wolcott (1973:8), a participant-as-observer takes a role in which the observer is known to all and is present in the system as scientific observer, participating by his presence but at the same time is usually allowed to do what observers do rather than expected to perform as others perform.

Choosing both rules of 'participant-as-observer' and observer as participant is also influenced by what has been advocated by Wolcott (1973:7) when he said that a participant observer cannot do both participating and observing at the same time. The two roles are essentially mutual and complementary, "the more perfectly you activate the other the less perfectly you activate its reciprocal."

In addition, Wolcott (1995:145) asserts that a participant observer is sometimes expected to rise above the role of researcher to become a non-researcher researcher, the person who acts naturally, in order to influence the informants to act naturally as well. Though this was difficult, I practised it in order to give purpose to my presence in the school.

This also brings about a question of advocacy and intervention. Prolonged participant observation, always has the risk of the researcher identifying strongly with the informants that defending their values or taking advisory role comes to take precedence over actually studying them (Ely, *et al* 1991; Miles Huberman, 1994; Wolcott, 1995; Woods, 1986). To curb this problem I made it clear to the principal at the outset that my purpose was not to display signs of personal approval or disapproval.

4.4.1 Insider/outsider

Issues of insider or outsider or both at different times shape the research process. I took an 'outsider' research role, more so because, as mentioned in paragraph 4.4 I adopted the two kinds of roles which are "participant-as-observer" and "observer-as-participant".

I am however, positioned sometimes as an outsider and sometimes as an insider. This is because I am a person who has read about management, who has some theoretical views of what it might be like to be a principal communicating with teachers, even if I don't have direct experience. Though I cannot be 'inside' the experience, but on the other hand I have worked in schools and taught school management at a college. I am an insider in that I have been in the schools myself.

I was an outsider in the sense that I did not know the informants, the school (especially those in the site where research was conducted), and most of all because I was never a principal. I also was an insider in that I am an African researching African women and men. This of course has cultural implications. As an insider I felt uncomfortable asking some questions that could offend the informants culturally. At the same time I was not a complete outsider, with no such sensitivity.

4.4.2 Ethical issues

The whole month of September was devoted to seeking consent from different concerned people, that is, the Department officials and the principal concerned.

The letter to ask for permission to conduct research was sent to the Superintendent General (previously known as Director-General). After that I phoned the identified woman principal to arrange the convenient period of conducting research in her institution.

Also important here was to find out if the principal understands the power of research and, in particular, research account. I did this because there is more of a responsibility to protect her interests if she does not or at least partially understand research. In that case I had to give assurances of confidentiality, anonymity, and most importantly the intended use of the data. I had to give the woman principal, the teachers, the school, and the area in which the school is located pseudonyms in order to protect their privacy, as we agreed not to reveal their identity. I also indicated the time required for participation and the non-interfering, non-judgemental role that I will adopt.

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of data is an ongoing cyclical process integrated into all the phases of qualitative research (McMillan and Schumacher: 502, 1997). Thus, data analysis is the integration of the operations of organising, analysing, and interpreting data. Analysing starts while in the field. This is clearly shown by Le Compte *et al* (1992:217) when they said that “choosing which events or persons to record involves making initial analytic decisions. Moving to greater visual and audio selectivity at later stages of recording presents another set of analytic judgements.”

It is important however, to point out that most of the data analysis is done after the fieldwork has been completed. I did start with some analysis of data while in the field by developing analytic questions and concepts, which served to focus data collection; and I also tried out themes on my informants.

4.5.1 Interviews

In trying to make sense of the data, I organised it into themes, using the steps highlighted by Altricher *et al* (1993). Thus, I read the transcripts for interview and field notes with the view of colour coding the data, highlighting important passages, writing down ideas, words and phrases, and pattern of behaviour. I also looked at similar phrases, relationships between variables, differences between ideas expressed by teachers and the principal and common sequences as outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994:9).

I then went through the text again looking only at the marked passages, listing the themes on a sheet of paper, and allocating each a colour. For each theme, I noted the relevant passages and page numbers in the transcripts and in the margins of the transcript put a tick in the colour for each theme. This provided a relatively easy visual 'road map' to construct thematic accounts.

After reading all the transcripts, I took one transcript and identified the themes, coding them with different colours. I then looked at whether similar themes emerged in other transcripts and field notes. The themes were then colour coded across all interview transcripts and field notes,

following the colours that were used in the first transcript. Some of these themes were generated through the reading of the literature.

In addition, I also looked at metaphors to capture the essence of what is said and observed and also to capture the dynamics of social situation of my informants as advocated by Altricher *et al* (1993) and McMillan and Schumacher (1997).

As indicated in chapter 1, a number of strategies were used in order to ensure validity, because qualitative researchers commonly use a combination of as many strategies as possible to enhance validity in both design and validity. In fact, McMillan and Schumacher (1997:520) assert that qualitative researchers use triangulation, which is the cross-validation among data sources, data collection strategies, time periods, and theoretical schemes. As a result, interviews (verbatim accounts), tape recording (mechanically recorded data), field notes (low inference descriptors), observations (use of participant recorded perceptions), and document analysis were used.

4.5.2 Observation schedules and field notes

Like what I did with interview transcripts, the observation schedules and field notes were also colour coded.

I also looked at whether the themes that were identified in the interview scripts emerged from the observation schedules and the field notes. As done with interview scripts, I also looked at similar phrases, relationships between variables, differences between ideas expressed by teachers and the principal, and common sequences as outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994:9).

Again, I looked for metaphors to capture the essence of what is said and observed and also to capture the dynamics of social situation of my informants.

4.5.3 Document analysis

Documents have also been studied when analysing data. This was done for the reasons I am going to give. Document analysis is important because it makes replicable and valid inferences from data to their context thus, it stresses the relationship between content and context (Bennett et al: 1994:16).

In addition, when analysing documents, patterns and trends may emerge, which had not previously occurred to you. Bennett (1994:245) also adds by alluding that, careful study of existing record systems may allow the researcher to avoid unnecessary duplication in data collection.

When analysing documents I followed the steps mentioned by McMillan and Schumacher (1997:457). Therefore I started by locating the documents. All the documents I needed were found in the principal's office.

The first set of documents are policies. They are, School Policy (1997), School Constitution (1997) and Learner Representative Council (Previously known as Student Representative Council) Vision, Mission, and Code of Conduct document. The other important documents analysed are Staff Minute Book, and the Information Book/School Journal.

After locating and identifying the documents, I gave brief descriptions of each; history of its use and owners/successors; and data frequency and representativeness. I also provided descriptive data about production or acquisition of it by the school, show who uses it, how it is used, where it is used, and the purpose of its use.

Thereafter, the meanings were corroborated with observation and interview data.

4.6 CORROBORATING DATA

Before discussing the strategies used for corroborating data in full, I will first elaborate what validity and reliability is.

4.6.1 Validity

Validity, according to Wolcott (1995:169), looks at whether the researcher has measured what the research purports to measure. Wolcott goes on to show that validity has now taken on a wider meaning, being associated more closely with truth-value. This means it is the correspondence between research and the real world, rather than just limiting it to measurement. Thus, qualitative methods are designed to ensure say and do. The researcher tries to find first-hand knowledge of social life unfiltered through concepts, operational definitions and rating scales. (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984:7).

It is therefore appropriate to mention that the presence of the researcher in a natural setting positions the qualitative researcher well in terms of potential truth value or warranted assertability of his/her report. To support this, Pelto and Pelto (1978:33, in Wolcott, 1995:169) assert that “In their field research anthropologists have invested much effort to achieve validity, for we generally assume that a long-term stay in a community facilitates the differentiation of what is valid from what is not, and the assembling of contextual supporting information to buttress claims to validity.”

However, McMillan and Schumacher (1997:411) indicate that in case study design, a single case is not treated as a probability sample of the larger universe. Instead, it provides for the extension of the findings, as an analytical synthesis that enable others to understand similar situations and apply these findings in subsequent research. Thus, “the usefulness of qualitative study is enhanced to the degree to which the research design is adequately described so that researchers may use the study to extend the findings to other studies”. (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:411).

Le Compte *et al* (1992:657-674) add by showing that there are some general standards for validity in qualitative studies. The standards can be usefully used as guides for making valid arguments in educational research.

The first standard as discussed by Le Compte *et al* (1992:657) is the fit between research question, data collection and analysis techniques. Here the data collection techniques and the

methods of analysing used should be suitable for answering the research question. The other standard is the effective application data collection and analysis techniques. Then comes the alertness to coherence of prior knowledge as the third standard. The two standards discussed cannot render credible conclusions as the research should be judged against a background of existing theoretical, substantive, or explicit practical knowledge. This calls for the exposure and consideration of the assumptions and goals embedded in the development and conduct of the study so as to place the arguments derived from a new study in their appropriate context and the arguments of one study appropriately compared to those of other studies.

Value constraints is another standard for validity. Research is subject to both external and internal value constraints. "Valid studies must be worthwhile" (Le Compte, *et al.*, 1992:660). It is therefore essential for the research to address the importance of research and its usefulness in the language that is generally accessible to the community of interested parties. Again, there are internal value constraints, which refer to research ethics.

The standards for validity in educational research were clearly observed in this study. The data was corroborated through the use of different data collection methods, that is, interviews, observations, study documents, informal conversations with both the principal and the teachers. In analysing data, prior knowledge was taken into consideration since according to Peshkin (1998 in Le Compte *et al.*, 1992:659) data collected and analysed forms the basis for the researcher's contribution.

In addition, I made sure that I followed the points mentioned by Wolcott (1995:347-356) to try and satisfy the challenge of validity. The points are: talk little and listen a lot; record accurately, let readers see for themselves; report fully; be candid; and member checking seek feedback (McMillan: 405). When interviewing and interacting with the informants, I made sure that the informants be the ones talking. Following on Wolcott's footsteps, I made a conscious effort to be more sociable, thus providing opportunities for teachers and other staff members to talk to me. I also became more attentive and responsive to the informants' stories.

When observing, I tried to record as accurately as possible, and in precisely their words, what I found to be important of what they said and did. In case of informal talks or events I endeavoured to make notes as soon as possible after the talk or an event. This minimised the potential influence of some line of interpretation or analysis that might have me remembering and recording too selectively or reinterpreting the behaviour prior to recording it (Wolcott, 1994:349).

It was also very important for me to include primary data in my analysis, not only to give the people who will read an idea to what my data is like but also to give access to data itself.

It is best to be candid in order to ensure validity. Firstly, I introduced the question of gender into my set of questions because I wanted to find out if the dynamics of communication of women principals could be explained in terms of gender. So, the questions that I asked were at least partially responsible for the answers that I received as in the case with the principal (refer to Appendices A, B and C).

This shows that an interview is a situated account. This means that the interview was shaped by the fact that the 'cast' is myself, that particular woman, and that it is happening in a particular place, at a particular time, in response to particular shaping questions.

As stated by Wolcott (1995:351), being candid means that the researcher should look at subjectivity as strength of qualitative approaches rather than attempts to establish detached objectivity. As a result, this study was also shaped by my own assumptions and my position, that is, the self-in-the research.

The point is, as a researcher, I needed to be aware of these assumptions. Delamont (1980:9) sums it up like this "Each researcher is her own best data collection instrument, as long as she is constantly self-conscious about her role, her interactions, and her theoretical and empirical material as it accumulates. As long as qualitative researchers are reflexive, making all their processes explicit, then issues of reliability and validity are served." This is what I have tried to do in this study.

It is also important to seek feedback to ensure validity. Seeking feedback is also referred to as 'member checking' by McMillan and Schumacher (1997). My drafts were shared with informed readers as part of the process of analysing and writing. This helped me to check the correctness and completeness and sometimes helped me to recognise where the reporting and the interpretation were overblown or underdeveloped. Member checking was also done during the interview sessions by rephrasing and probing questions to obtain more complete and subtle meanings.

This study's validity was enhanced by using the strategies that have been discussed.

4.6.2 Reliability

Reliability in quantitative approach according to Bennett *et al* (1994:218) looks at whether the measure will yield the same results on different occasions (assuming no real change in what is to be measured). But with qualitative approach, one endeavours to find out if different researchers on different occasions will make similar observations.

To this effect, Wolcott (1995:167) advocates that fieldworkers do not try to make things happen, but whatever the circumstances, they cannot make them happen twice. Thus, qualitative researchers show that if something happens more than once, they do not claim that the repetition is exact. This is because human behavior is always bound to the context in which it occurs, and that what is most important in the social reality cannot be reduced to variables in the same manner as physical reality, and that what is more important in the social discipline is understanding and portraying the meaning that is constructed by the participants involved in a particular social setting (Ary, *et al*, 1990:445). Therefore as mentioned in paragraph 4.6.1. The findings are shaped by the fact that the researcher is myself, and that it is happening in a particular time and place, responding to a particular question.

In my search for achieving consistency in findings, I established consistency through procedures. Thus, Wolcott (1995:168) sees reliability as an artifact.

Furthermore, to ensure reliability, as in validity, I carefully documented all the information gathered in the field. A variety of techniques were also employed to demonstrate the trustworthiness of my findings.

4.6.3 Triangulation

To ensure reliability and validity I had to corroborate field observations as discussed in paragraph 4.3.2.1. corroborating field observations is also referred to as triangulation. This was done by obtaining data from multiple sources as advocated by McMillan and Schumacher (1997:443), that is looking at different people at different times in different contexts. As mentioned in paragraph 4.3.2.1, the following strategies were used: Multiple methods, multiple participants and multiple situations.

Multiple methods was used by observing both the principal and the teachers and other important informants like the secretary. I also conducted casual observations and recorded down whatever was happening. Focused interviews were also conducted though I also noted down important information that could be said outside the formal interview.

In addition to interviews and observations, the documents were investigated and examined. Therefore, school policies, school journal, information book and staff minutes book were examined.

Multiple participants strategy was taken care of in the sense that the researched will be the principal, teachers, secretary (if available) and heads of departments.

Multiple situations strategy was accomplished by ensuring that observations were done in the morning assemblies, during tea breaks and lunch time, in the staff meetings, in the principal's office, and also in the staff room/office. I also attend the staff functions that were held.

By looking at the above three strategies, my data was triangulated.

4.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

I have indicated at the beginning of this chapter that I chose qualitative approach because it seemed to be the most appropriate for this study.

However, qualitative research has its weaknesses, which if taken care of, may not affect the research adversely. Concerning this, Vulliamy, Lewin and Stephens (1990:40) point out that qualitative research can generate problems concerning reliability and validity of data collection techniques, ethical considerations and the difficulties of relating macro and micro theory. Moreover, the researcher might not obtain the necessary details if an interviewee is not willing to provide the information. If one is observing one might be fascinated by one aspect and forgets to observe other aspects of the events being studied.

As a single case study, this study presented me with a number of limitations.

First I encountered ethical problems. Because I had one main informant, who is the principal, who had to be interviewed three times, I had to be careful not to anger or irritate her in order to get information. Setting risk levels for potential harm is very difficult in qualitative studies. Harm may be caused by blows to self-esteem or "looking bad to others, threats to one's interests, position, or advancement in the organisation, or up to being sued or arrested (Miles & Huberman, 1994:292). Thus, access and quality of data may suffer if the researcher tries to reduce the chances for harm.

The other ethical problem concerns the way the principal may have felt during my stay at school. Like any normal person, one would feel uncomfortable to have someone in his/her office observing her/him over a long period. I, at times felt like I was bothering her, though she never verbally indicated that. At one stage, we agreed that she would call me from my office whenever she holds a conversation with one or some of the teachers. At times she would forget to call me and it would also be difficult for me to join them uninvited. (Refer to field notes extract below written on 14/10/199). "When I arrived at school, I thought everything would go according to plan. The principal had prepared an office for me, where I would sit alone and be isolated.

Initially I thought I would sit in the staff room where I could observe the principal and the teacher's interaction. The office issue complicated my research. When trying to think about how to come around the problem, I thought that sitting in the principal's office would be better than staying in my own office. That also was problematic. The principal seemed a bit uncomfortable doing her duties in my presence for the whole month.

I then decided to talk to her about it so that we could see what to do in order for me to get the information I need (observing her communication with the teachers and the key events). We ultimately came to a conclusion that the best would be for her to call me to her office whenever she is talking to one of the teachers or whenever she goes to the staff room to talk to them. This was a much better solution to my problem.

During the last week, (1st and 5th) I realised that she was then reluctant to call me to the office when she had meetings with some of the teachers as agreed. This could be because she was getting tired of calling me, or because of the journal I have asked her to compile for me. This posed a lot more ethical problems to me, because I just could not go and ask her why she has decided not to call me, I had to safeguard our good relationship.

The other problem was related to my conversation and interviews with the teachers and other staff members. The teacher, when talking to me would try by all means to protect their positions in relation to the principal. Some would even show signs of nervousness when they enter my office. This became evident because they became relaxed and freer to discuss with me when the principal was not within the school premises, as if they were saying "the principal must not see that it is me who provided you with the information". This presented itself as a serious limitation to this research.

Related to this is the issue of trust. The male teachers demonstrated the most suspicion (did not show complete trust) during the interview sessions. One of them even went to an extent of saying to me "I have brought my own tape, I also want to have a copy of this conversation", but after I have told him that I will make the research report available to him, and assured him of confidentiality and anonymity, he switched it off. During my stay at school, I joined their food

syndicate and ate with them. Some men would say jokingly that I am joining them in order to study them better.

This research project was also conducted in a community whereby the large education research is still unfamiliar. People are unfamiliar with academic research, so that when somebody says to the principal that she/he wants to come to the school and conduct 'research' there is not necessarily any shared understanding of what 'research' means. Moreover, there is a lack of familiarity with qualitative research in particular, as opposed to surveys and questionnaires.

In my case, though the principal and some teachers had an understanding of what research is, especially quantitative research, they were not familiar with qualitative research, more so, a single case study.

It may be that the informants wonder what is in it for them, they may have no clear idea of what the research 'product' may 'look' like. This uncertainty, even unfamiliarity, with educational research, meant that the principal and teachers spoke freely about their experiences outside the parameters of the formal interview, but they held back from providing similar details when the actual interview started.

This also affects the behaviour of the informants. They are forced to behave in a 'particular way in the presence of the researcher, and then revert to normal way of living in her/absence. For example, when speaking to some lady teachers during break, they indicated that when the principal informed them that I was coming to do research, they imagined a particular person, who is not approachable. They even prepared themselves to behave in a 'particular' way (perceived to be a proper way of behaving). One of them even added by saying that culturally, they are expected to behave well in the presence of a visitor. That is the reason why the staff suggested that I be given my own office because they did not want to pretend for the whole month. This was also confirmed by the principal who told me that some staff members thought that the researcher is like an inspector.

The use of a tape recorder in the interview sessions may also create problems, especially because the interviewee is not certain who are going to have access to the tapes and how the data is going to be presented. The use of a tape recorder in the interview session might also have shaped the kinds of information provided by the principal and teachers.

Again, this study, as a single case study, could have a methodological limitation. Because a single case study normally is done on one site, with one key informant, the problem could arise where something unexpected happens to the key informant/s or the site itself. In that case a researcher faces a major problem where she/he would either stop the research, postpone, extend the period of fieldwork, or change the site completely. This kind of problem surfaced when I was in the school. The problem and how I solved it is clearly elaborated in the piece of field notes below. "The problem of methodology became further complicated when on the 21st October the principal told me that she received a letter from the circuit office delegating her to act on behalf of the circuit manager (who is away) from the 20th to the 30th of November. This would definitely affect my research negatively because the principal is the key informant.

I showed her that this would affect my research and she told me that she has talked to the officers in the circuit about my presence in her school and she told them that she would still want to accommodate me. She made arrangements that she would come to school in the morning and then later in the afternoon go to circuit office. In cases where she is needed urgently in the mornings, she would start there and then come to school. That seemed to work.

Again, seeing that she is now too busy, attending to circuit office duties, the school and me on the other hand, I asked her on 27th to note every encounter (between her and the teachers that I did not notice) in a diary. She agreed. The diary was given to me on my last day".

The issue here is, a researcher must be able to go around any limitation or problems encountered during research. Triangulation also helped reduce some of these problems.

4.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I endeavoured to explain how this research would be conducted.

The theory that will underlie this research is symbolic interactionism. For this reason, the context is of utmost importance. Thus, the environment, conditions, time, situation at the time of the research is going to be considered when analysing.

For sampling, I used criterion-based selection and I settled for a single-case study where a single school was chosen as a site for the research. Furthermore, I have used purposeful sampling strategies in selecting the participants. They were selected by reputation case strategy.

Data collection was done by means of interviews, observations and document analysis. The semi-structured questions were developed for the interview with the principal and the teachers. An observation grid was also compiled to guide me throughout the research period.

My role as a researcher was to listen, probe, observe and record rather than to judge, and I tried to remain an observer.

I organised the data into themes. The themes were generated through the reading of literature and some emerged from the data itself. The interview transcripts, field notes, and observations schedules were read and the themes were colour coded. Data belonging to one theme was analysed in depth.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on findings obtained from interviews with and observation of a woman principal and teachers in her school. In addition selected school documents were studied and analysed. As noted in chapter one, I have organised the data thematically, with these five themes grounded both in theoretical assumptions from the literature outlined in chapter two and three, and in the interviews data.

As noted in chapter four, the principal was the key informant and she was interviewed three times. The six teachers were each interviewed once. Thus, the chapter will first focus on how the principal accounts for her own communication style, in response to my questions. It will also focus on the teachers' accounts of their principal's communicative style and how they respond to her.

Secondly the analysis will focus on the month-long observation which took place in the school. Thirdly the chapter will also look at the analysis of selected school documents.

