

**CHALLENGES OF WOMEN LEADERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS:  
OVERCOMING BARRIERS THROUGH TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

by

**MUSA GRACE ZITHA**

(Student Number: 3586-838-4)

submitted in accordance with the requirements for  
the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

in the subject

**EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR R.I. LUMADI**

June 2022

## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the challenges of women leaders in South African schools. It was motivated by the discovery in several studies that although women dominate the South African education sector, they are heavily underrepresented in leadership, particularly at the level of the school principal. Therefore, it was vital to explore the factors that could serve as challenges for women to ascend to leadership positions. Using the Gauteng Province Department of Education in South Africa as the case study, this study adopted a qualitative, exploratory case study research approach. A triangulation of theories, namely feminism, theory of change, and transformational leadership, was utilised to guide data search and analysis. Data sources were secondary sources as well as an empirical investigation through in-depth interviews and personal observations. Methodological limitations caused by Covid-19 included more costs on data and purchases of library material. The study found that women in the Gauteng Province Department of Education were largely absent from leadership positions. In addition, they faced a broad spectrum of challenges that made them either regret being in leadership positions or resign from these positions. This was confirmed in this study in which out of the six schools that were chosen as case studies, four had men as principals (67%) while only two schools had women principals (33%). Regarding deputy principals, three schools had women deputies while another three had male deputies. This study found that inordinate challenges existed that blocked women from assuming or retaining leadership roles. These challenges emerged from the country's history of colonialism and apartheid; cultural and religious beliefs which sustain patriarchy; home-work conflicts; institutional factors, including glass-ceiling, coaching, networking, and mentorship challenges; personal factors, including a lack of self-confidence and poor self-image; education and training; inadequate support structures; absence of political will to address the plight of women employees; and unethical practices, including corruption, nepotism, and tribalism, among others. This study, thus, concluded that women leaders or those aspiring to leadership positions faced huge challenges in the Gauteng Province Department of Education. To deal with these challenges, a recommendation in this study proposes the implementation of transformational leadership. It posits that transformation, in terms of leadership, in the Gauteng Department of Education, needs to start at the department level before it can

come down to the school level. Transforming the entire Gauteng Province Department of Education as part of the collective effort to eliminate the challenges women face in schools requires the collective support of everyone across the body from the national level. Most importantly, it requires political intervention. The thesis posits that radicalism, such as that pushed forward under feminism, particularly under radical feminism, is not likely to yield any results as both men and women will oppose it. They would blame it for seeking not only to disrupt society but also to disrupt their own lives by complicating the relationships between men and women. More research is needed on the productive levels of male versus women leaders in the Gauteng Province Department of Education. This can be measured in terms of pass rates or any other variables. Research is also needed on why the Department of Basic Education continues to make timid progress in gender representation in leadership positions while other departments are making some progress, although not very significant. In exploring these issues, it may be essential to change the research strategy from what was used in this study since the use of a qualitative research methodology alone can generate a biased picture.

**Keywords:** Education, gender, Gauteng Province Department of Education, South Africa, transformational leadership, women's challenges, women leaders