When discussing the findings I will integrate the interviews, the observations, and the document analysis. Thus corroboration will take an integrative approach.

The interview data has not been edited for expression. However, because the informants are second language speakers, the data has been partially edited for grammar to prevent the meaning of what they were expressing being obscured. It was felt appropriate not to completely change the style and rhythms of these women and men's speech patterns.

I have indicated in chapter four that the theory of symbolic interactionism will underlie my research. I have also indicated that using symbolic interactionism has the following methodological implications: respecting the empirical social world; layers of reality; taking the role of the other; appreciating the culture and situating the interaction.

I have described the area in which the school is situated, the school itself, the principal's office, my office and the staff room. It is important to understand the context as the situation/context within which an interaction takes place, can affect perspectives and behaviour, and perspectives can affect behaviour. Description of the principal will also be given, as she is the main/key informant. The background of all the documents analysed has been similarly contextualised.

5.1.1 Situating the interaction

5.1.1.1 *Description of the site*

Thathe High School is located in a small township in the northern part of the Northern Province. It is one of the two high schools that are found in the township. The township has one main tarred street from the west to the east and second untarred one going to shopping complex.

Some of the houses are small and are either built by the government or by contractors. The owners have extended most of these small houses. In addition there are also a large number of big modern houses. This township is surrounded by a number of villages where cattle, goats, chicken and pigs are farmed. That is the reason why cattle and goats loiter in the streets and graze next to the roads. This feature affects the lifestyle of the people living in this township, especially the learners, who come from the neighbouring villages. Boys and girls are expected to attend the initiation schools, [even those staying in the township]. Some children are also expected to look after the cattle and goats, after school.

The majority of the families belong to the working class and still uphold their traditional customs. This area is also characterised by a strong belief in Christianity. There are very strong Christian churches and some teachers and learners belong to those churches.

5.1.1.2 *Description of the school*

Thathe High School is situated on the eastern side of the township. It is on the left side of the main tarred road. On the eastern side of the school are bushes.

The school is built with brown face brick in a U-shape. The gate into the yard is on the eastern side of the school. As one enters through the gate, one immediately lays eyes on the office block. This is the block in which the principal's office, staff room, and other teacher's offices are situated on the eastern side. On the northern and the southern sides are two long classroom blocks. They each have eight classes, bringing them to a total of sixteen classrooms. Each building has a verandah facing each other. The two blocks of classes are attached to the office block by corridors.

It is a big school with one thousand and twenty five learners (1025). It starts from grade eight (8) to grade twelve (12) and it is composed of African learners only.

It is in this big school that Martha (pseudonym) the principal manages a staff of twenty-eight (28) teachers. Seven (7) of them are women and twenty-one (21) of them are men (refer to appendix G). Like many schools in South Africa and elsewhere in the world, it is male dominated (Adler *et al.*, 1993:115; Blackmore, 1989:94; Blackmore and Kenway, 1993:27; Ozga, 1993:2; Shakeshaft, 1989:19-20). Two heads of departments assist her and they are both men.

Apart from the teachers, she also has one administration clerk (male), a woman cleaner and two security guards (males).

The school starts at 7:30 and formal teaching ends at 13:30. After that the students stay for studies until 15:30. The principal explained that because of the required seven hours working time for teachers, the teachers may only leave the school premises at 14:30 while only those supervising studies, remain until 15:30.

5.1.1.3 *Description of the staff room*

When one enters the office block from the eastern side, one sees two large pot plants on either side of the double wooden door. The unmistakable cleanliness is very apparent as you enter. The floor is clean and it shines. There is a large entrance hall and a corridor leading to both the southern and the northern sides. The staff room is situated on the southern end of the office

block. From the corridor a double door leads into the staff room. This is a very big white room with nine wooden tables. Eight are arranged in such a way that they form a U-shape, facing the north. The ninth table is placed somewhere in the centre of the staff room and this is where the chairperson and secretary sit for formal meetings. Eight cupboards (steel and wooden) are put against the walls.

It has eleven curtainless windows and a double door leading to a verandah on the western side. There are four windows on the western side of the room, one on the southern side and six on the eastern side. At the right corner of the western side is a kitchenette for the staff. The notice board (small green board) is mounted on the wall at the extreme left side of the southern wall of the room.

5.1.1.4 *Description of the principal's office*

The office is in the main office block. The entrance of the office is on the eastern side. When one enters, one goes to the right side of the corridor. The first door leads to the administrative clerk's office while the second one leads to the principal's office.

This is a beautiful office, well arranged and clean. The office is rectangular in shape, approximately 3,5m x 6m. On the eastern side, there are four (4) windows with white lace and burgundy curtains. The wall is painted in cream and on the southern side, there is a door leading to the administrative clerk's office.

The door is on the right side, and on the left side stands a big wooden table with eight wooden awards on it, three for Mathematics, three for Physics, one for English and one for Geography. Two huge silver trophies for music and four smaller gold plated trophies, one of which is for academic excellence. This may be the reason why the regional office echoed that it is one of the best managed secondary schools in the Region and that it produces good results every year! (cf paragraph 4.2.2).

On the northern side there is a big rectangular notice board with notices, timetables and certificates stuck on it.

Against the wall of the western side are three bookshelves. In the middle of the office is a long brown table, which looks new and modern. There are few stacks of books neatly packed. On the left side of the table (northern side) is a beautiful photo frame with a watch. There are two small photos of previous students in the frame. The principal uses a burgundy high back chair while on the other side of the table are two burgundy office chairs in leatherette. I sat on one of these chairs.

On the floor is a brown wall-to-wall clean carpet. The carpet looks very clean. There is white asbestos ceiling with a huge white fern hanging from it.

This is where all the interviews and observations with the principal took place.

All descriptions given above show that this school is situated in a rural environment where traditional practices may have an influence on the managerial task of the principal. However, it was essential that these descriptions be given so that the readers may understand the analysis in relation to the context. This is particularly significant because, as mentioned earlier in this paragraph, understanding the context within which the interaction is taking place is important as it can affect perspectives and behaviour, while perspectives can also affect behaviour.

5.1.1.5 *About the principal*

As has been expressed in chapter two and three, people learn to be who they are. Thus we all are socialised into being what we are. The way human beings behave, the way they communicate, is the result of socialisation though there may be neuroanatomical bases for the differences we have (Philips et al, 1987:189). As has also been pointed out in par 3.4.1, normal children learn the language that is made available to them by family members and other people around them.

Again, as noted in paragraph 2.4.1, the way we perceive people is the starting point of how we communicate. When one wishes to share an idea with another, the message is formulated based on references constructed from past events, experiences, expectations, current motivations, needs, personality, and educational background. Thus, to understand the communicative style of this principal, it is important to look at her background (socialisation) in general.

In addition, symbolic interactionism emphasises three principles; one of them being that meaning attribution is product of social interaction in the human society. Hence, the life history of the principal and a full description of how she portrays herself should be mapped out.

Some of the methodological implications of symbolic interactionism as pointed out earlier in this paragraph (5.1) are respect for the empirical social world and taking the role of the other. This means that the researcher and the readers need to know the position of the researched subject and to put themselves in that position and look at the world with them. Another methodological implication complementing the two mentioned above is appreciation of the culture of the informants. Thus, it is imperative to interpret the researcher's behaviour, not only through her/his own perspective, he/she must capture the meanings that permeate the culture as understood by the participants.

The portrayal of the principal will focus only on key aspects of her life. More detailed description would risk the privacy afforded by the pseudonyms. The views and stories of the principal and also of the teachers will best be understood, as already mentioned, in relation to their context. The principal has been given a pseudonym to protect her privacy.

Martha (pseudonym) is a middle-aged woman (in her early fifties), who in her context is considered elderly. She was born and raised in the Northern Province. She is a controlled speaker who formulates her viewpoints with care and takes time, even lengthy monologues, to explain a point. Perhaps that is the reason why she regards herself as a talkative person as indicated when I interviewed her. This is how she puts it in response to the question: What do you believe are your strength and weaknesses as a communicator?

I think I talk too much.

I like talking so much so that, perhaps a thing that should be said in short I usually end up taking too long to communicate, and I think that is where my greatest weakness is in communication. And, well, ... sometimes I find that when I have had a conversation with somebody I sometimes feel I'm dominating, even when maybe I would like them to talk more, sometimes they don't talk that much to me.

Surprisingly, she considers taking time to explain issues as a weakness, even though it may be one of her strengths, taking into account that clarity is important in communication.

Martha walks gracefully and never does things in a hurry. She is a very organised woman, whose office is always spotless, with everything carefully and neatly packed. She explains everything in details when she talks.

She is highly qualified with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree obtained in 1970, University Education Diploma (U.E.D) and a Bachelor of Arts honours (English) obtained in 1983. In addition she did a Diploma in Environmental Education in 1996. Teaching has been her profession ever since she completed her University Education Diploma. She worked in three other high schools for 18 years before she joined the present high school as a principal. She was promoted to be a senior teacher and later a head of department in those schools.

Martha was promoted as principal at Thathe High School in 1990 and is the first principal of the school. In 1992 she obtained 64,7% pass rate with the first matriculants and in 1996 84,7% pass rate. From 1996-1998 Thathe High School was the best in matric results in the Area/District. Furthermore, the school was a forerunner in the area in Merit Award Ceremony and production of a newsletter.

Martha is highly regarded by her seniors in the circuit office and regional office. This was apparent when she told me that she received a letter from the circuit office delegating her to act on behalf of the circuit manager from the 20th to the 30th of November. Although this created a problem

for this research because Martha is the key informant, nonetheless, it showed that her managerial skills are recognised and valued. The details of how this methodological problem was solved are elaborated in paragraph 4.7.5.

She was brought up in a family, which advocated for education. Her family background was established with questions like: Who in the family influenced your life most and how?

Well I am the 4th born in the family. My parents were not that learned, my mother has standard 6, my father went to a night school when he was already an adult. ... but they were very much for education. As a result even my elder brother and two sisters went to school before I did. And, well, we were a family where we had to go to school and nothing else. My parents were very strict about schooling. I remember we couldn't just stay home for any reason. The only time I got permission not to go to school was when my youngest brother was born. ... The village where we stayed was not that enlightened, but in the family itself we all went to school and we were sort of helping the community in as far as reading letters because most of them could not read. So we were a family where people would come with a letter to have it read by my mother to them cause their father had written to them from Jo'burg or something like that and when we grew up we had to help sometimes. My mother would say so and so has got a letter, can you read it for her? So and so wants a letter written so can you help and, my father also was very much, in spite of the fact that he wasn't educated he believed in sending his children to boarding schools. My sister went as far as the Cape to do a Diploma in Domestic Science. My brother went as far as the University of Natal where he had registered for a B.Com degree but he didn't complete it. And, my other sister also went to boarding school to do her junior secondary education and then later to do her teachers course. I also was sent to boarding school as from Form 1, to the Eastern Transvaal.

One other thing about my family is that my father used to read. He bred a culture of reading. He would buy newspaper, he was a shopkeeper, and on Sunday he

would buy Sunday Times and when he was through with Sunday Times, then we could also get it and read it. My elder brother and sisters also, when they were students, they would buy Drum, Bona and magazines like that. I remember seeing some magazine called Panorama for the first time in my life and, I saw some 'Negro' graduates, and I liked the attire and it influenced me to a great extent. Although I found the degree part of it interesting enough, I thought that what was more important was a mortarboard."

It is then clear that though her parents were not so educated, they played an important role in instilling the spirit of studying and reading in her. However, even if her parents did not have formal education, it may be correct to say that they were well educated, taking into account the time and the area in which they lived.

As I indicated at the beginning of this chapter, she seems an organised person, and my arrival at the school was well planned and arranged for as my visit had been communicated to all the school structures including the learner community. This is clearly captured by the first day I arrived at school. For this reason I will give an account on how I was received on my first day.

The principal at my first meeting struck me as a charming friendly lady who was prepared to help me. She was waiting for me, and she expressed she was eagerly waiting for me. She told me that the chairman of the School Governing Body was supposed to come and welcome me, but could not come because of serious and urgent family commitments. She also told me that it was examinations time and as a chief invigilator, she was going to leave me for a while to see that the examinations have started well and then she would take me around, introduce me to the staff and show me how and when everything take place.

Taking rounds with the principal was a relevant exercise as I got a feel of the school, teachers and ancillary staff. Some of the teachers occupy individual offices and some work in the staff room. The senior head of department occupies the office, which is just opposite the principal's office. The second head of department also occupies his office though he is sharing it with two other staff members.

She took me from office to office introducing me to each one of the teachers. The introduction also took place in the corridors for those we met in the corridors. We then went to the big staff room where the larger part of the staff is based. Few teachers were present, some were in the classrooms.

What struck me was the way she prepared for my arrival. As she was introducing me to all the teachers, she kept on saying, "this is Mrs. Thakhathi, she has arrived today as I told you in the meeting."

As we were moving from the staff room to her office, I told her that I would also need to interview the teachers and also spend most of the time with her and the teachers. I said that because she told me she had prepared an empty office for me to use during my whole stay. This led to a talk about teachers being free to talk to me and the principal said that the teachers were a bit apprehensive about my coming, thinking that I was going to play a role of an inspector where I will be looking for faults and weaknesses. She then told me that she held a meeting wherein she explained my role to them and assured them that I was just a researcher and they should relax and give me information. This for me indicated that she understands the power of research.

Interestingly, when we went back to the office, she also introduced me to the lady cleaner. She called her into the office and gave her a chair. Even more amazing, she also said to her "this is the visitor I told you about last week. She is going to be with us for some time." "This is a family indeed", I said to her.

5.1.2 Background of documents analysed

5.1.2.1 *Staff minutes book*

This is a book where all the minutes for the staff meetings are written. The female teachers take turns to write these minutes. The whole staff refers back to previous minutes for important and major decisions.

I looked at the minutes book which had the first minutes recorded on 9 January 1990. This is the meeting during which Martha was introduced as a principal at Thathe High School. I needed to look at a number of issues in the minutes book. Firstly, I needed to check who the main speakers in the meetings were. I needed to check if patterns emerge regarding how often the principal talks in the meeting and the content of the conversation. I also needed to find out how often formal staff meetings are held. It was important to analyse the minutes, starting with the very first meeting held by the principal as in this way, trends and pattern can be identified.

5.1.2.2 *Information book/instruction book*

The information book was called an 'Instruction book' in the previous government. Principals used it to give instructions to the teachers. With transformation initiatives in the Department of Education, its name was changed to 'Information Book'.

With these documents, I needed to find out if there is a relationship between the contents of the Information Book and the principal's conversations with teachers. I also needed to find out more about the channels of communication used.

Martha uses the information book for a number of issues. She uses it for instructions to the teachers, for announcements like birth of children and deaths, for notices, and for disseminating departmental information. However, the notices that are written in the information book will not be repeated on the notice board in the staff room. The information book brings information from Management to the staff. Thus, the principal writes the information and then passes the book to the heads of departments, and then the heads of department will circulate it amongst the staff members. Every staff member who reads the information appends his/her signature to show that he/she has read the information. At times the heads of departments also writes the notices or information to the staff, but this is to a very limited extent.

The principal also uses the information book for reminders and advice to teachers. It is also used for positive messages like congratulations, Christmas messages and others.

5.1.2.3 *School journal/log book*

According to the school principal, the school journal is a book where the principal records everything that takes place at school, for example, problems with teachers, and dates at which important events took place. The principal also has to record when she is absent from school, where she is and what for.

The journal is referred to by the departmental officials when visiting the schools, for example, circuit managers. During the previous government, it was checked by the inspectors.

5.1.2.4 *School policies*

All stakeholders, Learner Representative Council, School Governing Body, and teachers formulated the policies, and the principal facilitated the process. Two of the policies studied for this project were formulated in 1997, that is, the School Governing Body School Policy, and the Learner Representative Council (LRC) Vision, Mission and Code of Conduct document. The constitution was also formulated in 1997. The school policy was founded in 1989.

These policy documents are used by and made available to the teachers, learners, and School Governing Body members when they enter the school, so that they are aware of the regulations in the school.

The discussion now focuses on five themes: communication and socialisation, communication styles, barriers of communication, channels of communication and teacher's attitudes.

5.2 SOCIALISATION AND COMMUNICATION

As mentioned by Coates (1986:131) (cf 3.4.1.1 d) children learn knowledge of the folk linguistic beliefs of their societies. The language is then used as a tool to convey socio-cultural knowledge and as a medium of socialisation. It has also been noted in par 3.4.1.1 (g) that acquiring communicative competence may be affected greatly by the context. As a result, children from

different backgrounds may communicate differently even if they come from the same cultural backgrounds.

As a researcher, it is important to try and take the role of the other, in trying to make sense of the data. It is also imperative to respect the empirical social world. This is done by trying to understand the culture of the informants and understanding the phenomena through the researched's own lenses.

In this paragraph, I will endeavour to understand how the principal was socialised and how it impacts on her communication with the teachers. I will also look at the comments of the teachers to try to verify and strengthen the account by the principal.

5.2.1 A traditional extended family

In chapter 3, it has been highlighted that while differences in communicative styles of women's and men's communication can be attributed to many factors, nonetheless, socialisation into gender positions is clearly a major factor that leads to the differences in the way women and men talk. This clearly emerged in the interview held with the principal and the teachers.

It is a normal practice in African communities to have extended families. Some live communally, that is, all brothers live in one big family, with the parents controlling them. However those brothers not living in one family, would always have parents, cousins, and other family members (who are not part of the nucleus family). To confirm this, June and Parker (1991:37-38), describe a black extended family as multigenerational, composed of aged parents/grandparent(s), adults children, and grandchildren. Black extended family may also be comprised of other additional adults or extra nieces or nephews (Queen, et al, 1985:8). Thus, in the family the child is socialised by parents and other people like grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. The principal was also brought up in a family, which at times, had extra members:

For quite sometime we were staying with cousins, from my father's side.
(Martha).

In response to the question: "How did your mother communicate with your father?" Part of her answers showed that she stayed with her grandmother. This is how she puts it:

My father was very close to his mother-in-law. As my grandmother was around, then the three of them would sit and speak ...

As part of her socialisation the principal points out that her father was of much influence to her academic life. This is common in many African families where parents who received formal education, though not highly qualified, encourage their children to study. While on the one hand traditional communities believed that girls should not be educated, on the other hand what is interesting in this woman's account is that her parents clearly ignored what was culturally a norm by letting and encouraging the girls to get educated as much as they could. She added by encouraging the children to read widely as indicated by Martha (cf. Par. 5.1.1.6).

Martha's strong personality was also greatly influenced by her father:

...my communication, the way I was brought up, my father was very strict and now that I am matured, when I was a kid I thought it was really a very good thing but later on I realised that people respect him for this because they know if he is happy about something, he'll say it and that is how he treated us as a family. If my father said well done he really was happy, but if he wasn't satisfied he would say I'm not happy with this. So, I find that, even now that I am a manager you know, when I am satisfied, I do say it and when I am not satisfied rather than keeping quiet I do communicate and say it.

This was also confirmed by the way that she behaved when I was observing her. On two occasions she called the teachers to her office in order to congratulate them for the tasks they completed well. Likewise, she called an Acting Head of Department of Agriculture to express that she was not happy about the way the learners were making noise outside the classroom when doing their practicals. All was said in a polite but authoritative manner.

Nonetheless, even though the principal was greatly influenced by her father, she still points out that she consciously refused to be influenced by some of the behaviour she considered not good:

And as a child, also, I came from a family where, like I said, my parents were very strict. So if you made a mistake they usually wouldn't take the trouble to explain in detail what is it that you have done wrong. And now that I'm growing up I try not to do that. I want a person to know if I say I'm not happy about this then they must know exactly what it is that they've done wrong.

Again, what the principal did is in line with the post structuralist view that children who are socialised into gendered patterns of behaviour are not just passive ciphers. They also resist and refuse, as well as accommodate and collude (Thakhathi, 1996:63).

5.2.2 Beyond a traditional family's borders

Outside the boundaries of her home, Martha also relates well to other people. It seems, however, that she did not only play with children of her own sex, as most children did due to the expectation of the community. Thus, when responding to the question "Did you relate more to boys or to girls?" she said:

I think I related well with both groups, because I remember there is one good friend of mine, from as early as that, Simon. And there is one other good friend of mine, Mokgadi [girl's name] who was my friend right from the time I could remember as well as Simon. ... I remember when we first went to school other children would tease us and say I am Simon's wife, because we were so close.

It is not unusual that the other children laughed at her when she had a boy friend because according to their culture, mixed-gender playgroups were not encouraged. One of the teachers also talked about how girls and boys were expected to relate to each other:

But then, when the boys and girls are communicating, in most cases, boys and girls were not allowed to communicate, especially if you are not related somehow. So, the girls were told no don't play with boys and the boys were also told that you mustn't play with the girls. The only time that they get themselves together is when they attend schools or when there is a festival somewhere. But they had to make it a point that they are not seen by the old people because they won't be allowed to communicate. (Bele).

In this community, not only were boys and girls discouraged from mixing, but boys were also taught not to respect girls. This is in agreement with what is revealed by the literature in chapter 3. Sex differences are evident in politeness. It is alluded that though both parents encourage boys and girls to be polite, mothers and fathers supply different models. Indeed, Mateosi, one of the teachers shows how they were taught to communicate with girls:

In our culture, normally you find that when we speak as boys we find having more arrogant when we talk to girls [we become more arrogant when we talk to girls], because we were taught in the initiation school that if you are a man you have to be seen that you speak as a man does. So, in a way, when I am speaking with someone else who is a girl then I must show. So that is why I am saying, because of that the culture has a big influence on the way I talk. (Mateosi).

Teaching children how to speak as different sexes is not unique to this group of people only. Literature shows that it is universal that when children learn interactional routine, they learn an understanding of social role appropriate to age and sex (Scheffelin & Ochs, 1986:3). Hence swearing is mostly considered as masculine.

The point here is that, as mentioned in chapter 3, socialisation through culture, influences the way people speak though it may not be the only influential factor at stake. Nyawa also pointed out that indeed, culture is a factor when it comes to communicative styles of men and women:

And somehow as you grow up as young girls and boys it is taught to you even if it isn't formal, but informal, you somehow get the teaching from the society that this is how girls should talk, this is how boys should talk. (Nyawa).

It is very interesting, therefore, that though the society does not approve of boys and girl being friends, Martha had a good relationship with boys. This then confirms what I mentioned in par. 3.3.4 that children who are socialised are not just passive recipients. As put by post structuralists, during socialisation, each person is active in taking up the discourses through which he or she is shaped (Davies in Weiner, 1994:64).

Such independence of thought might have moulded the principal into the strong character she is now. Such strength is normally associated with masculinity. The teachers, however, associated this feature of her personality with "strictness" and this is how two teachers expressed it:

(Laughter) ... the principal is very strict. Very strict. And, ja, she is very strict. Maybe one needs to cite an example. If she delegates you to do something, she likes you to do it up to utmost best. And if you don't do that then she will question you. If you do something, she wants you to do your best. (Mateosi).

It is also reflected in Nyawa's words when she was talking to the principal. Here, Nyawa had a disagreement with the principal because the principal wanted her to do a specific task her way, while Nyawa felt that she could do it better in her own way. The principal insisted that the task be done the way she (the principal) wanted, and as they talked, Nyawa said these words:

"...and it also make us angry while you [the principal] are being strict". (Nyawa).

Mateosi also talks strongly about the principal's personality when responding to the question: "Do women and men communicate differently? " He opted to talk about his principal's communication instead of women in general:

... the principal that I am working with is so strong in a way that it is difficult to see the weak points. If all women could be the same as the principal that I am having, I would say even women can talk just the same. Because whatever she does, she tells us what it is and we respond. [the teachers do whatever she tells them to do] The very same applies to if a man can tell us what to do then we would do it. (Mateosi).

Derby acknowledges her strong personality by suggesting that she finds her a person who is good at persuading teachers to do tasks:

I will say no to a thing, then she will say "but Mrs. ... you can do that. I know you can say yes to this, you can manage to do this". Then I feel that she is persuading me. But if I don't feel like taking it I will, still say that, "no, I don't think I am right for it". And then she will say, "no but you are very good at this", and then I will end up maybe taking it. Usually if she realises that you are the best person at it, willing or not willing, she might end up winning (laughter). She does that sometimes. (Derby).

5.2.3 Nurturing nature

In the interviews with Martha, it was striking how she expressed her genuine interest in the pupils' welfare, rather than divorcing work from a concern with who actually benefits. Whatever action she takes must be "for the benefit of the child". As part of socialisation, women are raised by parents at home and teachers at school, to be nurturing and caring. The teachers' comments about her concern for the children are certainly gendered. But this should not suggest that men are not caring. The point is that women are socialised in a particular way. Different experiences for men may well equally encourage care and nurture for their pupils. Moreover, this attitude of care and concern needs to be seen as a real strength. It is thus important that gendered attitudes are seen to have positive as well as problematic effects.

Thus, Martha becomes very worried after discovering that some of the learners are using drugs:

So that discovery, you know, actually demoralised us a lot, I felt very sad: Maybe its because we weren't careful, maybe we gave up on them too early, maybe if we had gone after them earlier on in the year we could have discovered the problem. You know with some of them [learners] when we interviewed them, they even had to agree with the parents that they are going to take them for medical attention because some said well I try to stop but I can't ... We enlisted the help of the parents. We invited all the parents and then we tried to treat each case individually.

And then thereafter, after we had contact with their parents you know when kids know that this has been revealed about me they [learners] usually feel that they are outcasts, it's as if you don't accept them anymore and I felt that we did not have enough time to let them realise that in spite of this incident you're still our kids...

Some of the things that we did after the experience last year, I teach guidance, I decided to invite people to come and address the school on drugs, and went to the social workers and they promised us that they would come because it is not only that as the main problem we wanted the social worker to talk about drugs and teenage pregnancies because its also the problem with the girls. ... But I also talked to some doctors that I'm acquainted with, and I requested if we could perhaps refer parents who notice something about their children.

Clearly, Martha shows an unmistakable caring nature of a mother in the way she handles and tries to solve the problems that are learner-centred. She takes pains to find effective help for learners who are addicted to drugs. She also communicates effectively with the parents in trying to solve the problems. The risk is to regard this nurturing nature as 'natural' to women, and to essentialise women's style of work. At issue and to be remembered is that, as much as there are biological differences, women have been socialised into nurturing roles.

The principal's concern for the children is also well known to the teachers, though at times teachers feel that children's interests take precedence over theirs. This is how one of the teachers expressed it:

Like if you are saying you're having a problem, she likes stressing the fact that you need to do everything for the children, its always for the kids. And what about me, because sometimes there must be a balance. It must be 90 percent for the kids and 10 percent for the teachers. Sometimes the 50 percent or the 60 percent must be there [for the teachers]. So, its always for the learners. (Linda)

5.2.4 Cultural role transference

Added to the caring nature, the principal also looks at the school as a family, which may also be seen as part of her socialisation. This emerged in the manner in which she introduced me (the researcher) to the school community. When introducing me to the staff members, she stressed that they should treat me as one of the family members. The same point was made to the learners during morning assembly when she introduced me to them. To show that Martha really sees all the staff as family, she even introduced me to the lady who cleans the school. In one of our casual discussions, Martha related to me how she came to adopt the culture of taking all the staff as family:

After I was offered a job as a principal, I went to a certain old lady (now retired) and asked her to give me any tip available that will help me become a good principal. She told me that the way to succeed as a principal is to treat all the workers the way you treat your own family members.

Consequently, Martha does not differentiate communication skills in the family and in a business setting:

Maybe slightly I do differentiate but then generally, I think what works well you know, in communication, be it in whatever situation. Usually, you know, we find

communicating this way at home and it works well for you. It works even in other situations. For instance I think as a woman and as a mother for instance, when I communicate with younger people I do it more or less the same way even if its in a formal situation I do it more or less the same way as I would communicate with my own. (Martha).

Thakhathi (1996:132) also points out that when women enter management positions, they tend to transfer their domestic experiences to their work situations. The point here is that women do not neatly separate personal and public roles, experience, or knowledge. They draw on their experiences as mothers when working with children and organising their homes, and they allow personal feelings to shape their work with staff and pupils.

One of the questions I asked both the principal and the teachers, was: "What do you believe are the strengths and weaknesses of women principals as communicators?" In response to this question, Nyawa (teacher) explained how women principals regard the school as a home. She, however, also ties communicative style with management style.

Therefore, she states that another weakness of women principals is that they regard schools as their homes. Surprisingly, she sees being nurturing and transferring their family roles to their work environment as a weakness instead of a strength. Adler *et al* (1993:118-119) put it in this way: "The style of managing a home and caring for individual children may, for some women, be similar to the style of running a school..." Thus when women enter into management they obviously transfer these skills, including communication skills. In this way women get things done by influence rather than by direct control.

A weakness is that sometimes if you attend to something urgently without thinking, they are impulsive. And the most weakness is that they regard the school as their home, they want everything to be the same as their home ... (Nyawa).

As mentioned, Nyawa sees this attitude as a weakness. This is in agreement with the general perception about everything feminine being a weakness. As mentioned earlier, one must see gendered attitudes not only as having problematic effects, but also as having positive effects.

Even though the principal shows a strong personality, the women teachers still feel that they need to give her full support because she is one of them. When responding to the question "How different do female and male teachers respond when the principal talks to them?" Linda said:

The difference is there because, as women, we are always part of her no matter how much we can be angry at her but we are always part of her. But with the men it's, after all she is not my wife (Linda).

5.2.5 Respect within a traditional community

By and large, the principal and the teachers point to culture as one of the factors that influences and shape the different communicative styles of women and men. The principal's culture stresses respect for elders and seniors when communicating. According to a study conducted in the United States by June and Parker (1991:40), "A respect for elders is a crucial component of the black child's socialisation process in the extended network system". Thus, Martha commented about respect and communication.

I remember, for instance, there was a park just next to our home, where people would move alone. And, once, some grown up was passing there and they were drunk and then we commented that old woman so and so is drunk, my father, said to us you don't say that about an elder, they are not drunk but, they are 'full'. ... "You don't talk to adults, you don't say this or that about them". When my father and my mother maybe were talking, somehow automatically you felt you were not supposed to be there, you know, things like that. Perhaps even communication between my eldest two siblings, my elder brother and my elder sister, age wise there was a gap because our father went to World War II. ... So, our brother and sister were more grown up than we were. So, you wouldn't be listening when they

were talking. ... You know at some stage when I was, I think I was at University level, we didn't just ask parents questions unnecessarily.

Martha goes on to relate that the school also continued to teach the culture that was taught at home:

Well in primary school the communication was fine. The world was more an extension of what happened at home, you don't speak to an adult this way. So as a result you don't expect an adult to speak that way...

Bele shows how speaking with elders within the traditional community is linked to non-verbal actions in showing respect:

With the girls, when they go to the elderly people then they have to kneel down and talk. To kneel is to show respect to the older people that you're talking to.

Patriarchy also contributed to the subordination of women (Lemmer, 1989; Ngcongco, 1993). According to Lemmer (1989:5), Africans in this sub-continent also show extreme authoritarian attitudes because of patriarchal upbringings where one finds that in a traditional society, African women are subordinate to men with a wider kinship system, with a chief being a controlling male. Certainly, some elements of cultural ideology explicitly devalue women, and men accorded more prestige (Rosaldo & Lamphere, 1974:69).

In my experience, as a black woman in South Africa, this has entrenched sexist attitudes in men and women. A strong culture of male dominance pervades and persists within schools. Men have little or no confidence in women and their abilities to manage, and see them as less suited for leadership positions (Kotecha, 1992:3). Such patriarchal attitudes complicate the relationships of the women principals with both the men and women teachers who work with them. At the same time, this study raised new issues shaping professional communication, such as how to find a balance between respect for age, and respect grounded in the fact that the woman is the principal and their (male teachers) leader.

The investigation will now attempt to explain and understand in what ways the staff communication might be gendered, and in what ways it might not be.

In this study, however, the principal seems to have the respect of the teachers (both males and females), regardless of the fact that she is a woman.

The point here is, though males are formally and informally socialised into disrespecting women, in a case where a woman is a leader, she receives respect despite her gender. This then explains why both male and female teachers indicated that they respect her:

... If she's persuading me to do something I don't want, then I'll show her that I can't or give her excuses because I don't think that it's good to say that "I don't want to", even if in my mind I'm saying it ... it's out of respect ... You can see that this person is older than me, you cannot just use these harsh words, it's not nice (Linda).

Bele (male) does not feel offended if interrupted by the principal. When responding to the question "How do you feel when you are interrupted by the Principal?" he said this:

... I take it good because she is my senior.

Thus, even though the teachers agree that the men and women on their staff behave in a particular way towards the principal, this is overlaid by the fact that there is a stronger relationship of respect, grounded in the fact that she is their leader who is also older than them.

However, the two female teachers explained how women are expected to behave by the society, which influences the way they communicate:

According to our culture or my culture, our woman should be submissive to the male. Even though a female has something genuine to say, it will be disregarded because it's a female. Even when there's something serious, even if you are in

their [men] midst, they wouldn't like you to dominate them, the male, as far as speaking even if you are raising a point. (Nyawa).

In general, in our culture, women should always come down where the are men. Women should not be seen to know more if there are men, they [women] should look humble and all that. But with the changes in culture, you find that whenever women have to show what they are really made of, men feel threatened, and they end up saying you look down upon us, you no longer respect us. That is what happens in our community. And even in cases where women seem to be more educated, they seem to be threatened, the men. They seem to feel inferior. In most families where women are more educated than men, sometimes quarrels stem out of just feeling maybe she is looking down upon me. (Derby).

In agreement with what the teachers said, Rush and Allen (1989:53) remark that according to some cultures, it is taboo, illegal or a sin for women to speak in public. Thus women tend to talk significantly less than men in mixed sex groups. It is therefore obvious, that when women do not speak, the silences are often the direct consequences of social, sexual or economic oppression (Rush and Allen 1989:16).

The male teachers also speak about their society's expectation of how men and women should communicate:

... the women are expected to listen to their husbands, in other words what a man says is final. (Mateosi).

... Women are not allowed to question the men. (Bele)

While on one hand culture encourages male dominance, on the other hand, the communication between the principal and her teachers is also shaped by the same cultural patterns which in this rural community, involve attitudes like respect for older people, and respect for leaders.

What seemed to emerge is that, as much as children are socialised into having different communicative styles, they also refuse what they do not want. It is also clear however that culture has more to do with how the principal communicates with her staff, and how the staff communicates with the principal.

5.3 COMMUNICATION STYLE

5.3.1 What communication is

Communication as mentioned in par. 2.1 is an act of imparting an idea or an understanding to another person. It covers any type of behaviour that affects an exchange of meaning. I then wish to explore how the principal and the six teachers that I interviewed view communication, and how they communicate verbally.

The comments of the principal about the meaning of communication are drawn from the second interview. The teachers' comments will also be looked at to find out if the two parties view communication in the same way. This is important because communication takes place between the principal and the teachers. The principal and the teachers were responding to the question: "Tell me what you understand by communication". Here, the principal sees communication as an interaction between individuals.

... to me, communication maybe is interaction between people which can take different forms, verbal communication being the most obvious one but then a person communicates in many other ways other than just talking. (Martha).

A good communicator must show effective communicative skills like, the ability to articulate well, and to bring the message which is as clear and unambiguous as possible. At issue here is that a manager who wishes to accomplish her/his management tasks well, should be a good and effective communicator as a message transmitted incorrectly may lead to catastrophic results. Thus, in response to the question "What communication skills do you believe you often demonstrate?" Martha responds that clarity is essential in her own communication with the teachers:

Okay, I think clarity is very important you need to be clear as to what you are communicating because otherwise you are most likely to be misunderstood. And I think also, maybe because we are Africans, maybe even the appropriateness at what you are speaking. ...

Four of the teachers described communication in a similar way with the principal. They see communication as an exchange of ideas or views between people, two of them added that it is simply talking. This is how the four teachers defined communication:

Communication is when two people can be able to exchange ideas, in other words, when you are exchanging ideas, when you are communicating. (Bele)

I think communication has to do with maybe telling or voicing out the views. And, I also think that it has to do with talking you know, just simply having to talk with others, but then you don't communicate alone. (Linda)

I take communication as a way of talking to someone. It can be verbal or facial expression. Sometimes if I look at someone, the message that I get is that maybe the person doesn't like me. (Derby)

To me, communication is a means of contact and being open to one another, in whatever you are doing in that particular institution. (Nyawa)

While the four teachers see communication as taking place between individuals, one male teacher defines communication in a hierarchical way, relating to procedures in the school:

Communication is passing information from the lowest level to the higher level. Like at school, we need communication. Learners in the class communicate if ever they have something to say to the management. They take information to their prefect and the prefect take it to the class teacher and then to the management. But before the management, the class teacher takes it to, if I told it's of

disciplinary measure he takes it to the disciplinary committee. But if it does not concern discipline, it goes straight to the management. (Itani).

While it may be essential to emphasise and strictly define roles and hierarchies in communication, i.e. upward communication, subordinates may be too intimidated by status difference to attempt to communicate with managers. But, it does not mean that if the organisational structure is too loose, communication may not be equally hampered. According to Atchison and Hill (1978:411) people may jockey for power positions within a group by withholding information or by assuming an inappropriate leadership role. In this particular school, upward communication seems to be preferred.

5.3.2 The principal's communication style

As noted in par 3.4, as people grow, each acquires the competence as to when to speak, when not to and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where and in what manner to speak. It has also been indicated by Milroy (1980:85) that communicative competence also involves how to communicate and interpret meanings of respect, seriousness, humour, politeness or intimacy.

Literature suggests that women and men communicate differently. Women's communication styles are often equated with powerlessness while men's communication styles are often associated with professionalism. (Refer to par. 3.5). This study looked into the communication style of a woman principal who is considered to be one of the best principals in a particular region, to try and find out how she communicates.

5.3.2.1 *The principal's own perception*

The data used here has been drawn from the second and third interviews with the principal, field notes and observation schedules.

(i) Talking excessively

In the interviews, the principal responded to the question: “What do you believe are your strengths and weaknesses as a communicator?” by saying this:

... weaknesses, I think I talk too much. I like talking so much so that you know perhaps a thing that should be said in short I usually end up taking too long to communicate and I think that is where my greatest weakness is when it comes to communication. And, well, sometimes I don't know what it is that I'm doing wrong, but sometimes I find when I have had a conversation with somebody, I sometimes feel I'm dominating even when, maybe would like them to talk more, sometimes they don't talk that much to me.

As mentioned in paragraph 5.1 (e), Martha sees herself as a person who talks excessively. Amazingly, she considers taking time to explain as her greatest weakness though it has been alluded to earlier that clarity is one of the factors that enhance effective communication. Thus, what she sees as her weakness could also be seen as a strength as it is much better to take time explaining to ensure correctness and avoid ambiguity. However, that must not be done at the expense of time, which should also be managed effectively.

(ii) Communication with male peers

When I asked her the question “How is the communication between you and the other principal in her region?” she responded by expressing that she has a good relationship:

I think it's okay. The fact that I am a woman and I happen to be, for instance, among the principals, to be chosen as a chairperson of the principals, makes the ladies [women principals] to be free as well. (Martha).

Thus, she does not only have a good relationship with other principals, but is also a facilitator of good relationship between the other women principals and their male counterparts.

Martha, however, commented about the patriarchal attitudes of some of the men. This is not only unique to her. Grinwood and Popplestone (1993:95) point out that in many organisations there is a competitive culture in which male managers behave as though they are fighting a battle. Most women principals find it very uncomfortable, yet it is very difficult for them to change it.

In this study, these attitudes may be attributed to traditional social customs that have produced a legacy of prejudice and stereotypes that cause men to look down upon women. Again, this is not unique to this group of teachers only. Lemmer (1989:5) shows that all South Africans in general also show highly authoritarian attitudes of patriarchal upbringings similar to what you find in a traditional society. This is Martha's comment:

Most men, if they believe this should be done this way they feel nobody should say no it mustn't. It's as if they don't accept when somebody maybe is not for the idea that they have, you know, if you've got a different view about something ...
(Martha).

(iii) Managers of change and problem solvers

Furthermore, she talks about the aspect of dealing with change. This is a period of transformation in the whole of South Africa and education, not being an exception has undergone a lot of significant changes since 1995. Martha's experience with change compels her to conclude that men find it difficult to deal with transformation or change. This is confirmed by Grinwood and Popplestone (1993:139) when they said that the movement amongst men for change is still in its infancy. The reason is that many men realise that they have more to loose by accepting and effecting changes, and don't realise that there are many advantages too. This is what Martha had to say:

... and, one other thing that I notice when I communicate with my colleagues, the male, I find that with most of them they've got the problem, the worst problem when it come to the present situation where you are faced with change you know.
... it is as if it's difficult for them to change from their own way of doing things.

You hear them complaining that “these parents, they don’t support” but if you go on to try and determine if they have done enough from their side to win the support of parents, you usually find that they will say “when I call them for meetings they don’t come” and if they don’t turn up that’s the end of it all. ...,but, we, usually as women come out eh, better able to perhaps adjust to change. Like at this very school, we had the very same problem when we had to elect them. We had a parents' meetings only ten parents came and with this ‘phela’ (Zulu word meaning 'by the way') even if 50 parents come it means you don’t have parents because we’ve got many kids. And you know what I did, I just called the teachers and said let’s say we’ll dismiss the kids on a particular day, I remember it was on Tuesday., I said to the teachers: “Let’s write letter and give these kids and say your child has been suspended from school until you show up as a parent and we would like you to be present here tomorrow by 8:00”. You know, when I arrived in the morning just before seven most parents were already here [at school] and you won’t believe that that day this whole portion [the area in front of the staff room where functions are held] was full of parents,... we used that strategy and we ended up having them and we said we wanted you [parents] to attend the meeting and they did. And, from then onwards, whenever we call parents to a meeting, they come, they do come because we ended up saying to them we won’t repeat this, please, do you understand the situation when we are inviting you, you have to be there ... So, with male principals, we say, maybe they think that it’s a childish way of going about because, men when they grow up, they don’t want to play, but as women we sometimes play games in order to get what we want.

Surely, a good manager must be a good communicator, and somebody who has the interest of those he/she is leading at heart. Martha compares the men and women in as far as communication styles are concerned. This is complicated because the management style of a manager is seen as closely intertwined with communication styles. Here, the principal’s deep concern for the children forces her to make a plan, no matter how absurd it is, to try and involve the learners’ parents in their school activities. This is in agreement with the view by writers like Adler *et al* (1993, in Thakhathi, 1996:76) who suggest that women prefer a different management style to men.

preferring less hierarchical structures, and being people-orientated. At issue here is, women managers would attempt any strategy to try and send a message to the receiver.

(iv) Mother tongue versus English as medium of instruction

Interestingly, she also mentioned the need to occasionally use her mother tongue to avoid giving inaccurate messages to her staff. Indeed this is a problem with many African teachers. This may lead to some of them choosing not to talk or even misunderstanding what is communicated to them. This, of course, would hamper the management efficiency of most principals, whether males or females.