## MANWELEDZOGUTE

Ngudo hei i sedzulusa nga ha khaedu dzo ambarelaho vhurangaphanda ha mbeu ya tshifumakadzini; kha zwickolo zwa Afurika Tshipembe. Ngudo iyi i dovha hafhu ya tutuwedza nga ha mawanwa a manwalwa ane a ri naho vhafumakadzi vho dalesa kha sia la pfunzo kha Afurika Tshipembe, a vho ngo imelelwa kha vhurangaphanda, zwi hulwane kha maimo a thoho dza zwickolo. Ndi ngazwo zwo vhone zwi zwa ndeme uri hu todisiswe zwithu zwine zwa nga vha zwivhanga zwa khaedu dza vhafumakadzi dzine dza vha thivhela uri vha vhe kha maimo a vhurangaphanda. Hu tshi shumiswa ngudo yo sendamelaho kha vundu la Gauteng kha muhasho wa pfunzo kha la Afurika Tshipembe; ngudo hei yo disendeka kha tzedzuluso ya ndeme. Kha matavhi mazhi o disendekaho kha tshifumakadzi, vhurangaphanda ho shandukaho, zwo shumiswa kha mawanwa na tsenguluso. Zwiko zwa mawanwa zwo vha zwo ditika nga maambiwa a bvaho kha vhanwe vhathu; na thodisiso ya mbudziso na kudzielwe kwa zwithu zwi bvaho kha iwe mune. U pimiwa ho vhangwaho nga dwadze la Covid -19, zwo nanisa u dura ha mawanwa na u renga zwishumiswa zwa u vhala laiburari. Ngudo hei yo wanulusisa uri kha vundu la Gauteng, vhezhi ha vhafumakadzi vha a kala u wanala kha maimo a vhurangaphanda. Zwinwe hafhu; ndi zwauri vha tangana na khaedu dzo fhambanano dzine dza ita uri vha disole arali vha kha vhurangaphanda kana vha pose tshovha. Izwi zwo khwathisedzwa kha ngudo iyi he kha zwickolo zwa rathi zwe zwa nangwa sa ngudo dzo randelwaho sia leneli; zwi nga vha zwa vharangaphanda vha tshinnani (67%), ngeno zwickolo zwivhili zwo vha na vharangaphanda vha tshifumakadzini (33%). Kha sia la tshanda tsha vhathusi vha thoho dza zwickolo, zwickolo zwiraru zwo wanala zwi na vhafumakadzi vha re tshanda tsha thoho dza zwickolo ngeno zwiraru zwo vha zwi na vha tshinnani. Ngudo hei yo dovha hafhu ya wana u ri khaedu dza u tsikeledza dzi ita uri vhafumakadzi vha shaye dora la vhurangaphanda kana u dzula vha kha maimo a vhurangaphanda. Thaidzo idzo, dzo toka midzi kha divhazwakale ya shango lashu yo sedzaho zwa u dzhiela zwa vharema fhasi na khetano nga lukanda, sialala na thendo dza vhurerele dzi tutuwedzaho u dzhiela vhanna ntha, thaidzo dza midini, zwithu zwa mishumoni sa u pfumbudza, tshumisano na thaidzo dza u pfumbudzwa, thaidzo dza muthu nga ene mune sa u shaya u difhulufhela, na u di dzhiela fhasi, pfunzo na u gudiswa, u shaya thikhedzo yo teaho, u sa vha na muya wa u difunga

uri u ambe nga ha dengetenge line vhafumakadzi vha vha kha lo mishumoni, kushumele kwa vhuada, tshidivhano, tshandanguvhoni, tshishaka na khethululo yo sedzaho dzitshaka na zwinwe zwinzhi. Hei ngudo yo fhedza nga uri vhafumakadzi vha vharangaphanda kana vhane vha tama u vha kha vhurangaphanda, vha livhana na khaedu khulwane kha muhasho wa pfunzo vunduni la Gauteng. U lwa na hedzi khaedu, ngudo hei i dzinginya la uri hu vhe na vhurangaphanda ho shandukaho nga u dzhiela nthu mbeu dzothe. Hu dzinginywa la uri vhurangaphanda ho shandukaho, kha muhaso wa pfunzo vunduni la Gauteng, vhu tea u thoma nthu kha luta lwa muhasho vhu sathu u tsela fhasi zwikoloni. U shandukisa muhasho wa pfunzo wothe vunduni la Gauteng, sa tshipida tsha u lwa na thaidzo dzo ambarelaho mbeu ya tshifumakadzini zwikoloni zwi toda thikhedzo yothe kha muthu munwe na munwe kha lushaka lwothe. Zwi hulwane ndi zwa uri zwi toda u ri hu dzhenelele polotiki. Hei pfunzo i bula u ri, u kandekanya pfanelo dza muthu, sa zwine zwa khou itelwa vhafumakadzi vha tshi kandedzwa, a zwi nga anwi mitshelo sa izwi vnanna na vhafumakadzi vha tshi do lwa nayo. Vha do zwi sasaladza hu si u toda u xedza lushaka, fhedzi hu u ri zwi si khakhise na kutshilele kwavho sa izwi zwi tshi nga vha na masia nda itwa kha vhanna na vhafumakadzi. Thodisiso nnzhi dzi kha di tea u itwa vunduni la Gauteng dzo disendekahio nga u bvelela ha vhanna ri tshi vha vhambedza na vhafumakadzi. Izwi zwi nga kalea nga tshileme tsha u phasa ha vhagudiswa kana zwezwo zwine zwa nga shumiswa. Thodisiso i dovha hafhu ya todea ya uri ndi ngani muhasho wa pfunzo u tshi khou kokodza milenzhe siani la ndinganyelo dza maimo i kwamaho mbeu dzothe. U ri fhungo ili li lale, zwi nga todea u shandukisa ndila ine thodisiso ya nga vha yone yo fhambanaho na zwo gudwaho. U vha na kuhumbulele kwa uri thodisiso dza ndeme ndi dzone fhedzi dzine dza nga anwa mitshelo dzi dzothe zwi a xedza lushaka.