I think you might think because it's in a work situation, you have to stick with English all the time. Then once you get to know people, I know for instance, even amongst members of staff, there are those people that if I want to reach them properly, maybe I need to talk more of [our mother language] than English.

What also emerged during observations is that she preferred to use English in formal meetings, that is, in her office and in the staff room but when she talked with the teachers informally, she used vernacular. She did the same when she talked with them in the corridor, and when she went into the offices of the heads of department to talk to them about something. During morning assemblies, the announcements were also made in English. Few statements would also be said in vernacular. But, most of the communication that took place when she was not aware that I was listening was done in her mother tongue.

5.3.2.2 *Teachers' perceptions*

(i) Communication styles of women principals in general

As noted earlier, I will now examine teachers' perceptions of women principals' communication styles. I will then investigate the teachers' perceptions regarding their own principal's communication style.

In response to the same question I asked the principal: "What do you believe are the weaknesses and strength of women principals as communicators?" they all gave different views.

(a) Formality

Linda thinks the weakness of women principals is that they only communicate with the staff in the office while their strength lies in the fact that they are good problem solvers:

Let me start with the weaknesses because they [women principals] want to be office principals. Like, if they have something to do or to say they'll send someone to say it. They can only come and communicate with the staff members if there's something wrong, some arguments, or some problems to solve. But, they don't want to freely communicate with their teachers like teachers ...do with each other, it's not very common. But then, suppose there's a group of women sitting, then they can join it, then the communication is free, but if it looks as if its just staff members talking, they usually leave. So I can say that their weaknesses are that they want their things to be official [to be done in the office]. (Linda)

(b) Openness

The openness of women managers in communication is also confirmed by writers like Goupton and Lick (1996:139) who depict it as "open, trusting, compassion, understanding and supportive". They, however, warned that this style is "not about being nice, but about empowerment,

productivity, and outcomes". Therefore, Nyawa thinks that their strength is that they are more open and attend to problems quickly.

... they are more open than men because whenever there is something, they'll attend to it urgently. (Nyawa).

(c) Gossip

Women are generally known for gossiping. Derby views gossip as a bad thing as most people do. However, at issue, and to be remembered is that personal, vicious gossip is disadvantageous, and gossip about business related topics is highly advantageous. It is also important to note that literature (Bartol and Martin, 1994; Bedeian and Glueck, 1983; Boon and Kurtz, 1984; Daft, 1991; Flippo and Musinger, 1982; Gannon, 1977), suggest that gossip may serve as a means of emotional release and provide management with important hints concerning the attitudes and feelings of the staff. It may also fill in information gaps and clarify management decisions. (Refer to par 2.6.2.1.). Gossip can either hamper or enhance communication depending on how it is used. One of the teachers said this about gossip:

As women, we have a weak point of being part of gossips and that might mean we haven't talked to the people themselves. We sometimes get information via wrong sources. (Derby).

(d) Temperamental

Women are believed to be temperamental and this is what Bele said about this tendency:

Well, sometimes the weaknesses are that women seem to lose temper in most cases, especially when you talk to them and you find out that you don't understand what they are talking about. Their attitude makes them lose their temper. (Bele).

This communication behaviour could be explained by the fact that some women adopt a 'token status'. Organisational environments for a woman manager changes depending upon the numbers of women and men she works with directly (Shakeshaft, 1989:175). She (Shakeshaft, 1989:175) continues to show that if a woman principal is the only female, or one of a few, she assumes token status. Tokens get extra and negative attention and this may produce feelings of isolation, anxiety and frustration, which may also force women to behave in ways that might not be good for them or the institution (Cooper & Davidson, 1982:27).

The other reason could be the demands of home and job responsibilities and also relationships at work, which include the nature of relationships and social support from one's superiors, colleagues and subordinates which tend to cause stress (Cooper & Davidson, 1982:30; Cooper & Davidson & Cooper, 1983:112-115).

(e) Inferiority complex

Two male teachers added an aspect of socialisation in their responses, where women are said to feel inferior:

... as far as the weaknesses [of women principals as communicators] are concerned, I can say that in most cases it depends on the situation, it is situational. It depends on the environment. Like women from the rural places, you find that sometimes, when they talk, because of the way they were brought up, you find that they are not very strong enough when they talk to men. But there are situations where you find that regardless of the environment some women can talk very well. Even in rural areas you find women who are very strong (Mateosi).

Most of them [women principals] are, I mean, they strive hard to achieve their goals. And again they try by all means to follow rules and regulations stipulated by the government. Their weak point is that, at times when they come across the problem with a male teacher they tend to look down upon themselves just because they are women. And they go to an extent of saying you are doing this just

because I was a woman. I think that's the weak points, otherwise we can say they are good principal. (Itani).

(f) Problem solvers

The perception of the teachers about Martha resonates what Martha said about herself. Though they see women principals as having weaknesses as managers, they think that they are better at solving problems than their male counterparts.

Their strength is that they can handle themselves well you know, they can present their matters well, they can solve their problems more than the male principals can, and they are good at communicating in that manner 'cos they don't show favouritism. (Linda).

Ozga (1993:11), who mentioned that women diffuse conflict more easily, confirms this ability. In addition, Walker (in Ozga 1993:21) in her research found that women managers in education act with a more integrated approach of feelings and objectivity and they are far more egalitarian in their approach of solving problems. One of the women interviewed in the very same study by Walker actually said that: "I also try to have all kinds of different forms of communication. I am quite flexible in the way that communication takes place, and in that way I am trying to create my own management style. Therefore, women are capable of doing things or solving problems in a way where the majority of the staff can go away feeling comfortable.

(ii) The teachers' perceptions about their own principal's communication style

The teachers did not only talk about the management of all women principals, they have also commented about the communicative style of their own principal.

(a) Consultative

As noted briefly in paragraph 5.2, it is generally said that women display more democratic ways of managing. So in response to the question: “How is communication between you and the principal?” Mateosi’s comments seem to show that, their principal is more democratic, consultative and considerate:

It [communication] is a healthy one in the sense that if there are some of the things that she needs to talk to us here at school, as an HOD, she will come and tell me that we have one two three. Most of the things that we have at school, she does it very well, I mean communicating with us very well. ... Normally, she is consultative, she consults. She consults when she wants to say something. She is also democratic in the sense that people are told to give their own view regarding whatever she is talking. ... If all the women could be the same as the principal that I am having, I would say even women can talk just the same. Because whatever she does, she tells us what it is and we respond. The very same applies if a man can tell us what to do then we would do it. (Mateosi).

It would seem, then, that Mateosi is quite happy about the consultative communicative style of his principal. What is interesting though, is that he is the only one who mentioned this. It may well be correct to analyse this using “relative social distance” (cf paragraph 3.5.1). It has been pointed out in Holmes (1995:12) that relative social distance is one of the factors that determine the nature of communication in almost all societies. This means that the roles people take in relation to one another in a particular situation, as well as how well they know each other, also determine social distance. Thus, the principal might have consulted him more for ideas because he is a Head of Department, and because they are supposed to work closely. The point is, frequency of interaction and the roles people take in relation to one another in a particular situation, as well as how well they know each other, also determine social distance.

As further confirmation, the staff minutes book shows that the principal seems to communicate well with the staff. The content of what she speaks about in the meetings varies greatly. She gives

instructions to teachers; gives notices about deaths, invigilation schedules, where she would be on a particular date, different issues about learners, administrative issues, welcoming new staff to the school and old staff from school vacations, promotions of staff members, births of children, reminders to teachers, and to a greater extent reports on principals' meetings.

(b) Relies on school policies

Martha's good communication is also apparent in the way she has managed to facilitate the formulation of different policies in her school. The function of policy, *inter alia*, is to communicate to staff members of an organisation what should be done, how it should be done and when it should be done. The school therefore, needs policies for its smooth running. Thus, I looked at her file for school policies to find out if this aspect was taken seriously in her management. She has indeed facilitated the formulation of subject policies with different subject heads as well as all stakeholders in the school who had been encouraged to formulate their policies. For example, the School Governing Body (SGB) had introduced School Policy 1997; Learner Representative Council (LRC) had also initiated Vision, and Mission document, and Code of Conduct 1997 and the school policy was formulated in 1989.

The School Policy and the School Governing Body School Policy state that the medium of instruction at the school shall be English. Though this has been stated in the policy, it is interesting to see that the principal often shifts to the mother tongue whenever she thinks that the audience would better understand the message in their mother language. What is also fascinating is that the teachers and the learners are made aware of the existence of such a policy when entering the school. Thus, the policies are well communicated to the entire school community, in fact, on registration all learners must read the policies and sign the declaration to abide by the rules and regulations of the school.

(c) Does not dominate discussions

Added to that, the principal is said to be somebody who does not want to dominate the talks, especially in formal meetings, if it is uncalled for. Instead she gives a chance to whoever is supposed to give a report as she explains:

Let me give an example, it depends on what the meeting is all about. Suppose it's a report where somebody has attended a lecture or a seminar, then that person is the one that is going to give the report. And then suppose we are talking about environmental matters, then like I'll be the one who is responsible for that, it's not like there's someone who has to do everything, we do it together. ... Sometimes she's not there when we have the meetings. ... But, if she has got nothing to do with that meeting then she doesn't say a thing, she'll be just like other teachers. Like when we go to a meeting she's part of the staff she doesn't become like I'm the principal and staff. Even where she sits, she can sit in the front if she's going to be the programme director but then if she's coming for the meeting its about the report and she's part, she will sit with us. (Linda).

Conversational dominance is often practised by men in cross-sex conversations (Coates, 1987:101). Also, a study by Eldesky (1981:390) shows that women participate more actively when the "floor" is not of the one-turn-at-a-time model described by conversational analysts, but is more informal and collaborative, with people often speaking at the same time. It seems like Martha chooses to take a non-dominating position in formal meetings because she wants to give a chance to her staff to participate without feeling dominated by her.

In the staff minutes book, it appears like a pattern that the principal has slots to speak in each meeting. However, out of sixty-five meetings, there are twenty-two meetings in which there is no indication that the principal spoke. This is not surprising as the principal herself and some of the teachers indicated during our interview sessions that she only talks in the meeting if there is an issue that she needs to address.

The principal did talk in the meeting held on 25 November 1999 while I was there. There was no specific item in which she was expected to make a presentation on the agenda. Significantly, though she made a contribution in the meeting that day, it was not indicated or recorded in the minutes. It could be because the minutes reflected only the main decisions taken in the meetings. This may also explain why minutes of twenty-two meetings were silent about her participation.

(d) Good communication with teachers

The teachers think their communication with Martha is good and they mentioned during the interviews some aspects, which show how good their communication is.

Linda and Bele describe the communication between them and the principal as 'good':

The communication is good. So, in most cases when I go into the principal's office, I go there being relaxed, ... So in other words I communicate with the principal as if I'm communicating with my colleague. (Bele).

He also thinks that women are good communicators because they are friendly, talk and listen to staff:

And, one other thing about ladies and communication is that they are friendly in most cases. And that's their strength, because in most cases when you go to their offices, they talk to you and listen to you. (Bele).

As an indication of the principal's good communication with her teachers, she also apologises whenever there is a misunderstanding. The literature (Lemmer, 1996; Mills, 1995) (cf par 3.5.1.3) says that women apologise more often than men, and at times even apologise for circumstances for which they are not responsible. Be that as it may, the teacher thinks that in this case the principal had offended her, and she apologised for a good course. After Nyawa and the principal exchanged some words, the principal apologised.

I am okay because I managed to tell her my feelings openly to such an extent that she apologised to me. (Nyawa).

Mateosi also comments about her encouraging spirit when she communicates:

One other thing is that in most cases, the principal is very encouraging. (Mateosi).

Linda also tells that the principal apologises:

... And when we are angry we get angry and we solve our problems. Like when she's angry with me she'll call me. ... if there's any apologies she apologises. If I've done something very good, she'll tell me that you've done very good. (Linda).

The teachers also raised the issue of openness in communication. To them, openness is the ability to tell somebody that you are happy or angry:

Firstly, if there's anything formal, we do it in a very formal way and its very good. If I have a problem, I don't know maybe its because I have this thing in me that when it comes to straight talk I am very much assertive, and being assertive doesn't mean I'm aggressive, I'm not aggressive I'm just assertive. So, I don't have a problem, if I have a problem I go straight to her and tell her that this and this and this. If her hairstyle is okay I don't have a problem I tell her just a she does to me. (Linda).

Derby expressed openness as teachers are being able to tell the principal about their feelings. Thus, the principal becomes encouraged to know that she is not the only one expected to be open while the staff is not. Still, this is done with respect since respect for elders or seniors is highly valued in their culture:

Generally, our principal is full of respect. What I have observed is that in many instances where women are in leadership, you find the ladies, knowing that men

can be very harsh, you find that when it comes to things that we do not agree, maybe it's the females or males who do not agree with her [principal], people say it openly, they don't hide their feelings. They will say we don't feel good about this, but in a way that still has that dignity of respect and it doesn't really kill a relationship. But no one reserves his or her feelings that I don't agree with this [no one hides his/her feelings if they do not agree with the principal]. We sometimes have longer meetings because we don't agree on something, but we end up agreeing. (Derby).

Nevertheless, Linda thinks that the principals' openness is one sided in that the principal seems to be the one who is more open about the wrong things done by the teachers:

It's more of a woman thing because, if something is wrong, she always confronts us and if something is good, she always say it out. Although there are times when you think she's always saying the wrong things she's forgetting about the good. But then she's saying the wrong things so that we can correct them. (Linda)

Still Linda thinks that her communication with the principal is good:

... our communication is okay. (Linda).

Earlier in this paragraph I noted that the principal herself expressed that she has a good relationship with the teachers, especially with the women. What Derby talks about seems to be good ground for any principal to feel that their communication is good. In this particular school, it looks like it is not only the principal who apologises if she feels she was wrong, but the teachers too:

There is one thing that I believe in. If I wrong a person and then the person comes to me, the best thing to cool the person is to say I am sorry. And, perhaps, sometimes when my supervisor say you did not do this the right way, and when you realise, its serious, maybe you weren't aware I did it the wrong way, and I

realise she feels bad about it, I quickly say I am sorry madam, I didn't intend to hurt you. (Derby).

(e) Harshness

In addition to the good communication skills mentioned, the teachers also draw attention to some of the things they don't like in the way she communicates. The comments were given in response to the question "What angers you when the principal talks to you?" What these teachers do not like in her communication vary greatly. Two teachers seem to find her harsh at times:

The words, the how, and the words which are used can [hurt one]. Sometimes she uses very strong words, which may disturb you somehow while you're still talking to her (Linda)

I become angry because you find that sometimes if she is not happy, in most cases she becomes harsh, especially because she is not a person who can come to you directly sometimes... (Bele).

Derby does not like it if her explanation is not accepted:

... there's one thing I don't like, if I have to be asked why, why, why, even when I said I don't know why, I am sorry it happened like this. If the person insist on saying but why did you do it, I end up not knowing what to say, I simply keep quite and that's where she will also realise I no longer have anything to say. (Derby).

Adding to what the teachers said, one of the support staff also talked about the harshness of the principal during our informal discussion. This sometimes happens to managers when they are under pressure. They sometimes forget to address the real issue and attack the persons' personal life or background as mentioned earlier in this chapter [cf. Par 5.3.2.2.1 (d)].

(f) Difficulty in accepting suggestions

Nyawa also firmly believes that Martha does not accept their suggestion and that angers her:

It's when she tells me to, in fact she forces me to do things her own way while I want to do it my own way with reasons, and I don't end up doing it my own way. The only problem I have is, ever since I've been to this school... she does not accept what we do as women... (Nyawa).

The question here is: "Is it really because she does not want to accept or is it because there are some barriers in their communication? It is important to note that any good communication can be impeded if there are serious barriers.

Likewise, Mateosi becomes angry if the principal tells him to do something he believes is wrong, for example, preventing him from doing what all union members agreed on doing, like embarking on a strike or attending union meetings:

When I am told to do something that I know this is wrong, if I am cork sure, even though I may not say I am hundred percent sure, when I look at it then I find there was nothing wrong, then I become angry (Mateosi).

The point here is that in any organisation, no matter how good the communication is, there will be a time when co-workers will differ. In that case miscommunication may occur.

It is also important, however, to note that communication can sometimes be hampered by personality flaws and emotional problems. According to Badenhorst (1987:79) managers who are rude, bad tempered and impatient may have problems with communication. Likewise, feelings of aggression, anger, frustration, depression and fatigue may interfere with communication.

The teacher's comments illuminate much about the communication that takes place between the principal and the school personnel, though the teachers were not my main focus.

5.3.3 Communicating verbally

Having looked at the communicative style in general, I now focus on how Martha communicates verbally. As pointed out in paragraph 3.5.1, when communicating verbally, women, more often than men, tend to use speech style that gives the impression of politeness. They are said to often use hedges and boosters as devices of politeness. Hedging and boosting are devices used by women to show that they are taking other people's feelings into account. Hedging and boosting devices include tag questions, questions, apologies, repetition, disclaimers, qualifiers and fillers. Women and men, as pointed out in paragraph 3.4.1, are said to be socialised differently in communication regarding imperatives, lexical terms, verbosity, politeness, interruptions, simultaneous speech, directives, verbal aggressiveness and minimal responses.

The next stage of this investigation is to find out if this principal's communicative style shows politeness. Since politeness is expressed differently by different cultural and linguistic groups, one has to analyse politeness in relation to solidarity, social distance, power, and formality dimension. I, therefore, am going to discuss aspects of politeness that have been shown or which seem to be present in Martha's verbal communication.

5.3.3.1 *Tag questions*

As discussed in chapter 3, women use tags far more than men do. Coates (1987:104) and Holmes (1995:80-82) mentioned four different kinds of tag questions: epistemic modal tags which express the speaker's uncertainty, the challenging tags which are confrontational as they pressure a reluctant addressee to reply or aggressively boost the force of a negative speech act, facilitative tags which invite the addressee to contribute to the discourse and softening tags which alternate the force of negatively affective utterances such as directives or criticism.

In this study, however, Martha, never uttered any kind of tag in her conversation.

It is, nonetheless, important to mention that literature, (Holmes, 1995:82) (cf par 3.5.1.1) suggests that women use more facilitative tags with affective meaning.

5.3.3.2 *Questions*

It was interesting to observe that Martha's statements were mostly presented to staff as questions. For example, in the formal meeting they held on the 24th October 1999, the principal showed a tendency of asking questions to bring something to the teachers' attention. When they answered, they then realised what she wanted them to note.

In a meeting where the principal called one senior male teacher to the office, the principal also showed a tendency to ask questions. This was a meeting between her and the teacher who had facilitated a workshop, which took place the previous day in the school. The workshop was on how to draw an action plan and it was for the principal and teachers of that school only.

Interestingly, she also used a question when suggesting something to the teacher: "Are you of the opinion that the group should do it again?" meaning that she thinks it will be a good idea if the teachers repeat the exercise.

Again, she asks questions when speaking to one of the male teachers who is said to be good with computers. When telling him to design a school emblem she puts it like this: "Would you like to design a school emblem?" actually saying "I want you to design a school emblem."

This is not surprising, however, because the literature (Coates, 1996:106; Coates, 1987:266; Lemmer, 1996:57; Mills, 1995:22) suggests that women have a tendency of converting statements into questions. (cf par 3.5.1.2). It is important to note that women use questions at interactional level than at informational level, because they are facilitators. As a result, questions are used as they are much more less threatening than making an assertion.

Martha's staff seemed to understand her usage of questions. They could differentiate between interactional questions or informational questions. During my period of participant observation, I did not notice any miscommunication that was caused because of her usage of questions.

5.3.3.3 *Disclaimers and fillers*

In my discussions with Martha and during the observations, what seemed to emerge was that she often uses disclaimers in her speech. The following extracts from the interviews show how often she uses disclaimers.

No I don't think eh, I got it in a formal manner. I don't remember it being that formalized. (Martha).

Maybe at secondary school, because you are more grown up, then maybe I would say no, I don't think there's any, even in the primary school by the way it was just one male teacher not all of them ya just one single teacher. And at secondary school there were many, I wouldn't say they were vulgar you know, anyone that I remember to be that vulgar I think they were okay, they were just fine. (Martha).

Okay, mm, weaknesses, I think I talk too much I like talking so much so that you know perhaps a thing that should be said in short I usually end up taking too long to communicate. And I think, also maybe because we are Africans, maybe even appropriateness of what you are speaking. Maybe I'm also, I think maybe you might think it in a work situation you have to stick with English all the time. (Martha).

Apart from using disclaimers when she was talking to me in the interviews, she also used disclaimers when speaking to her staff:

- (a) When Martha was talking to one of the teachers about the workshop held at school, she asked the teacher about using the very same method that was used in the report. This is how she puts it: "I don't know if we should do it the very same way we did it yesterday."
- (b) When talking to the computer teacher she said: "I don't know if you can do it like this".

In addition, Martha uses a lot of fillers when she communicates. It is almost impossible for her to finish a sentence without using fillers. The fillers she uses are 'you know', 'eh', 'ehm', 'well', 'okay', 'you see', 'jah', 'so', and to a lesser extent 'like'. The following extracts from the interview transcripts are evidence of how she uses fillers.

And so when we have a formal meeting, I'll talk and make sure that I have communicated well, Say it's a staff meeting; say it's parents' meeting you see. ... I wish I did that more you know, I won't say I eh do that but when, say I'm preparing, I think about it you know, you but eh otherwise when you talk especially if you're talkative like myself you end up doing it the way you do it without doing it necessarily being too cautious about it.

Well a good a day is eh, a day when something big is happening in the school if I may put it that way like eh, I think eh, last year when we had our merit award ceremony, you know, it, eh, we have the merit award ceremony annually. Why last year was a very special, maybe its because the way it was arranged, ya it was well arranged and what I liked most what made me to be very happy is that the person who was guest speaker on this day is a product of our school. She matriculated here, she is now working for Telkom. (Martha).

At issue here is that the literature suggests that women use more of disclaimers, fillers and qualifiers. To be borne in mind, however, is that this is the way they were socialised, which could be different if there were other factors involved?

Still, Martha's usage of fillers and disclaimers did not seem to cause any miscommunication. Instead, where she used disclaimers, the teachers understood that she was being polite. As a result, they always agreed with her in whatever she told them.

5.3.3.4 *Commands and directives*

In her comments, when we were discussing in interviews, informally and in her meeting with the teachers, Martha showed a certain degree of authority by using directives and few commands.

It is useful to consider what other writers say about commands and directives. As pointed out in paragraph 3.5.1.5, women are said to be less direct when speaking or giving instructions. This does not mean that they don't use directives and commands or that they are weak, the difference lie in that women use directives which minimises status difference and which suggest rather than demand action. On the other hand, men are said to often use directives, which explicitly establish status differences between participants. Martha used the less direct commands as well like when she was talking to Cyril (Pseudonym). This is how she put it:

“Perhaps we could have that as well”.

This has been softened. She could have said, “Let's have that”.

Again when she asked Cyril on his way out of the office she said:

“May I ask you to call Itani please?”

She could have said: “Call Itani for me.”

When talking to Cyril about the workshops, she expressed it in this way:

“Maybe you should organise this kinds of workshop periodically”.

But Martha also used a lot of direct commands like in the case where she had to give the two Heads of Departments instructions on what to do in her absence:

“You must circulate the information book to all the teachers”.

“Check everything here at school and contact me in case of problems”

“Make sure that the examination is running smoothly”

“Attend to anything that crops up”.

In the formal meeting, after realising that the teachers and herself did not quite understand what Cyril was talking about, she echoed this words:

“Cyril repeat what you said”

No doubt, the above statements were not softened at all. They were very direct. It is thus, proper to say that the principal is capable of using both explicit, commands and suggestive commands. It is however crucial to express that, given her social background, where her father encouraged her to read and to succeed in education, she can be capable of using both kinds of directives.

The commands and directives were not used excessively. That may be the reason why Martha’s communication with the teachers is not impeded by her usage of commands and directives, though some teachers expressed that she is harsh.

5.3.3.5 *Interruptions*

The analysis of interruptions by and to Martha was done by looking at the responses of Martha and teachers in the interviews and the observation schedules .

According to research, men tend to interrupt women often. Coates, (1987:99) points out that men violate the turn-taking rules of conversation, where the interrupter prevents the speaker from completing their turn, at the same time gaining a turn for themselves. There are different types of interruptions including simple interruptions, overlaps, butting in, silent interruptions, and talkovers (Gaig & Pitts, 1990, in Breshanan and Cai, 1996:173). In this particular study, it seems like the teachers, both males and females do not often interrupt Martha when they are conversing.

In response to the question: "How do you feel when you are interrupted by the teachers when speaking?" This is what she said:

Interrupted by the person I'm talking to, well, if I'm interrupted, I think it's a bit uncomfortable but then it depends on what type of an interruption you know. Maybe somebody is interrupting me because they want to make sure they get meaning of what you're saying. Maybe they interrupt you because they'd rather you did not go on, so it depends but I would say that when I'm interrupted, well it will surprise me a bit but then I will always be accommodating, why the person is interrupting. (Martha).

Martha prefers to be accommodating when she is interrupted. However, what she does not comment about is where the interrupters would be coming from, that is, if its from men or women.

When asked the question "How do teachers react when you interrupt them?" She equally expresses that it is not a problem to her:

Well, I don't find it to be much of a problem because usually the interruption is for a good cause. (Martha).

The point here is, interruptions may not only be a sign of dominance or aggression, but they may also be agreement or supportive interruptions. Without any empirical data, however, I can only guess that whichever interruptions directed to Martha may not have been threatening, otherwise she would have been uncomfortable.

The same questions directed to the principal were also directed to the teachers. In response to the first question "How do you feel when you are interrupted by the principal when speaking?" they said:

Like I said, the way I can talk to my colleague is different to the way I talk to the principal. Like, I don't think before she will even finish talking I will interrupt her. ... I have got to listen to what she's saying, so I give my point of view of the problem before I answer 'cause I need things to be very clear between the two of us. And, I think she's also a good listener. (Linda).

Nyawa indicated that the principal does not interrupt her, and our conversation was like this:

Nyawa: Normally I know there are people who like interrupting others, ... I am very patient.

Tshilidzi: Does your principal normally do that?

Nyawa: No she doesn't.

Mateosi also expresses that the principal does not usually interrupt him:

It depends. Normally she would give you a chance to speak until you finish and then she will say whatever she wants to say. You are given an opportunity to express yourself. (Mateosi).

It is interesting though, that Linda links lack of interruptions with good listening skills, which is yet another aspect which enhances good communication. Martha's ability to listen obviously contributes to the good communicative style mentioned by the teachers. It is crucial to point out that marginal listening and evaluative listening as mentioned in paragraph 2.4.2.3, is often indicated when the listener continually interrupts the sender. This tendency impedes good communication.

Even so, Derby has never paid attention to how Martha reacts to interruption because she was never conscious about it:

I don't think there is any problem, if people talk it [interruption] could be there.
I have never paid attention to that. (Derby).

Again, the teachers were asked the question "How do you feel when the principal interrupts you?"
Still, the teachers indicate that they do not interrupt her:

I've never interrupted her ... When we talk something, if I feel there is something
I want to say I simply mark and when she is finished talking I then say what I
wanted to say. So it is not easy for me to interrupt her. (Nyawa).

By and large, both the principal and the teachers try by all means to enhance their communication,
which could be attributed to traditional customs where respect for elders and seniors is valued.

While the comments of the teachers largely show that no interruptions take place, my observation
agreed more with what the principal said. The principal's comments, showed that whatever
interruption she encounters is for a good course. In my observation, when Martha and Linda had
an informal conversation in my presence, Linda kept on interrupting the principal, but in a
supportive manner. This was the only event at which the principal and the teacher had
simultaneous talk; perhaps it was because this was one of their social talks, where they had to be
themselves.

5.3.3.6 *Verbosity*

Here, Martha comments about how she speaks as mentioned earlier in this chapter. She regards
herself as somebody who talks too much:

I like talking too much so that you know, perhaps, a thing that should be said in
short, I usually end up taking too long to communicate, and I think that is where
my great weakness is when it comes to communication. And well, sometimes I
don't know what it is that I am doing wrong, but sometimes I find when I have
had a conversation with somebody, I sometimes feel I am dominating even when

I, maybe, would like them to talk more, sometimes they don't talk that much to me. (Martha).

The point here is, there is a belief that women talk more than men do. This, however, is consistently contradicted by research (Coates, 1987:103). She continues to say that the myth of women being talkative has persisted because the society has different expectations for male and female speakers. While men have the right to talk, and women are expected to be silent, talking at any length maybe perceived like talkativeness rather than verbosity in women.

Not amazing, then, Martha thinks she talks too much as pointed out in the beginning of this chapter. This may be because she is part of the same patriarchal upbringing, which socialised her into thinking that women should talk less, especially in the presence of men. To show that indeed her community does not expect women to talk much, the teacher felt it necessary to mention that fact in the interviews:

According to our culture or my culture, our women should be submissive to the male. Even though a female has something genuine to say it will be disregarded because it's a female. Even when there's something serious, even if you [female] are in their midst, they wouldn't like you to dominate them, the male, as far as speaking [is concerned], even if you are raising a point. (Nyawa).

In general in our culture, women should always come down where the men are. Women should not be seen to know much if there are men, they should look humble and all that. (Derby).

Thus, women may not talk much in cross-sex conversations and may talk more in same-sex conversations, though their speaking up tend to be noticed by the group to a much greater degree than does men's (Rush & Allen, 1989:53).

When I asked Linda to talk about men and women's communication she said that women are said to speak more than men do:

It is generally said that women talk a lot, and men can say an idea in two words, and women will take the whole paragraph [to explain]. ... Like when it comes to talking, they talk a lot... Men say something in one paragraph and women in maybe twenty [paragraphs]. (Linda).

In addition, Linda also thinks that Martha can at times speak for a long time:

What she can do is she can talk for a long time Instead of shouting, she can express it [anger] in many words. (Linda).

The fact that she is a woman of many words was also confirmed in the interviews I had with her. She took time explaining and describing whatever I needed.

What seemed to emerge in my observation is that in all the meetings that Martha held with the teachers in her office, she would be the one speaking and the teachers agreeing. She would ask questions and the teachers would only give answers:

- (a) In the meeting held with the male teacher who was given instructions to sign some forms, Martha said everything and the teacher just agreed and gave short answers to her questions.
- (b) In the meeting also held in her office with two male teachers where they were talking about the Merit Award Ceremony which was to take place later that morning, Martha still did most of the talking, and initiated all the discussion. She asked questions and they gave the answers.
- (c) Likewise, Martha did most of the talking when she had a meeting with two heads of departments. Here she was telling them what to do in her absence.
- (d) Also, when Martha was talking to Cyril who was conducting the workshop for the teachers, she did most of the talking. In this meeting she was giving suggestions on how

to improve the workshop when they have it again. She also wanted to congratulate him for the success of the workshop.

One morning I arrived fifteen minutes late for the morning assembly. It took much longer than usual. As I looked through the window of my office, I saw the principal speaking for a long time, using her hands vigorously. After the assembly she came to my office to tell me that she was "calling the learners to order" as they were misbehaving. This is indeed consistent with what Linda said above "Instead of shouting, she can express it in many words".

The same thing happened in our informal discussions. Whenever we conversed informally, she would explain a number of things to me lengthily. Many of my questions were even partly answered in our informal discussions. She is indeed a woman of many words.

Martha's long explanations enhance her communication because, what she was in fact doing is clarify the listener as much as possible.

Though Martha uses questions, fillers and disclaimers, her communication remains effective and no miscommunication was mentioned by the teachers. The fact that no teacher mentioned any miscommunication does not however mean that it is not present, it does however show that it occurs at a very minimal level such that it does not seriously retard communication. Her authoritative behaviour resulting from the usage of commands and directives does not hamper her communication with the staff. The teachers still find her a good manager.

5.3.4 Communicating non-verbally

Non-verbal communication is very important in communication. It clarifies, supplements, and amplifies verbal messages. Non verbal communication is communication, which takes place through elements and behaviours that are not coded into words. It is when people communicate through body language. In this study, I needed to find out if managers are aware of its importance or if they overlook non-verbal communication. This was done by asking questions in interviews

with both the principal and teachers, and also by observing how the principal communicates non-verbally.

The responses of the principal were drawn from the question “Do you pay attention to gestures, stress inflection, in your own voice?” and when answering other questions. The responses of the teachers were drawn from the question “What kinds of non-verbal actions does the principal always show when she speaks to the staff?” The responses of the principal and the teachers will be discussed looking at different aspects of non-verbal communication.

5.3.4.1 *Kinesics*

When talking about her own weaknesses and strength as a communicator, Martha, remarks that her body expresses what she is saying. Furthermore, she tends to become silent when she is angry or hurt:

I think my strengths when it comes to communication are, I believe when I’m talking for instance even my body expresses that which I’m saying. I don’t think that I’m a good pretender you know, and that helps me with my communication. And then another weakness could be that when I’m not happy about things, I don’t usually voice it out verbally you know, I just communicate it in some other way. Like I said, communication could be in different forms.

According to Linda, Martha uses her hands when she speaks:

She use her hands a lot, (Linda).

Linda’s comments were also confirmed by my observations. Linda always used her hands when she was talking to me the staff and other people who came to school. In all the meetings she had with the teachers, she complemented what she was saying by moving hands. Men are said to be the ones that occupy more space than women. Men sit with their buttocks away from the back of the chair, while women keep their buttocks close to the back of the chair. Women keep their

legs together, whether crossed at ankles or at the knees. In fact, Spangler (1995:414) asserts that “spreading of legs, whether sitting or standing, is more characteristic of men”.

What this study brings to light is that women also, at times, occupy more space than is believed about them. Again, as said earlier, the point is to be wary of essentialising women and men’s experiences, and acknowledge that both can act differently in different contexts.

Also, what seemed obvious since it was done repeatedly was that she always held or had a book or paper in front of her that she fidget with while talking. I noted this in several meetings.

- (a) In a meeting that took place in her office with the head of department, this is what she did: Her hands were constantly stroking the book and at times putting it down and picking it up again.
- (b) When she had a meeting with one of the teachers, she kept on moving her hands up and down and touching paper she was holding. She also kept on looking at the paper.
- (c) She also kept on touching and looking at the documents that were on the table before her: when she was talking to two teachers in her office.
- (d) Again she called one teacher to come into her office to discuss and collect some forms, she was stroking the forms before handing them to the teacher.

Apart from using her hands, Martha also maintains a sitting position which is more ‘feminine’, that is, she sits straight up, with her lower back next to the back of the chair. She always kept her legs close, hence occupying less space.

What is more amazing, even so, is that her sitting position may change if she is angry. She tends to sit like she is lying on the table:

When she is angry the glasses will drop and she will sit like this. Then we'll know that something is wrong... Obviously when the spectacles drop, she will sit as if she is lying on the table, she won't sit properly, you know how she sits. But, obviously everything will change and she will just move to and from, sideways, just like that. (Nyawa).

Nonetheless, Martha is consistent when it comes to sitting position.

5.3.4.2 *Facial expression*

Martha herself voiced out that when hurt, she tends to show it in her facial expression:

Well, I turn to be more silent and I think even facial expression will say I'm not happy, maybe I'm hurt. (Martha).

The teachers' comments agree with what she told me as they also see her as a person whose anger, hurt and happiness is shown in her facial expression:

Ja, ja, ja, she does [communicate non-verbally]. For instance, if I am called to her office, if I look at her I can read that today it's good news or not good news. I am not sure whether the other people can see that, but I can see that on her face. (Derby).

Sometimes she reacts, I mean many times I look at her and her facial expression then I can see that what I've done is not good 'cause she can't tell you that [you must] respect me and things like that. (Bele).

Facially you can read that really what she is saying angers her even if she doesn't shout at us. (Derby).

Ya, facial expression, and I don't know, I don't think there's something else.
(Linda).

The teachers, having not mentioned anything about a smile, one can just assume that what they mean by saying: "you can see when she is happy", is that they see her smiling face. Conversely, when they say: "You can see by her facial expression if she is angry", they could be implying that she does not smile when she is angry or hurt.

What, nonetheless, emerged in the observations is that Martha smiled whenever she talked to the teachers. What was even more apparent was that she smiled to interact with the teachers, not because she wanted them to see that she was happy. This was also evident when she was talking to the head of the Department for Agriculture. In this conversation she was expressing her dissatisfaction at how the learners in Agricultural Science conduct themselves during practical sessions. Despite her obvious dissatisfaction, she smiled slightly. The explanation for this behaviour is complicated. Much as it is true that when she is unhappy she shows it facially, (as mentioned by Martha herself and the teachers) it could also be right to say that because we are newly acquainted, it may well have been very difficult for her to reveal to me, a stranger and a researcher, that at times she becomes angry or hurt as she might have understood research as an activity that must only demonstrate positive findings. Wood (1994:163) also explains that gendered patterns are apparent in smiling. Wood continues to show that women reflect feminine socialisation by smiling even when they are not genuinely happy. To note, also, is that non-smiling women are often judged more severely than men (Sprangler, 1995:413).

For communication to be effective, verbal communication should be complemented by non-verbal actions. In this study, it is clear from Martha and the teachers' remarks that facial expressions are used to clarify verbal messages.

5.3.4.3 *Eye contact*

From the teacher's responses, Derby is the only one who mentioned that Martha keeps eye contact:

..., she usually looks at us whenever she addresses us in the meeting. She keeps eye contact. (Derby).

This was also confirmed in my observations. In all the meetings held in my presence, she kept eye contact. Though she showed a tendency of looking at books or documents held she spent most of the time looking at whomever she was talking to. This could be attributed to her authoritative position, or the tendency of women being good readers and interpreters of non-verbal actions. This is in agreement with what literature advocates. Literature (Kalbfleisch & Cody, 1995; Spangler, 1995; Thorne, 1975) suggests that women tend to look at the other persons more than men irrespective of the other person's sex (cf par 3.6.2). The reason for maintaining eye contact could be that they look for non-verbal behaviour, as in paragraph 4.4, it was pointed out that they are better decoders. In addition, women show interest and involvement with others by sustaining eye contact (Pearson, 1985:246; Wood, 1994:164).

On the other hand according to Martha's culture, maintaining eye contact when they are speaking to a person is considered a sign of disrespect (Mr Hlongwane: a community member who was born and bred in that area and belongs to the same culture as the principal). He further indicated that averting one's eyes and looking down while talking indicate that both parties respect each other. Though women friends may look into each other's eyes they are not allowed to do so to women they respect irrespective of their age. Martha, however shows that she has overcome this barrier and is able to maintain eye contact, which helps her "regulates the interaction, establish the relationship level of meaning and also to suspend her verbal communication" (Wood, 1994:152-153) This behaviour positions Martha as a manager who communicates well.

5.3.4.4 *Paralanguage*

Paralanguage as mentioned in paragraph 2.5.2.3, are the vocal aspects of communication that relate to how something is said than to what is said. The vocal actions often convey emotions and attitudes.

Here, the teachers' responses were drawn from the very same questions mentioned earlier in this paragraph. What the teachers say is that the tone of their principal's voice changes when she is happy and when she is not.

Okay like any other person, the tone might differ a bit when she is talking about very good things or maybe things that are not good at all. (Derby).

The tone of her voice and the words she uses, tone and the manner in which she's saying it. (Linda).

What is surprising is that Martha is said to keep her voice low no matter how angry she is. When I was talking to Linda about shouting, this is how she responded:

...You mean like bursting of words coming out of her? Even if she is to say: "I didn't say you must do that!" Usually she is very much formal... She always keeps her voice low... (Linda).

My observation also confirmed what the teachers say about her. It was quite difficult to say if she is excited, hurt, sick, or if she does not want you, by merely listening to her voice. What seemed to emerge was that she always speaks politely, though at times with authority, but her voice was always even and stern.

5.3.4.5 *Object language*

The way the principal dresses reveals much about her. She dresses formally, mostly in suits. She always wears stockings with her costumes. When she wears dresses and trousers, she still chooses the formal ones. She undoubtedly presents herself as a typical 'traditional' principal.

The image she presents as a traditional principal is compounded by the fact that she left her face as natural as she could be, without make up or bright lipsticks. It is not surprising, however

because, African women of her age, in a rural South African context, do not actually use make up the way the younger ones do.

She also presents herself as a very clean person both in her physical appearance and in her surroundings. She also insists that the school and the office block be kept as clean as possible.

The point here is, non-verbal behaviours like those mentioned above say something about the approachability, availability, the closeness and warmth of the manager or communicator. Her image with respect to what I have cited above seems to be one of a principal who can not be easily approached. This may also explain why the teachers' not easily approachable and 'formal'. Important and to note is that, though they see her as 'strict' and 'very formal' they still see her as a good principal.

5.3.4.6 *Proxemics*

It is also important to say what proxemics is before discussing how proxemics is depicted by the principal. According to Jenkins and Johnson in paragraph 3.6.4 proxemics is how persons deal with the space around them. The issue here is, there are gender differences too with regard to how space is used.

With regard to sitting positions at the table, Linda in fact says that the principal does not always occupy or sit in a position where she would be seen as powerful.

Like when we go to a meeting, she is part of the staff, she doesn't become like "I'm the principal". Even where she sits she can sit in the front if she is going to be the program director. But then if she is coming for the meeting about the report and she is part, she will sit with us. (Linda).

The point again is, one who sits at the head of the table is interpreted as a leader, thus, choosing to sit with the teachers when the principal is not leading the meeting is seen as an act of identifying herself with the teachers/staff.

While in meetings held in the staff room she is seen to assume a non-leadership sitting position, on the other hand, when the meetings are held in her office the opposite is the case. This may be ascribed to the kinds of issues discussed in the office meetings taking into account that she leads almost all the meetings in her office. Though Mayo and Henley (1981:41) remark that reserving the head of the table for the high status person is a cultural norm for Western society, Martha who is African sometimes occupy this position, perhaps because she is a professional who has had Western influence in her education. Furthermore, when it comes to approachability, what seemed to be apparent was that Martha was not easily approachable.

The issue here is, studies (Baird, 1976 in Spangler, 1995; Willis, 1966 in Thorne, 1975) (cf par 3.6.4) found that women were approached more closely than men by both men and women. This emerged during my observations. More so, Derby mentioned that Martha's personality also adds to her unapproachability.

She cannot talk casually most of the time. But whenever she has to talk to us, it is something good, we feel more comfortable with her. (Derby).

Apart from her personality, this characteristic can also be ascribed to culture. As pointed out earlier, the culture of her group of people emphasises respect for the elderly and people in senior positions. Anyone would avoid going closer to those respected. The culture expects juniors to keep their distance unless they have serious business to discuss with the seniors.

In addition to respect, age could be another factor encouraging the teachers not to approach her easily. In one of my formal discussions with three women teachers, they indicated that they are not free with the principal because she is much older than they are. Thus to them, respect and age are inextricably intertwined.

5.3.4.7 *Touching*

Regarding touching, the only thing the teachers expressed was that she is not a person who uses physical contact. In my experience as an African woman who grew up in South Africa, patting and touching would not be viewed positively.