**Maipfiandeme:** pfunzo, mbeu, muhasho wa wa pfunzo vunduni la Gauteng, Afurika Tshipembe, vharangaphanda ho shandukaho vhu katelaho munwe na munwe hu sa sedzi mbeu, thaidzo dzo ambarelaho vhafumakadzi, vharangaphanda vha vhafumakadzi

## XIANAKANYIWA

Dyondzo leyi yi lavisisa mintlhontlho ya varhangeri vaxisati eswikolweni swa Afrika-Dzonga. Leswi swi hlohloteriwile hi ku tshuburiwa eka tidyondzo to hlayanyana leswaku hambileswi vavasati va lawulaka xiyenge xa dyondzo ya Afrika-Dzonga va kumeka va nga yimeriwi ngopfu eka vurhangeri, ngopfungopfu eka xiyimo xa nhloko ya xikolo. Hikokwalaho, a swi ri swa nkoka ku lavisisa swilo leswi nga tirhaka tanihi mintlhontlho eka vavasati ku tlhandlukela eka swivandla swa vurhangeri. Ku tirhisa Ndzawulo ya dyondzo ya xifundzankulu xa Gauteng eAfrika-Dzonga tanihi dyondzo ya xiyimo, dyondzo leyi yi amukela ndlela ya xiyimo, endlelo ra ndzavisiso wa dyondzo ya xiyimo xo lavisisa. Ku hlanganisiwa ka tithiyori ya matlhelo manharhu, ku nga vufeminisi, dyondzo yaku cinca, na vurhangeri bya ku cinca, yi tirhisiwile ku kongomisa eka hungunyana ku lavisisa na ku xopaxopa. Xihlovo xa hungunyana leri a ku ri swihlovo swa vumbirhi xikan'we na ndzavisiso wa ku tirhisa empiriki, hi ku tirhisa mimbulavurisano leyi dzikeke ni ku xiyisisa ka munhu hi leswi swi xiyiweke. Swipimelo swa maendlelo leswi swi vangyiweke hi Covid-19 swi katsa tihakelo to tala eka hungunyana hi ku xava swilo swa le layiburari. Nkambisiso wu kumile leswaku vavasati eka ndzawulo ya dyondzo ya exifundzheninkulu xa Gauteng va pfumaleka hi vunyingi ku suka eka swiyimo swa vurhangeri. Ku engetela kwalaho, va langutane ni swiphiso swo tala leswi endleke leswaku va tisola hi ku va va ri eka swikhundla/swivandla swa vurhangeri kutani va tshika eka swona. Leswi swi tiyisiwile eka ndzavisiso lowu leswaku hi swihi swikolo swa tsevu leswi hlawuriweke tanihi tidyondzo ta timhaka, mune a ku ri na vavanuna tanihi tinhloko ta swikolo (67%) kasi i swikolo swimbirhi ntsena leswi a swi ri na tinhloko ta swikolo tani hi vavasati (33%). Mayelana na vaseketeri va tinhloko ta swikolo, swikolo swinharhu a swi ri na vaseketeri va vavasati kasi van'wana vanharhu a va ri va vinuna. Ndzavisiso lowu wu kumile leswaku mintlhontlho leyi nga ringaniki a yi ri kona leyi a yi sivela vavasati ku teka kumbe ku hlayisa mintirho ya swiphemu swa vurhangeri. Mintlhontlho leyi yi humelerile eka matimu ya tiko ya vukoloni na xihlawuhlawu, ripfumelo ra ndhavuko na vukhongereri lebyi hlayisaka vupatriyaka ku lwisana ni ntirho wa le kaya, swilo swa nhlango, ku katsa na silingi ya nghilazi, ku letela, ku endla vuxaka bya le inthanete, na mintlhontlho ya vuleteri, swilo swa munhu hi xiyexe, ku katsa ni ku pfumala ku titsheмба, ni ku tivona loku nga ri ki kahle, dyondzo na vuleteri, swivumbeko swa nseketelo leswi nga ringanelangiki, ku