One of the teachers had this to say about touching:

What I can say about her personality is that she is not a person who can pat [pat or hug somebody] (laughter)...The physical touch, she doesn't use. She only maybe uses that only when she is congratulating us for something. But generally she doesn't use that, she does not always use physical contact. (Derby).

According to Hlongwane (a community member who was born and bred in that area and belongs to the same culture as Martha), touching in their cultural group is done by men and not women. Married men are not allowed to touch their wives in public. The men touch women to advance their sexual intentions. For example, a man touches a matured girl/woman's breasts to tell her that he loves her and he wants to marry her. If a matured female allows a man to touch her breasts, she is sending back a message to the man that she loves him too. This is in agreement with literature (Lewis 1972:237) which shows that culturally, for men touching is much more restricted to the opposite sex and its function is primarily sexual in nature (cf paragraph 3.6.3). Thus, women would not touch men or women. It is, therefore, not surprising that Martha as belonging to the same culture as Hlongwane, also given her age, does not touch or pat her colleagues.

Martha's actions are also confirmed by Mayo and Henley (1981:32) who alluded that adult patterns of touching tend to reflect cultural stereotypes of women and men and are reinforced by women's and men's roles in our society. Thus men's non-verbal proactive behaviours, (such as initiating touch) are consistent with the male role whereas women's non-verbal reactive behaviours (like allowing oneself to be touched) are more consistent with female role (Mayo and Henley (1981:32).

In conclusion, concerning non-verbal communication, Martha's comments were, by and large, consistent with the teacher's comments and observation. Martha prefers using her hands while speaking. In addition, she seems to prefer a feminine sitting position, which may be changed when she is angry.

It also emerged that her emotions are shown by her facial expression. The teachers are able to tell if she is angry or happy by looking at her face. Nonetheless, Martha is a smiling person. She keeps on smiling although the situation is tough. Her smile is complemented by eye contact.

Again, the comments of the teachers brought to light that the tone of Martha's voice changes depending on whether she is happy or not.

The responses of the teachers and the observations further illuminated that the principal is not easily approachable, especially for casual/informal talks. This, however, may be compounded by the fact that she has a closed personality, she is a senior and also older than them.

Added to this, is the fact that she seems to be a person, who does not prefer physical contact, like, patting her colleagues. Still, in the overall, her non-verbal actions are consistent with her verbal messages. This indicates that people may feel comfortable with the manager even if the manager does not always communicate by touching them. What seems to matter to the teachers is her executing her duties well as a manager.

5.4 BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

It is important in this study to try and find out if there are any barriers to the communication of Martha and her staff. It is also very important to find out if any misconception is gendered since there are many factors that hamper effective communication.

The principal talked about the barriers of communication between her and the staff when responding to the question "What angers you when you talk to the teachers?" What is interesting

is that even if the question does not explicitly ask about barriers of communication, what she talked about suggested these.

5.4.1 Marginal listening

The principal implies that “marginal listening” (Elkins, 1980:340) is one of the barriers of communication. Marginal listening occurs when the receiver is doing or thinking of something else while the sender is communicating, hence, only part of the message is sent and is effective.

This is how she puts it:

... when they [teachers] don't pay attention. You find maybe you're talking to them in a meeting, you find somebody decides to start writing something, not, recording what you're saying, maybe marking books, I don't like that. I don't like that because it's an indication that what you're [the principal] doing is not important, we've got better things to do. (Martha).

The point here is, marginal listening may result in the original message being distorted as only part of the message may be received.

5.4.2 Distrust

Martha also sees distrust as one of the barriers of communication between her and some of the teachers. Even if she does not mention the word distrust, it is clear that lack of openness in communication shows distrust:

And when I talk to a person [teachers], and they are not open to me you know, they don't tell me how they feel about what I'm saying, that also does annoy me. (Martha).

5.4.3 Language barriers

Furthermore, she also points to language as a barrier of communication. Realising that there are teachers who would be more comfortable if she speaks their mother tongue, she chooses to talk with them in their mother tongue, not in English:

...also, I think, you[a manager] might think because its in a work situation you have to stick with English all the time. Then, once you get to know people, I know for instance even amongst members of staff there are those people that if I want to reach them properly, maybe I need to talk more of our own language than English. (Martha).

The point here is, the message is most likely to be decoded improperly if the listener does not understand the language fully. Likewise, one can have good ideas, which can be encoded improperly because they seldom find proper words (refer to par. 2.4.2.2)

5.4.4 Perceptual barriers

In response to the question “What are the barriers of communication for you as a woman?” she remarks about perceptual barriers.

Sometimes because of this misconception with the feminism [a woman deviating from the traditional expectation is regarded as a feminist and is viewed negatively], I find that, I need to be a bit cautious because if maybe I feel very strongly about a thing and I say it, maybe in a certain way, people are likely to say “oh, you are one of those”, rather than taking it that maybe that’s the way I feel about a particular thing. (Martha).

Martha has to be cautious when she wants to put an idea across because she does not want to be labelled a feminist. What however, comes out clearly is that ‘feminism’ is viewed in a ‘particular’ way that would make people receive the message differently. It is also clear here, that any woman

with strong views is likely to be seen as a 'feminist'. Thus, the listeners may attribute characteristics to her on the basis of the assessment of the group, which may lead to miscommunication.

Furthermore, Martha noted that her communication is also restricted by the general perception that women in higher position are there because those in authorities are interested in them personally, rather than in their competence. This is of course 'gossip' which tends to affect many women leaders negatively.

And, one other thing is, some things tend to have an effect. For a very long time, you know that former homeland which is where we belong, a person who is being promoted, for instance, to a higher position as a woman, people generally tended to make it look like you've not been promoted because you are capable but its because you are perhaps doing things that are not proper, the wrong behaviour, maybe you're doing this person in authority a favour, that's why you get promoted as a woman and perhaps that's one of the things that have, in spite of the fact that I was a graduate during those times when graduates were not many, especially woman graduates. But I remained down [in the lower echelons of management] for a very long time because, when you're afraid you don't want to give people the impression that oh! Mrs so and so has joined this, things [pleasing the authorities in order to get a management position] like that. So, I find that to be somehow restrictive, and it doesn't go away out of the minds of people for quite sometime. We are no longer there presently, but somewhere you still have it.
(Martha).

This kind of perception may lead to perceptual defence where the communicator may distort or block information (Bartol and Martin, 1994:449).

5.5 CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION USED

The comments of the principal and the teachers about the channels of communication were mainly drawn from the question “What channels of communication do you always use to communicate with the staff?” The same question was posed to the teachers in this way: “What channels of communication do the principal use to communicate with the staff?” The comments were also drawn from elsewhere in the interviews, like when the principal responded to the question: “What are the common activities in which you do much talking here at school?”

In asking this question, I wanted to find out the kinds of communication channels she uses and to try and find out if this has any affect on her communication with the staff.

In the second chapter, paragraph 2.6, I noted that channels of communication are paths or conduits through which managers and employees pass messages to one another. The chapter also noted that formal communication could take place through downward, upward or horizontal channels. Transmission of message may also take place through informal channels of communication like grapevine or management by wandering around.

5.5.1 Personal encounters

By and large, the principal uses formal channels of communication. This is done mostly through personal conversations. What seems to happen is that whenever there is an issue to discuss the principal calls the teachers concerned to her office. In the case where teachers do not take instructions this is what she said:

I usually call them to the office to talk to them ... (Martha).

As I indicated earlier in this paragraph, the comments were also drawn from elsewhere. In response to the question “What are the common activities in which you do much talking here at school?” she also describes personal conversation with the staff as being the channel of communication she usually uses:

When I call somebody to the office, for instance, I usually call them myself. In any case that is the aim why you call somebody to the office, to discuss the issues. (Martha).

Martha also prefers to deal with her seniors in head office personally. When she had electricity problem in her school, which was difficult to solve because of regional politics. Amongst many ways of communication, she also used personal contact:

So we went personally to regional office, eventually, with the SGB members and we were promised. (Martha).

The fact that Martha seems to prefer using personal conversations was also confirmed by the teachers' responses.

Then she also communicates to us through private conversations, and that is done very well she is exceptionally very well [good] in such matters. One other thing is that if there's a problem, like if she knows that if I go to this person and talk to her like this, we are going to exchange words and stuff, she won't do it in fact she won't. Every official thing is always done in her office. Like she understands how we want to be called [addressed]. She'll come to me and say how are you Linda because she knows I enjoy that but she'll never go to somebody who is very much formal and call her, how are you Jack [i.e using first names], she won't do that. I think she's exceptionally well [good at that]. (Linda).

I cannot differentiate that because most of the communication that is done between the principal and teachers, if it is not a meeting, it's usually in her office. (Linda).

... And even calling you the person in particular... [calling teachers to the office]. (Nyawa).

Verbal communication in most cases she do it in her office. If she wants to talk to you then she sends someone to call me to her office. (Bele).

It is then clear from what Martha and her teachers say that she prefers talking to the people concerned personally. This is also confirmed by Adler *et al* (1993) and Grinwood and Popplestone (1993) in Thakhathi (1996) who found that relationships and interpersonal skill seem to be a concern for many women managers.

It is not surprising too, that Martha knows how to speak to each individual, as mentioned by Linda, because research conducted by Walker in Ozga (1993:21) also shows that women think about other people's feelings. This may also be attributed to the women's traditional role in the family where they have to promote and maintain harmony. Taking other people's feelings into account may, however, cause problems as some people might think that it is an indication that women are weak and can be manipulated.

5.5.2 Delegation

Apart from personal conversations, Martha also uses downward communication by delegating. In this case she uses Heads of departments to take the messages to the relevant teachers:

She uses the Hod's ... and information from the Hod's. (Nyawa).

... And sometimes she does send Heads of Departments. (Derby).

Sometimes she may use the representative of teachers to pass information. So, in case of various departments within the schools, the information will come from the principal to the head of that section. (Itani).

In the Learner Representative Council (LRC) Vision, Mission, and Code of Conduct document, paragraph 3.8, it was pointed out how the learners should communicate with each other, class teachers, and management. Therefore, in this school there is upward communication, that is,

learners communicating with staff, and also horizontal communication, i.e., learners communicating with learners. Most importantly, the school policy 1997, paragraph 1.3 also points to upward communication by stating that “all teachers are free to contact management on any issue related to their duties”.

5.5.3 Communicating through meetings

Furthermore, the principal uses formal meetings to talk to the staff in case there is something to be communicated. This is captured in her own statement:

And so, when we have a formal meeting I'll talk when it's my turn to talk. And I usually talk and make sure that I have communicated well. Say it's a staff meeting, say it's a parent's meeting, you see. (Martha).

The teachers also made mention of the fact that the principal also communicates with them through meetings:

We also have meetings where we communicate if there's a need like when there are reports and stuff, we'll gather around and then have a meeting. (Linda).

... She talks to us in staff meetings. (Nyawa).

Sometimes she uses the form of meetings. (Bele).

According to the Staff Minutes Book, sixty-five meetings were held between 1991 and 1999. The number of meetings held per year, are plus/minus six per year. This number of meetings may confirm the comments by the principal and teachers and also through my observations that she prefers calling individuals to her office, that is, a person to person conversation.

There are also management meetings, which take place between the principal and the Heads of Department, and the subject heads meetings, which take place between the principal and the

subject heads. These meetings are supposed to be held once every quarter though this was not adhered to. Martha explained that these meetings are for information sharing, formulating policies, and to solve problems. The principal convenes these meetings.

In the three management meetings recorded in the minute book, the principal did most of the talking because she was disseminating information to the heads of department. Also, in the two subject heads meetings, the principal was still the main speaker, welcoming the staff and giving announcements.

In addition, Martha also relies on meetings to communicate with the parents. The school policies strongly emphasise the need for communication between the staff and parents through meetings.

My observations confirm that she communicates regularly with parents because parents used to come to see her and she would always attend to them. She also sent out letters, inviting parents to attend a merit award ceremony held at school.

In addition to ordinary staff meeting, Itani remarks that she sometimes calls urgent staff meetings:

... eh, she will call an urgent staff meeting. (Itani).

It would, be surprising if she did not use staff meetings since this is one of the channels that are normally used in all organisations.

5.5.4 Written communication

Again, Martha relies on written communication as one of her communication strategies. This is done through circulars, school journals, notice board, and information book (previously called 'instruction book'). Circulars are often sent to the staff through the senior teachers, the same applies to the information book.

When the principal receives the circulars from the seniors, she passes them to the teachers in this way:

Like for instance in their circulars then the circulars will be sent to us through the channels. The principal will see the circular then suppose its for Geography and I'm the head of department of Geography then she's going to write that Ms ... circulate on all Geography teachers then we all read it and sign and take it back (Linda).

The information book is a book where the principal writes all-important information for the staff to read and append their signatures after reading. The principal does sometime requests the heads of departments to write the information on her behalf. By and large, the comments of the teachers show that Martha uses the information book to pass information to them:

The info. Book [information book], like the one you sign in after reading what you have read. (Linda).

... and even using the information book. (Nyawa).

In my interview with Derby, she also talked about the information book. This is how our conversation went:

Derby ... using, what's that book, mm, I forget its name. It's em ...

Researcher: Information book?

Derby: Ja, she uses that sometimes for serious issues.

... sometimes she uses the information book ... (Mateosi).

When studying the Information book, what was apparent was that Martha communicated mainly through the Information book between 1991 and 1995 where the highest number of messages passed within a year was twenty-three and the lowest was fifteen. But she did not use the Information book as much between 1996 and 1999. In this period, she sent messages to teachers six to nine times per year. While it is difficult to explain why there is such a decline in the usage of the Information book, one can attribute it to the increase in person to person conversations.

Furthermore, what was apparent was that the Information book was used more for notices and for passing information than for giving instructions. In fact, from 1997 to 1999, there was no instruction given through the Information book. This, again, may be explained by the fact that she prefers to talk to teachers personally. During the observations I noticed that she preferred calling teachers to her office when she wanted to request something. As mentioned earlier, Martha herself and the teachers expressed the point that she prefers calling them to the office.

Related to the Information book, is the notice board. Some notices from the circulars are written on the green notice board in the staff room, "in other words there is no duplication" said the principal while we were talking. The principal also explained that all the notices that are to be written on the board must be written 14 days before the due date. This rule is for notices about the dates at which the teachers are to submit marks, question papers and so on.

As mentioned earlier, the principal also pointed out that she uses the School Journal (Log book). This, however, is used for communication between her and officials from the regional office. Though it was used in the previous system by the inspectors, she still thinks that it is useful now for recording cases and other important events. This was done thoroughly and in detail. Almost everything such as all conflicts and problems encountered, especially with teachers, were recorded. Even my presence at the school as a researcher was recorded. When I asked her to tell me who checks the journal, she said:

I don't know who is it for because when any official comes to this school, they may demand for a journal but, now that we are no longer having, the routine school inspection the circuit manager might, while she's taking rounds, demand for

it. They look at it but they usually don't do anything. I'm not even sure, if they read everything that is inside there. I mean things like problems, you only hear in a meeting where the circuit manager will say "principals please make use of the school journal because some of you don't even indicate the date on which the school reopen", important things that need to be recorded. But, one way in which it helps us as school managers, if you have a teacher maybe who gives you problems, then at some stage you record it, then it will help you. Maybe if the matter gets out of hand, and you've got to take the matter up, the circuit manager is likely to say "now that you are bringing the matter to me how long has it been going on, and have you got any record to show?" then you may refer to it. (Martha).

As a principal she also communicates with the learners. This is mostly done during morning assembly, which is held every morning:

Like for instance, we use morning devotion not only just for scripture reading, actually in our constitution we've indicated its a time when we can upgrade eh, you know inform our children on your topics. During morning devotion also I do a lot of talking usually especially if there are issues to be addressed. (Martha).

Again, this shows that the principal does not only use the teachers or heads of departments to communicate with the learners. She still prefers occasionally to use personal conversations with the learners as she does with the staff.

By and large, the principal is much more in favour of talking to individuals face to face. During my stay at the school for the whole month, I observed that indeed she talks to teachers and other staff members in the office. The messages that needed to be given to learners were given in the morning assembly either by the principal or by one of the teachers.

5.6 TEACHERS' ATTITUDES

This theme has been introduced to try and establish if the communicative relationship between teachers and Martha as a woman principal is gendered. This is important in that communicative sex differences, regarding both attitudes and linguistics, have social consequences, which may adversely affect the principal's managerial work.

As was made clear in chapter 3, women are more polite than men when all necessary reservations and qualifications have been taken into account. It was also made clear that females and males use language differently and in teachers' attitudes the differences can be observed. Literature shows that acquiring gendered communicative style is a process, which is influenced by social interactions that are influenced by factors in the immediate interactive context, like cultural, social and economic conditions. The comments of the principal and teachers in the previous paragraphs also brought to light that the community in which these informants belong socialise boys/men to be aggressive and not to respect girls while communicating. On the other hand, girls/women are taught not to say much in the presence of men. It then follows that men and women might communicate differently with a woman principal.

The comments of the principal are drawn from the second interview in response to the questions "Who ignores your instructions? What could be the reason and how do you deal with it?" and "Who co-operates when you give instructions and what do you think are the reason for co-operating?"

The principal's comments show that at times, some men do refuse to listen to her. Interestingly, because she is older, she sees it as an act of 'boyishness' and not in a gendered sense. However, there was reluctance in the principal's response about who ignores her while she communicates. This could be explained again by the fact that some responses were shaped by the interview itself. It is difficult for a professional to be frank with someone she does not know well, especially if you are asked to talk about your problems or failures. This underscores my earlier methodological arguments that the interview is situated, not providing a decontextualised 'truth', but shaped by the interactions of interviewer and interviewee, at a particular moment in time. This reluctance

is captured in the answer given by Martha in response to the question: "Who ignores you when you give instructions?" This is how she answered:

Okay, let me think, eh... I doubt if I've got an answer for that you know. You mean when I give instructions? ... Mm, they'll just not take the instructions. Some men, usually with ladies I hardly notice it. ... Well with the ladies maybe its because I'm a woman, also we are perhaps more closer as compared to the men. I usually talk to them when we are women alone you know, maybe even informally just to let them realise that we need to support one another as women. So then, I encourage that if they have a problem they rather come to me instead of not taking instructions and things like that. But, with the men also, I don't encourage them not to take instructions, because they are boys [younger teachers], sometimes they don't do what they are expected to do, although that is not too pronounced at this institution.

The comments of the teachers were in response to the question "How different do female and male teachers respond when the principal communicates with them?" By and large, the teachers think there is no difference in the way the men and women respond to the principal when they communicate. One attributes it to openness and respect as mentioned in the previous paragraph:

Generally our principal is full of respect [she is respected by her teachers]. What I have observed is that in many instances where women are in leadership, you find that the ladies, knowing that men can be harsh, you find that if we do not agree, maybe it's the males or females who do not agree with her, people say it openly, they don't hide their feelings. They will say we don't feel good about this, but, in a way that still have that dignity of respect and it doesn't really kill a relationship. (Derby).

'Respect' for seniors as discussed in paragraph 5.3.1, is clearly at work in this relationship. Thus, culture makes them respect her even if she is a woman.

Nyawa's observations combine openness with the principals' ability to know how to approach each individual when communicating. Indeed, interpersonal relations are enhanced by getting to know more about one another. Learning more about the other person and as well as the reasons for those relationships help improve communication (Steinberg, 1994:82). The teachers say that she knows them as individuals, and she knows how to communicate with each one of them:

It depends on what they are responding to. Most of us here are very open. Even the principal knows us, she knows that when she goes to so and so she has to go via so and so or she has to do this and this so that that particular person will agree. I am happy because even if there's problem, it doesn't go to such an extent that we fight. We strengthen each other and then we continue. (Nyawa).

No there is no difference. Ya, we all respond the same. (Bele).

What seems to emerge in Mateosi and Nyawa's responses is that both males and females may respond differently at different times depending on the content of what they are talking about with the principal. What again emerges here is that it seems that women support the principal because she is a woman.

Men respond in accordance with what she will be asking, but the very same applies to women, I think they also do the same, but it will depend on what is it that she asked.

... to site an example, she might tell them to do a particular job, only to find that because they are women they know other ways to do that particular job, the response is going to be different. Like cleaning the classes, there are many options ... they can use to clean classes. But sometimes you find teachers having their own way of cleaning classes, then you find that the response is going to be different, because they tell her that we are going to do it this way.

Again it seems that men may at times be negative though they may not verbalise it. On the one hand, Linda and Mateosi had not noticed any tangible and concrete gendered action by the teachers. On the other hand, what seems apparent is that both the female and male teachers show gendered stereotyped attitudes through non-verbal actions. It is not surprising that women show gendered stereotyped attitudes. Literature (Goupton and Slick, 1996:137) shows that women leaders are often not well supported by other women. The problem could be that traditionally oriented women often harbour resentment for and even openly defy women who assume positions usually occupied by men. It could also be interpreted according to what writers (Blackmore, 1999:192; Cooper & Davidson, 1982:88; Klein and Ortman, 1994:14; Still, 1990:89) refer to as “queen bee syndrome”, where women in higher echelons work to keep out other women to protect queenly status. The issues that have been pointed out by both Mateosi and Linda may be better apprehended in the teachers’ responses when answering the question: “Do you sometimes notice an attitude in women which somehow seem to be saying ‘She is a woman what can she tell us, she is just one of us’?” This is what Mateosi and Linda said in our conversation:

That one I don't think we can run away from, because that is their [women] nature, they always like criticising. Sometimes even if they may not say it openly but I am sure that element might be there. ... It's very much difficult to see that. But when they talk sometimes you can see that they are showing that she is a woman. ... As I have already indicated, when she [the principal] says something, in most cases, what she says 98 percent is good. So the response from the man is just normal. (Mateosi).

Linda's responses were like this:

... I cannot differentiate that because most of the communication that is done between the principal and teachers, if it is not in a meeting, it's usually in an office. Maybe if you say afterwards [when the meeting is over], there are times when they [the teachers] come back very much satisfied and there are times when they come back very angry. ... Both [males and females]. ... No, not ‘after all she is not my wife’. But you can see that they're saying that, you can see it.

On the other hand, what could be contributing to such a relationship is a shift in culture'. The teachers, in fact, when responding to the question: "Do men and women communicate differently?" indicated that culturally men and women are supposed to communicate differently. However, some women, like Nyawa and Derby, ascribe the similarities in ways of communicating, to the current attitude where every one knows his or her rights.

Nowadays I see there is a change. Both men and women communicate the same because now everybody knows his and her rights. People are more open than in the past. So, everybody can express themselves [himself/herself], its no longer give and take. People access both men and women. (Nyawa).

... But with the changes in culture, you find that whenever women have to show what they are really made of [how they feel] men feel threatened, and they end up saying you look down upon us, you no longer respect us. That is what happens in our community. And even in cases where women seem to be more educated.

... But in general, our community, those who still are more educated than men, our women are still more humble in families as compared to women at work. Women at work emphasise what is right for the situation. Just like women in the school, we do what we think its right. If it means that men must ..., but all in all the role of the women in the community and the role of the women at work is very much different, we still have to be humble, down to earth at home, because culture is against us. But at work we have to stand for what is right. (Derby).

And when I probed further to find out if men in the school do not look down upon the women, Derby said:

In our school, we don't have that problem, that is not a problem not at all. It might be a problem maybe when they are alone, but they won't show it to us.

Like the reluctance in the principal, there were silences in some of the teachers' responses. I suspect that these teachers wanted to present me with a good picture about their relationship with

the principal. At any rate, it seems hardly surprising that as loyal teachers, they would easily reveal their relationship to a stranger, one, moreover, carrying a tape recorder, and doing research.

Nonetheless, it is clear that the teachers have respect for the principal, and the respect seems to breed good communicative relationship.

5.7 CONCLUSION

What emerges from this investigation is that there is no clear dominant strand. In one case, the accounts of the teachers show that she is a strict communicator, who seem to get things done, and then in another case, they show that they have no problems communicating with her whenever they have an issue to talk about.

Clearly, the communicative style of the principal cannot be explained in terms of gender alone. Her 'motherly' care and love can be explained in terms of gender, in that women are socialised into their role of 'nurturer'. But, it can further be explained in terms of their dedication to their work, because all principals, whether men or women, are by virtue of their position, expected to ensure that learners behave and work to their fullest potential.

Furthermore, while it is evident that the principal's communicative activities are gendered, it is also clear that other communicative behaviours result from the context in which she grew and in which she finds herself, one common to all principals, male and female. A particular historical and political legacy and socio-economic conditions generate problems all must face. One can then argue that the communicative style of women principals and staff cannot be isolated from the context in which they are working.

What, however, appears to be one of the main patterns in her managerial communication is that her communication is mostly influenced by culture. According to her culture, women are not supposed to talk much when there are males. Again, women should not appear to know more than men. Martha, however emerges as a good communicator despite the cultural barriers. Her

victory was also possible because the teachers, too, try to compromise some of the cultural expectations for the smooth running of the school.

Secondly, the teachers find her a good communicator who is consultative who relies on school policies, who does not prefer to dominate discussions even though they think that she is sometimes harsh and refuse teachers' suggestions. Though she uses a polite language by using questions, disclaimers, and fillers, Marta's verbal communication appears to be authoritative and effective as she uses commands and directives only where necessary. Martha also presents herself as a manager who understands that verbal communication needs to be complemented by non-verbal actions. She keeps eye contact, uses more space, and uses facial expression when communicating. Again, she conquers cultural barriers of communication by practising what is seen as taboo in her own culture.

Furthermore, this study brings to light how Martha overcomes language barriers by using vernacular when she speaks with staff and children despite the fact that policies states that English is the only medium of instruction. She again arises as the manager who strives to overcome any obstacle to accomplishing her management tasks.

Lastly, Martha, in her communication, seems to favour personal encounters, though she also uses written communication and formal meetings as her channels of communication.

It may therefore be correct to say that Martha's communication as a woman manager, whether desirable or not, is also shaped by her context in which she is a woman, mother, wife, African, educational manager and as an individual with her own unique personality. In all these identities women face contradictions and ambiguities. Most of all, Martha's communication is shaped by her culture, which sometimes becomes a barrier. What is interesting is that where cultural values impedes communication, she rises above it and ensure that communication is effective. She then emerges as a good manager who communicates well with her staff, and whose staff understands and respects her.

CHAPTER 6

SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will give an overview of the study, where the summary of the chapter will be provided. It will also highlight the key issues that emerged from the research.

In terms of this particular piece of study, it is important to suggest ideas for a way forward or improvement of communication. The forgone chapter, in particular, necessitates that recommendations with regard to the communication process be given. Recommendations will also be given with regard to the gendered nature of communication that normally causes miscommunication.

6.2 OVERVIEW OF THE INVESTIGATION

Chapter one gave the background to the research. I highlighted the research problem, the aim of the research and my motivation for doing the research. It also showed how I would go about doing the research by indicating the research method and design.

Chapter two focused on the role of communication in management. This was particularly done because, to look into gender and communication, it is important to have knowledge about communication in management and how it affects management. Thus, I looked at the purpose of communication, communication process, and barriers to effective communication.

Chapter two also pointed out the types of communication, which are verbal and non-verbal communication. Both types are important for the smooth running of any organisation or school. Verbal communication is composed of oral and written communication. Oral communication is more consistent with more human oriented approach to the management task, though it may be disadvantageous in cases where written records are needed. Written communication on the other hand is good for managerial task as it reaches many people at the same time. It may also be disadvantageous as it normally has delayed feedback. Non-verbal communication is when people

communicate through body language. It clarifies, supplements and amplifies verbal message. There are four categories of non-verbal behaviours, which are kinesic behaviours, proxemics, paralanguage and object language.

Furthermore, chapter two looked at the channels of communication as they are important for effective communication. An organisation has both the formal and informal channels of communication and communicators must know how to deal with both for communication to be effective.

Chapter two ends by pointing out the use of electronics to facilitate communication. By using a computer, some organisations do not only increase the flow of information, but also seem to have discovered new types of information the computer is capable of supplying.

Chapter three shows that, while communication is important in management, it may be affected by the differences in communication styles of women and men. It further shows that while differences in communicative styles can be attributed to many factors, socialisation into gender positions is clearly a major factor that leads to the differences in the way women and men talk.

Furthermore, chapter three highlights different perspectives within feminism, which are liberal feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism, black feminism and post-structuralist feminism. This was done because feminists have insisted on the importance of looking critically at a taken-for-granted gender divisions, which they do not regard as 'natural'. Thus, I referred to post-structuralist theories which argue that the subject position 'woman' is constituted through discourses which are multiple and contradictory. This presents alternative subject positions for women and girls (and men) in which they might at any time, be both powerful and powerless in different contexts, sometimes active, and sometimes passive.

Because accepted male and female behaviours are the result of socialisation, the differences in communicative styles of women and men are also the result of socialisation. It, therefore became important to examine the key theories of gender socialisation, namely, biological determinism theories, socialisation theories and psychoanalytic theories in order to understand how it happens.

In this case, post-structuralists also argue that children who are socialised are not just passive recipients. During socialisation, each person is active in taking up discourses through which she or he is shaped.

I also noted, in chapter three, how gender differentiated communication is acquired through socialisation, starting at home, then to school and also in the community. Children develop sex-appropriate speech in different communities. The way mothers and fathers interact with children influence the children to acquire gendered communicative styles with regard to imperatives, choice of lexical terms, verbosity, politeness, interruptions and simultaneous speech and directives. Fathers are said to use more imperatives when speaking with sons than mothers do. Fathers expect boys to know the specifics when it comes to topics perceived to be in the men's domain, while mothers use more general vocabulary. Again, with verbosity, girls observe that mothers talk less than men in mixed companies. Mothers tend to be more polite in their speech thus sending a message that it is females who should use polite language. With regard to interruptions, both parents interrupt girls more than boys, whereas fathers interrupted their children more than mothers did. Fathers are more likely to talk simultaneously with children than mothers. Regarding directives, girls are expected to use more polite question forms and the boys to use direct and implied forms than girls.

Chapter three also noted that the interactive context also has an influence on gendered communication. Girls from working class community may speak differently from the middle class community even if they come from the same cultural background, the same applies to boys. The marital status and the family ecology as a context also affect the acquisition of conversational competence. Generally, studies show that children of married mothers are less likely to have traditional stereotypes and play preferences. Again, single mothers reciprocate children controlling speech acts.

The chapter went on to show that the communicative styles that have been acquired by boys and girls are apparent in the different ways women and men communicate. Women and men show communicative differences in linguistic politeness. This is also affected by and can be analysed by three theories, which are, social distance, power and formality. Therefore, women are seen

as more polite than men when all the necessary reservations and qualifications have been taken into account.

The chapter also looked at how women and men communicate non-verbally. Gender differences also exist in non-verbal communication. Women seem to smile and laugh more than men, and to be more concerned about the listeners. Women also claim less space, are touched more, and tolerate more spacial intrusions than men. On the contrary, men tend to speak loudly but less talkative than women. Women are also believed to be better encoders and decoders, especially of facial expressions. Furthermore, women are more alert to non-verbal cues in general, and are even better at recognising the specific messages conveyed by non-verbal actions.

The chapter also briefly pointed out social consequences of communicative gender differences. It pointed out that the differences may cause miscommunication between co-workers. The seven areas where miscommunication could take place are: the meaning of questions; link between speaker turns; topic shifts; self-disclosure; verbal aggressiveness; interruption and listening.

In chapter four, I mapped out how I went about doing the research. I started by stating and defining symbolic interactionism as a theory that would underlie the research. I also indicated how sampling and selection was done. I used criterion-based selection. The informant was selected by reputation i.e. reputational selection. The chapter also shows that the data was collected by using multiple research techniques of interviews, observation and archival research.

In this chapter I also pointed out my role as a researcher. I chose to adopt a role of 'participant-as-observer' and observer-as-participant. It was also shown that the interview transcripts, the observation schedules and field notes, and the selected documents were all analysed in an integrated manner. The data was corroborated for reliability and validity.

Chapter four led to chapter five, which elaborated on the findings of the research. The analysis was done thematically, with five broad themes. The chapter starts by describing the context where the research took place in order to situate the interaction. I also gave a profile of the

principal as the key informant. A brief description of the selected documents analysed was also given.

Chapter six provides synthesis of findings, recommendations and conclusions.

6.3 SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

The case data on the interviews, participant observation schedules and documents generated a number of issues which resonated with the literature reviewed in chapters two and three, while new issues also emerged grounded in the interview data and participant observation schedules.

What seems to emerge with regard to socialisation is that the principal is a woman with a strong personality, who is strict and at the same time shows a motherly caring nature in the way she handles and attempts to solve learner-centred problems. Added to the caring nature, the principal seems to look at the school as a family, which may also be seen as part of her socialisation.

While on the other hand culture encourages male dominance, on the other hand the communication of this principal and her teachers is also shaped by the same cultural patterns which in this rural community, involve attitudes like respect for older people, and respect for leaders.

Again, what seems to emerge is that, as much as children are socialised into having the different communicative styles, they also refuse what they do not want.

With regard to verbal communication, a number of issues emerged too. Firstly it became clear that Martha converts statements into questions, and this is in agreement with the literature which points out that women do that because questions are much more less threatening than making an assertion. It also became evident that she uses a lot of disclaimers and fillers in her speech. She used disclaimers like 'don't think' 'I think', 'maybe', 'I don't know'. She also uses a lot of fillers like 'you know', 'eh', 'ehm', 'well', 'okay', 'you see', 'jah', 'so', and to a lesser extent 'like'.

It was also clear in the principal's comments during interviews, informal talks and in the meetings that she showed a certain degree of authority by using directives and few commands, both explicit and suggestive. Though the literature suggest that women avoid using direct commands, the data in this study seemed to show that they can use both, depending on how they have been socialised.

Concerning interruptions, it also emerged that while interruptions may be a sign of dominance or aggression, men may not interrupt a woman who is in leadership position due to the traditional customs which emphasise respect for elders and those in respectable positions. In addition, the study showed that in this kind of context, whatever interruption is experienced, is usually in agreement or supportive.

Again, it was clear that the research is consistent with the assertion by Coates (1987:103) which indicates that the myth of woman being talkative could be persisting because while men have the right to speak and women expected to be silent, talking at any length may be perceived as talkativeness in women. What the research seemed to show is that most women talk at length.

Regarding non-verbal communication, what emerged was that some of the aspects were consistent with what the literature advocates and some did not. In agreement with literature, women smile and maintain eye contact. However, the research also showed that women may also occupy more space, than what is believed about them. They may also speak with polite but stern voice; not be approachable; maintain authoritative sitting positions; and not prefer physical contact like patting her female colleagues. Aspects like these, as in this study, may be compounded by personality, the fact that she is a senior and older than them. In, fact, this is what their culture emphasise. The point here is to be wary of essentialising women and men's experiences, and acknowledge that both can act differently in different contexts.

It also became evident that indeed women managers prefer a communicative style, which is more people orientated. In this study, the face to face channel of communication was mostly favoured though the other channels like Information book, formal meetings, circulars, school journal and notice board were used. By and large, personal conversations are preferred.

By and large, this study shows that communication can be barred by marginal listening; incorrect and lack of understanding of English (for those who use English as their second language); distrust and stereotyping (where all women with strong views may be seen as feminists). Another barrier of communication brought to light is the general perception that women in higher positions got access because those in authority are interested in them personally.

Lastly, it also became obvious that the teachers both female and males, due to their tradition, have deep respect for their principal. This, 'respect' for seniors is clearly at work in this relationship. Their culture makes them respect her even though she is a woman.

What also became apparent was that both men and women communicate with their principal well. Their communication is characterised by openness. Both men and women respect her when communicating. Women also voice their opinions at any time, which is not familiar to them in their culture. This study, then, brings forth the issue of 'shift in culture' as a contributory factor. The present emphasis on people's rights causes women to feel that they have the right to express themselves openly.

In general the communicative relationship of the woman principal and the staff is marked by 'respect' grounded in their traditional customs. The communication of women and their staff is shaped by the context, personality, and the rural location.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.4.1 Societal change

Given that gendered communication styles are socially constructed, it is important to examine and work to change the social relations, which construct gender differences. Though this is not a short-term solution, it would have greater impact and lasting effects at the end. Thus, Henly (1977 in Steward and Ting-Toomey, 1987:130) suggests that the parents and teachers need to start eradicating the negative aspects of the stereotypic roles for both sexes at an early age. The

overall aim must be to reform gender relations so that they exist on a more equitable foundation, and provide the basis for the full and free development of both men and women.

While the challenge to social relations, which construct gender needs to start in the family and to be followed through in classrooms, neither of these sites has been a specific focus of this research. What is needed in South African educational studies are a range of research projects located in all these settings where gender relations and roles are constructed.

6.4.2 Consciousness raising

As it has been shown that women and men are socialised into different gendered positions, which most or some of them are not aware of, it may be right to suggest that both genders be made aware of their gender differences in communication. Knowing how different they are may reduce communication problems. Therefore according to Tannen (1990:297), “once people realise their partners have different conversational styles, they are inclined to accept differences without blaming themselves, their part or their relationships”.

In addition, it is important to tie consciousness raising with power and authority. In this case, teachers, for example, would have to explicitly focus on inequities in patterns of talk and way of interacting with learners.

6.4.3 Combining men and women’s communication styles

Communication can also be improved in schools and other organisations by combining both masculinist and feminine styles of talking. According to Sandler (1988:12), some researchers are currently beginning to explore the possibility that some features of “women’s speech” and behaviour might have positive values in fostering a more equitable scholarly climate based more on the co-operative development of ideas than on “competition for the floor”.

Though the general trend is to ask or expect only women to change their communicative behaviour and adopt “male forms” of communication, my recommendation would be that both

female and male styles be adopted. The reason would be that when only women are told to change their behaviour, and essentially to adopt “masculine style”, the characteristics of female forms are ignored, and the assumption of power as domination is reproduced (Kramarae, 1980:207). Truly, communication should be both supportive and self-revealing (feminine) and forceful and assertive (masculine).

6.4.4 Helping men accommodate and use politeness strategies

The other effective way of improving communication would be to help men acquire polite communicative skills and use them in public. It would seem it is much more difficult for men to accommodate female communicative styles than women, moreover, the way power is distributed in the society, the patterns of interaction in public formal setting seem to benefit men more than women. Consequently, Homles (1995:221) thinks that many men need explicit practice in enhancing their conversational competence so that their discussions could be pleasant for them and their colleagues. This can be done by providing training sessions to encourage them and help them acquire the skills.

6.4.5 Helping women

It is also important to mention specific suggestions to women so that they can improve their communication skills. Women can, for example, maintain a “confident aura”. Women should make sure that their politeness norms are taken into account so that women’s participation in public context can increase.

Another way would be for women to capitalise on the skills they have, like listening skills, verbal and writing skills, and non-verbal skills. This is underscored by Nelson (1981, in Stewart and Ting Toomy, 1987:130) who mentioned that non-verbal awareness and interpretive skills are important female manager’s attributes that could be capitalised on.

Furthermore, organisers, chairpersons, trainers and teachers should make sure that women teachers and managers get access to talking time, and better quality discussion.

6.4.6 Communication policies

Formulating policies that will address everything about communication in the school or any organisation is basic. This is however not taken seriously in many schools.

The policies should show how communication should take place, the channels of communication and all the relevant aspects of communication in the organisation. More importantly the managers must make sure that the policies are implemented.

The communication policy will have to specify the medium of instruction (of course in line with the nation language policy requirements). In this case second language speakers who cannot understand or express themselves well in that language will have to undergo training so as to improve their language skills in whichever language is used as second language in their institutions.

Another important issue as explained by Armistead (1996), is to come up with a crisis communication plan. In his article, he points out that to be successful as manager, one has to show credibility as a communicator before the crisis and by the crisis communication plan. A crisis communication plan must have the following essential elements: the school's spokesperson; procedures to communicate with the school regional office if the crisis is isolated in the school; showing how the information will be gathered and showing how the information will be disseminated (Armistead, 1996:33). The plan should be in writing.

6.4.7 Channels of communication

It is important that managers also rely on informal communication networks to ensure positive climate. Supplementary to formal channels, the principal will have to rely on mechanisms like personal visits, before school breakfasts, luncheons, social events (even outside of school grounds, and secret gifts on teacher's desks to ensure positive and open communication in their schools (Bredeson, 1988:185). To strengthen the informal channels of communication, the

principal could practice an 'open door policy'. The door should be open for teachers, students, parents, and support staff.

6.4.8 Programmes for institutional development

Lastly and most importantly, to improve communication in schools, managers must ensure that there is a planned programme of organisational development. This will include developing an in-service training programme to improve communication skills for the whole staff (Hoy and Miskel, 1991:368).

Culturally, specific training programmes are also very essential and managers should make them a priority. Thus managers belonging to the same cultural background should agree on how to ensure that their cultural values do not become barriers to communication.

6.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The preceding review has demonstrated that there is a great need for theoretically oriented, well designed research on how to deal and cope with cultural barriers to management work. In this study, cultural values appeared to be influencing the principal's management task.

There is also a need for research in African communities on non-verbal communication and how it affects relationships between managers and staff in educational contexts.

6.6 CONCLUSION

Communication does not exist in a social vacuum but at the very core of human interaction. Managers should always give consideration to the gender of the communicator in order to avoid miscommunication. Women have a different and polite communication style, which should be taken seriously by both women and men. Women, also, should start to appreciate their own style and assert themselves during this era where the whole world is advocating for the recognition of women in management. Since this study has shown that a woman in a South African rural

community is able to overcome barriers to communication, especially cultural barriers, the challenge directed to other women managers in educational settings is that they must strive to conquer them as well. The issue, however, is that the barriers are real in their consequence and seem to have their greatest effect for not being perceived. When they are recognised, managers should seek to overcome them.

Women should know that they will in most cases come across antagonism with regard to their communication style, and that should not discourage them in their managerial work. On the other hand, educational managers need to improve their understanding of women's particular experiences and incorporate that information into communication practices. We need to review communication theory for its exclusion of women, we need to find out more about how women act as communicators, and how they interact (Rush & Allen, 1989:55). Although it is likely to be years before women's communication style could be appreciated in educational management and in management in general, we are living in a critical period marking the transition from the Industrial Age to the Information Age, and the issue of gender differentiated communication should be taken seriously.

APPENDIX A**CAREER AND LIFE HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Place of residence
2. Age
3. Denomination
4. Marital status
5. Give me the details about the institutions in which you worked
 - Names of schools, colleges, and universities in which you worked
 - Number of years worked
 - Subjects taught
 - Relations with staff and pupils
 - Awards/honours/achievements
6. Qualifications: Year acquired, Full-time or part-time?
7. Teaching experience
8. Area of specialization
9. Talents and interests
10. Professional membership (e.g. SADTU and positions held)
11. Outstanding events of professional life
12. Any publication/research done or articles written? What about?
13. Your future goals and ambitions

APPENDIX B**1ST INTERVIEW WITH THE PRINCIPAL**

1. Where were you born and bred?
2. Who were the members of your family?
3. How did you relate to your:
 - 3.1 Mother?
 - 3.2 Father?
4. Who in the family influenced your life the most? How?
5. Who did you spend most of your time with (between the age of 1-6 years)?
 - At home
 - When playing
 - At school (if you had started school by then)
6. Did you ever get taught about how a girl should talk? By whom?
 - 6.1 How to talk to women
 - 6.2 How to talk to men
 - 6.3 How to talk to elderly people
7. Tell me about the communicative styles of you teachers at
 - primary school
 - secondary school
 - university/college

APPENDIX C**2ND INTERVIEW WITH THE PRINCIPAL**

1. Tell me what you understand by communication.
2. What channels of communication do you often use when communicating with the staff?
3. What do you believe are your strengths and weaknesses as a communicator?
4. Do you use different communication skills in family, social, and business setting?
5. What communication skills do you believe you often demonstrate?
6. What are the barriers of communication for you as a woman principal?
7. What are the common activities in which you do much talking here at school?
8. Who do you often talk to?
9. Do you pay attention to gestures, stress, inflection, in your own voice? In other's voices?
10. What kind of non-verbal actions do the teachers in your school often show? How do they affect you?
11. Can you tell when people persuade you to do something? How?
12. Who ignores your instructions? What could be the reason? How do you deal with it?

13. Who co-operates when you give instructions? What do you think is the reason for cooperating?
14. What angers you when you talk to the teachers?
15. How is the communication between you and the other principals (both men and women) during principal's meetings, taking into account the small number of women principals?
16. How do female and male teachers respond differently when you communicate with them?
17. How do you feel when you are interrupted by the teachers when speaking?
18. How do teachers react when you interrupt them?
19. Give your comments about the loudness of the voices .
When you talk to the teachers.
20. When discussing in the staff meetings, what kinds of topics to argue?

APPENDIX D

3RD INTERVIEW WITH THE PRINCIPAL

1. Talk about the best day you had at school.
2. Discuss about the worst day you had at school.
3. Tell me about the day you had a good conversation with one or some of your staff members. Where did the conversation take place? Which teachers were you talking to? What were you talking about?
4. Tell me about the days you had arguments with some of the teachers (were they men or women?) How did you resolve it? How did you feel about the whole situation?
5. Say something about the attitudes of the teachers when you address them?
6. Do men and women communicate differently? How?

(NB more questions were generated from the principal's answers).

APPENDIX E**INTERVIEW WITH THE TEACHERS**

1. Tell me what you understand by communication.
2. What do you believe are strengths and weaknesses of women principals as communicators?
3. What channels of communication does the principal always use to communicate with the staff?
4. Do you differentiate the communication skills that you believe are important in family, social, and business setting?
5. What are the common activities in which you do much talking here at school?
6. Do you pay attention to gestures, stress, inflection, in your own voice? In other's voices?
7. What kinds of non-verbal actions does the principal always show when she speaks to the staff?
8. Do you think that the way you were brought up has anything to do with the way you communicate now? If yes, in what way? If not, tell me how you came to adopt your communicative style.
9. Tell me anything about the communication between you and the principal
10. How different do female and male teachers respond when the principal communicates with them?

11. What angers you when the principal talks?
12. How do you feel when you are interrupted by the principal when speaking?
13. How does she react when you interrupt her?
14. Can you tell me when the principal persuades you to do something? How? How do you receive it?
15. Tell me something about the principal's communication and her communicative styles
16. What are your comments about men and women's communication. Do men and women communicate differently? Why?

APPENDIX F
PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION GRID

OBSERVATION	DESCRIPTION
1. Who is in the scene	How many teachers present? Their gender, age and qualifications?
What is happening here?	Is it a staff meeting? What are they doing and saying to one another?
(a) How are both the principal and the teacher communicating verbally?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tag questions/minimal response • Questions • Apologies • Disclaimers, qualifiers, fillers • Commands and directives • Interruptions • Simultaneous talk • Verbosity • Verbal aggressiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arguments • Shouting • Loudness • Swearing • Smiling • Eye contact • Touch • Proxemics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usage of space • Approachability • Sitting position at the table • Kinesics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupation of space • Sitting position on the chair • Spreading of legs • Gestures • Posture • Facial expression • Tone of voice
(b) How are both the principal and the teacher communicating non-verbally?	
(c) What is the content of their conversation?	Content/What beliefs do the content of the conversation illustrates/ Who talks and who listens/

<p>3. Where is the meeting/conversation taking place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What physical setting forms their context? • What natural resources and technologies are created or used? • How do they allocate and use space and physical objects? • What sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and feelings are found in the context?
<p>4. When does the group meet and interact?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often and how long are these meetings? • How do they use time?
<p>5. How do identified verbal and nonverbal aspects interrelate?</p>	
<p>6. Why does the group act as it does?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What meanings do teachers and principals attribute to what they do • What traditions and worldviews can be found in this group of teachers and their principal?

APPENDIX G

LIST OF STAFF: THATHE HIGH SCHOOL

8 females: 21 males

GENDER	AGE	POSITION	SERVICE
1 Female	51	Principal	11 years
2 Male	39	Head of department	5 years
3 Male	37	Head of department	2 years
4 Female	35	Teacher	11 years
5 Male	41	Teacher	10 years
6 Male	35	Teacher	7 years
7 Male	38	Teacher	11 years
8 Male	39	Teacher	11 years
9 Male	41	Teacher	11 years
10 Male	37	Teacher	11 years
11 Male	36	Teacher	11 years
12 Female	38	Teacher	11 years
13 Female	35	Teacher	10 years
14 Male	34	Teacher	10 years
15 Female	40	Teacher	9 years
16 Male	36	Teacher	9 years
17 Male	32	Teacher	9 years
18 Female	32	Teacher	9 years
19 Male	33	Teacher	7 years
20 Male	33	Teacher	6 years
21 Female	28	Teacher	5 years
22 Male	26	Teacher	4 years
23 Female	30	Teacher	5 years
24 Male	33	Teacher	2 years
25 Male	25	Teacher	3 years
26 Male	27	Teacher	2 years
27 Male	42	Teacher	2 years
28 Male	30	Teacher	1 years
29 Male	27	Teacher	1 years

APPENDIX H

SCHOOL POLICY 1989

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 School management comprises the Principal, Deputy Principal and Heads of Departments.
- 1.2 All teachers must abide by the stipulations of the School Act (SASA).
- 1.3 All teachers are free to contact Management on any issue related to their duties.

2. CLASS TEACHERS

- 2.1 Each teacher assigned to a class is entirely responsible for the welfare and upkeep of his class.
- 2.2 Each class teacher is responsible for the attendance register for the class.
- 2.3 Attendance registers are to be marked daily in class during the time specified.
- 2.4 Attendance registers are to be submitted to the H.O.D. in charge of the summary register on the last school day of each week.
- 2.5 Whenever a pupil needs permission to leave the school yard during school hours, the class teacher must give him/her written permission which must then be signed by the Principal or H.O.D.

3. SUBJECT TEACHERS

- 3.1 Each teacher assigned a particular subject must follow the general time-table.
- 3.2 Teachers must not waste time at the beginning of a period to and from the class.

4. PERIOD REGISTERS

These are kept by the class monitor and have to be checked and signed by each subject teacher each period.

5. SUPERVISION OF PUPILS

Whenever a teacher is assigned to supervise pupils, he/she shall do this conscientiously.

6. DEPARTMENTAL BOOKS

- 6.1 Each subject teacher is responsible for the distribution and collection of the Departmental books for his/her subject.
- 6.2 The registers provided for the distribution are to be kept up to date. Departmental books are to be checked by the subject teacher at the end of every quarter.
- 6.3 All subject teachers must be absolutely accurate in keeping records for departmental books so as to avoid any inconvenience to the pupils and to Management at the end of the year.

7. SCHEME OF WORK AND DAILY PREPARATIONS

- 7.1 A scheme of work or work programme for each subject is to be drawn for each week of the school calendar in accordance with the requirements of the syllabus.
- 7.2 Lessons are prepared for each period and to be one week in advance.
- 7.3 The scheme of work/work programme and daily preparation are to be kept in a file and must be submitted according to the time table provided, on Tuesday during or before short break.
- 7.4 The file, scheme of work/work programme and daily preparation remain the property of the school and are to be handed back when a teacher terminates his/her service at the school.
- 7.5 Due date for submission of scheme and daily preparation will be provided.

8. TESTS AND PROGRESS RECORDS

- 8.1 Monthly tests will be written. The duration of each test and marks allocated are to be according to the specifications of the syllabus.

- 8.2 Questions and memoranda must be handed in, 3 days before the commencement of the test.
- 8.3 A test time-table is provided.
- 8.4 A full set of papers will be set for Std 9 pupils doing commercial subjects in August.
- 8.5 Class schedules are to be compiled quarterly.
- 8.6 Half year schedules shall be compiled from the monthly schedules and progress reports will be sent to parents/guardians at the end of each term.

9. TRIAL EXAMINATION

This examination shall be written by Std 7 and 10 pupils.

10. EXCURSIONS

Each department must organise educational tours for their departments.

11. COURSES

Teachers attending courses/meetings should write reports which must be submitted to their H.O.D's.

12. SUBJECT POLICY

Each department will, under the supervision of the H.O.D. or senior teacher, compile a policy (which may not contradict the school policy) to be followed for the particular subject or group of subjects.

PRINCIPAL:

TEACHER:

APPENDIX I**SCHOOL CONSTITUTION 1997**

1. NAME: E.P.P. Mhinga Secondary School Governing Body.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 To further the interests, well-being and education of the learners enrolled.
- 2.2 To promote harmony among learners, educators, parents and non-teaching staff.
- 2.3 To foster co-operation between the school and the immediate community within which it is situated.
- 2.4 To perform such acts and functions as may be necessary to attain the above aims and objectives.
- 2.5 To act democratically and transparently at all times.

3. ACTIVITIES OF THE GOVERNING BODY

The Governing Body shall perform such activities as are necessary in terms of the powers and duties assigned to it in the School Act or any relevant provincial regulations.

4. LIABILITY OF MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNING BODY

A member of the Governing Body will not be liable for any debt, damage or loss incurred by the school unless he or she acted without authorisation or malicious intent, in which case he or she may be held responsible for such debt, damage or loss.

5. MEMBERSHIP

- 5.1 Membership shall be open to all educators at the school, all parents/guardians of learners at the school, all learners at the school and members of the non-teaching staff.
- 5.2 Categories of members:
 - 5.2.1 Elected members
 - 5.2.2 Co-opted members
 - 5.2.3 The school Principal

6. ELECTION OF SGB

6.1 Time

6.1.1 Learners will elect their representatives annually in September.

6.1.2 Educators, non-teacher staff and parents will elect their representatives to hold office for 3 (three) years.

6.2 Electoral officer: Teachers trained for this duty shall be responsible for the election of the learners and the educators representatives.

SCHOOL MOTTO HLAWULEKANI HI MINTIRHO VISION STATEMENT

E.P.P. Mhinga High School's vision is:

To provide career-orientated quality education and creative thinking.

MISSION STATEMENT

E.P.P. Mhinga High School is committed to realise the vision of the school by:

- providing an intensive, flexible curriculum to learners.
- empowering educators with relevant skills through induction and in-service training.
- involving parents in the education of their children.
- providing relevant resources.

6.3 Office bearers. The following portfolio's are adopted for executive committee: Chairperson, Vice-chairperson, Secretary, Vice-secretary, Treasurer, Chaplain and additional members.

6.4 Facilitator for learners: one of the educator's representatives shall be the facilitator for learners in the PCL.

7. DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE SGB

7.1 The SGB shall perform all compulsory tasks as stipulated in section 20 of the S.A. School Act.

- 7.2 **The SGB shall be guided in its duties and powers by the SASA, Regulations for Governing Bodies of Public Schools, Northern Province Act 1995 and the South African Constitution.**
- 7.3 **The SGB may, after consultation with all stake-holders, apply for any allocated function(s) from the H.O.D.**

8. FINANCES

- 8.1 **School fund:** The SGB shall use the school fund established by the school committee.
- 8.2 **Annual budget:** The finance committee shall be responsible for drawing the annual budget during the last term of the previous year. This budget shall be approved by the SGB before it is implemented.
- 8.3 **The SGB shall decide on the amount to be contributed for each learner by the parent or guardian.**
- 8.4 **Financial records and audited statements:** The finance committee shall be responsible for keeping all financial records. All financial books shall be audited annually.

9. COMMITTEES OF THE SGB

- 9.1 **Parents of learners at the school and any relevant community members may be co-opted into subcommittees.**
- 9.2 **The following subcommittees have been adopted:** finance, policy-making, fund-raising and provisioning.
- 9.3 **Other subcommittees may be established whenever a need arises.**

10. REIMBURSEMENT OF SGB MEMBERS

- 10.1 **No member of the SGB shall be imburshed for his/her services in the SGB.**
- 10.2 **The SGB shall carry the financial responsibilities for all expenses incurred on behalf of it.**

11. VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION

The SGB shall have a right to join any association of its choice as long as such an association is for the benefit of education.

12. MEETINGS

- 12.1 **The executive shall meet regularly according to the year programme.**

- 12.2 Subcommittees shall meet at least once per quarter.
- 12.3 The Annual General Meetings shall be held: one during the first term of each year.
- 12.4 Emergency meetings shall be called whenever a need arises.

13. MEETING PROCEDURES

- 13.1 The Chairperson of each committee shall be responsible for arranging for and chairing meetings.
- 13.2 The secretary shall invite members to meetings at least 14 days before the date of a meeting.
- 13.3 Management shall keep the records of the committees in files.

14. CASUAL VACANCY

The SGB shall co-opt a suitable individual to fill in any casual vacancy that may arise.

15. REPORTING OF SGB ACTIVITIES TO COMPONENTS

- 15.1 The learners, educators and non-teaching staff representatives shall give a report to their colleagues within two week after each SGB meeting.
- 15.2 Parents shall be given a report during the AGM.

16. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION

Amendments to the constitution shall be effected if at least $\frac{2}{3}$ of the members at a general meeting convened for the purpose of considering such a matter are in favour of such an amendment.

17. CODE OF CONDUCT AND POLICIES

- 17.1 Various policies shall be drawn by the subcommittee charged with this task in consultation with the relevant component(s).
- 17.2 The code of conduct for learners shall be part of the PCL constitution.
- 17.3 The SACE code of conduct is adopted for educators.
- 17.4 The staff code is adopted for the non-teaching staff.

18. NON-DISCRIMINATION

There shall be no unfair discrimination on the following grounds: race, gender, sex, religion, disability, culture or language.

19. LANGUAGE POLICY

19.1 English shall be the medium of instruction.

19.2 English, Xitsonga and Afrikaans shall be the languages offered at the school.

20. ADMISSION

The admission subcommittee shall be responsible for this and are to be guided by policy.

21. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

This form of punishment shall no longer be used.

22. REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL OF LEARNERS

All learners in Grade 8-12 shall be eligible for election into this body.

23. USE OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND FURNITURE

Permission for the use of the school buildings and furniture by the community shall be at the discretion of the school Management.

24. DISSOLUTION OF THE SGB

This shall be the prerogative of the H.O.D. as the School Act stipulates.

Signed by:

CHAIRPERSON

SECRETARY:

PRINCIPAL:

At

APPENDIX J**SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY (SGB) SCHOOL POLICY 1997****1. ACADEMIC AND MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

- 1.1 Management shall be responsible for ensuring that all Departments draw up policies for their learning areas.
- 1.2 Management shall draw up a policy which shall be in line with Circuit, Area, Region and Provincial policies.

2. MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

English shall be the medium of instruction at the school.

3. ADMISSION OF LEARNERS

- 3.1 A learner who qualifies for admission to the school in a particular grade shall be eligible for admission.
- 3.2 Admission of any learner shall be subject to the availability of space.
- 3.3 The parent/guardian and the learner must sign a declaration to abide by the rules and regulations of the school before the learner is admitted or registered at the school.
- 3.4 A committee consisting of learners and educators shall be responsible for the registration of new learners.

4. SCHOOL FEES

Each parent has to contribute the amount stipulated for the school fees and any other contribution that may be decided upon by parents of learners in the school.

5. EDUCATION TOURS

- 5.1 Parents have to give consent for their children to undertake educational excursions and to pay for such expenses. Such consent allows the educator(s) in charge to act in loco parentis' in case of emergency.
- 5.2 If a learner destroys any property when out on an educational excursion, his/her parents shall be responsible for the repair/replacement of such a property.

6. MISCONDUCT

- 6.1 If a learner misbehaves whilst at school for during educational excursion, the matter shall be referred to the Disciplinary Committee at the school.
- 6.2 If a learner has committed a misconduct which is deemed to require the involvement of her/his parents by the Disciplinary Committee, they shall be invited to the school to attend to it.
- 6.3 If a parent is invited to the school as under the circumstances referred to under 6.2 above, the learner shall not be allowed back at school until the parents respond.

6.4 In case of gross misconduct, the school shall apply the recommendations as set out in the document entitled: **Guidelines for the consideration of Governing Bodies in adopting a code of conduct for learner.**

7. ILLNESS/DISEASE

7.1 If a learner suffers from a chronic disease, the parents must inform the school and provide the school with the relevant document if applicable.

7.2 Should a learner need medical attention while at school, educators may act in loco parentis if need be.

8. MEETINGS

8.1 All parents must attend meetings to which they are invited.

8.2 If a parent is unable to attend a meeting he/she should send an apology in writing.

8.3 If a parent fails to attend a meeting without an apology, rule 6.3 above shall apply.

9. SCHOOL PROPERTY

Learners must take care of school property. If a learner destroys school property her/his parents shall pay for its repair or replacement.

10. PREGNANCY

If a learner fall pregnant, her parents must inform the school management to discuss the matter with them, so that the child is placed under the care of the parents. If the educators notice that a learner is pregnant, the school management shall inform the parents and invite them for a discussion.

11. CODE OF CONDUCT THAT SHALL APPLY

11.1 For learners: adopted code of conduct for learners.

11.2 For educators: the SACE Code of conduct.

11.3 For non-teaching staff: The Public Servants' Act/code of conduct.

12. FREEDOM OF RELIGION

12.1 Freedom of religion shall be observed.

12.2 Morning devotion shall be compulsory for all learners since this shall be utilised for educational enhancement of learners rather than teaching a particular religion.

Signed by:

..... DATE

..... DATE

..... DATE

APPENDIX K**LRC VISION, MISSION AND CODE OF CONDUCT DOCUMENT (1997)****1. VISION**

- We would like that the learners being helped at the end of our LRC.
- We would like to achieve power of leadership so that we can run out LRC well.
- We would like to get good result at the end of the year.

2. MISSION

- All the stakeholders must work together.
- We must work hand in hand to reach our goals.

3. CODE OF CONDUCT**3.1 ABSENTEEISM**

- All learners must be present at school on each school day.
- All learners must be present for morning devotion, lessons, afternoon studies/activities.

3.2 PUNCTUALITY

- 3.2.1 Learners must arrive in time for schooling.
- 3.2.2 Learners must avoid to be late.
- 3.2.3 The gates must be closed 10 minutes after the first bell.
- 3.2.4 Late comers must be punished mildly before they get to class.

3.3 SCHOOL WORK AND RESPONSIBILITY

- Every learner has the right to write tests and examinations.
- All tests and examinations are to be written by all learners.

3.4 TIMETABLE

- Every learner must have his or her own timetable which must include all activities and studying time.
- Every class representative should ensure that the class has its own timetable so that learners can refer to it.

3.5 BEHAVIOUR

3.5.1 Towards each other

- There must be respect amongst us.

3.5.2 Towards teachers and other employees

- All learners must respect teachers and all other employees at the school.

3.5.3 Towards visitors

- We must treat them in such a way that they will feel welcomed.

3.6 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

3.6.1 *Communicating with school.*

3.6.1.1 All parents of learners at the school must attend all meetings whenever they are invited.

3.6.1.2 All learners must inform their parents about meetings called.

3.6.2 *Involvement of learners in learners school work*

- They must check their child's school work.

3.6.3 *Contribution by parents.*

- Parents who volunteer to help are welcomed, for example, in making repairs for windows, doors, chalkboards, et cetera.

3.7 **CONTROL**

3.7.1 *LATE COMING*

- 3.7.1.1 Learners who can come late at school must be punished.
- 3.7.1.2 If a learner refuses punishment, he or she must go back home and come back with his or her parents before he or she can be allowed to attend the lessons.

3.7.2 *DODGING*

- 3.7.2.1 A learner who dodges at school should be reported to his or her parents.
- 3.7.2.2 The parent of that learner should come to school to talk with management.

3.7.3 *FIGHTING*

- 3.7.3.1 Learners who fight at school must be sent to the disciplinary committee of the school.
- 3.7.3.2 The disciplinary committee should find ways of solving the problem.

3.7.4 *SERIOUS MISBEHAVIOUR*

- 3.7.4.1 If a learner can come to school with anything which is not allowed at school, eg, liquor, drugs, cigarettes, et cetera, his or her parents must be invited to school to talk with the principal.
- 3.7.4.2 If that learner continues to do the same thing he must be reported to the South African police Services.

3.8 **PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTIONS**

- 3.8.1 If a learner has a problem or suggestion he or she must tell the class representative or class teacher.
- 3.8.2 If a class has a problem or a suggestion they must report it to the class teacher.
- 3.8.3 If learners have a problem that is general, they must report it to the RCL who must take it to the management.

3.10 PREGNANCY

If a learner falls pregnant, her parents must inform the school management so that the matter can be attended to.

3.11 EDUCATIONAL TRIPS

- Whenever learners have to undertake an educational trip, eg. subject trips, all the learners have to be informed.
- If learners decide to have a trip on a particular subject, they must tell the school about it.
- Where possible, trips should not be undertaken during the week.

3.12 DECLARATION

All learners who are registered at the school must sign a declaration to abide by the rules and regulations of the school.

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