pfumaleka ka swa tipolitiki ku ta lulamisa xiyimo xa vatirhi vaxisati ni maendlelo lama nga ri ki ya mahanyelo lamanene, ku katsa ni vukungundzwana, ku va ni vuxaka bya rimbewu, na ku hambanyisiwa ka tinxaka exikarhi ka van'wana. Dyondzo leyi, xisweswo, yi gimete hi ku vula leswaku varhangeri va xisati kumbe lava va navelaka ku va na swivandla/swikhundla swa vurhangeri va langutane na mintlhontlho leyikulu eka Ndzawulo ya dyondzo ya xifundzhankulu xa Gauteng. Ku langutana ni swiphiso leswi, xitsundzuxo eka ndzavisiso lowu xi ringanyeta ku tirhisiwa ko cinca ka vurhangeri, yi veka leswaku ku hundzuluka, hi mayelana na vurhangeri. Eka ndzawulo ya dyondzo ya le Gauteng, swi lava ku sungula eka xiyimo xa ndzawulo swi nga si fika ehansi ka xiyimo xa xikolo. Ku hundzula ndzawulo hinkwayo ya dyondzo ya xifundzhankulu xa Gauteng tani hi xiphemu xa matshalatshala ya nhlanguanelo yo herisa mintlhontlho leyi vavasati va langutaneke na yona eswikolweni, swi lava nseketelo lowu hlanganeke wa un'wana na un'wana eka bodo hinkwayo. Ku suka eka xiyimo xa rixaka xa nkoka swinene, swi lava ku nghenelela la ka tipolitiki. Thesis yi veka leswaku ku va ni vuxiyaxiya lebyi byi susumeteleke emahlweni eka rimbewu ra vavasati, ngopfungopfu ehansi ka vuxiyaxiya bya rimbewu eka vaxisati, a swi tikombi leswaku swi ta humesa mbuyelo wo karhi tani hi leswi vavanuna na vavasati va ta kanetana naswona. A va ta yi sola hi leswi a yi nga lavi ku kavanyeta vaaki ntsena kambe ni ku hlangahlanganisa vuxaka exikarhi ka vavanuna ni vavasati. Ndzavisiso wo tala wa laveka eka swiyimo swa vuhumelerisi bya vurhangeri eka xifundhankulu xa Gauteng eka ndzawulo ya dyondzo. Leswi swi nga pimiwa hi ku ya hi mimpimo yak u pasa kumbe swilo swin'wana leswi cinca cincaka. Ndzavisiso wu tlhela wu laveka eka leswaku hikokwalaho ka yini ndzawulo ya dyondzo ya lehansi yi ya emahlweni yi endla nhluvuko wa tingana eka vuyimeri bya rimbewu eka swivandla swa vurhangeri loko tindzawulo tin'wana tiri karhi tiendla nhluvuko, hambani leswi swi nga riki swa nkoka swinene. Eku kambisiseni ka timhaka leti, swinga va swa nkoka ku cinca maqhinga ya ndzavisiso ku suka eka leswi tirhisiweke eka ndzavisiso lowu tanihi leswi ku tirhisiwaka enlelo ra ndzavisiso wa xiyimo ntsena ri nga humesa xifaniso lexi nga na xihlawuhlalu ntsena.

**Marito ya nkoka:** Dyondzo, Rimbewu, Ndzawulo ya Dyondzo, ya xifundzhankulu xa Gauteng, Afrika Dzong, Vurhangeri bya ku cinca, Mintlhontlho ya vavasati, varhangeri va vavasati

## DECLARATION

Name: Musa Grace Zitha

Student number: 35868384

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy in the subject of Educational Management

### **CHALLENGES OF WOMEN LEADERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS: OVERCOMING CHALLENGES THROUGH TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

I declare that the above thesis is the product of my own research; and that all the sources that I have quoted or referred to have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that this thesis has not been previously submitted, in part or in whole, for examination at any institution for another qualification.

SIGNATURE:



DATE: 5 June 2022



## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to all South African women teachers who strive to succeed career-wise while they fight injustices caused by patriarchy and challenges in balancing home and work lives.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Rudzani Israel Lumadi, for his patience, dedication, and guidance over the past couple of years throughout my Master's and PhD journeys. His availability through possible contact and timeous response and feedback has been the most potent asset throughout my studies at the University of South Africa.
- THANK YOU to Uitsig Primary School staff members for making my leadership responsibilities easier. Extended gratitude goes to Loshinee, Jenet, Marina, Kholeka, Rianda, and Mathabo for carrying out their managerial duties effectively. You girls are ample evidence that girls can lead any organisation if provided with opportunity and support. Working at Uitsig during this study made it possible for me to complete it on time.
- My beautiful children Nhlalala (19), Enetta (17), and Rixaladza (9) for understanding my absence in their lives when they most needed me. Nhlalala and Enetta always assisted Rixaladza with the homework, and Rixaladza constantly reminded me of my study meetings. A huge THANK YOU to Lala (Nhlalala), who always stole her engineering studies moments to assist me with proofreading, searching for information, and computer skills tutorials. Thank you, Lala, for constantly massaging my feet after a long day of studying.
- My mothers, Mhani Mthavini N'wa-Magezi, Mhani Ndaheni Simailina and Mhani Tsatsawani-Mrs Hlongwane Senior. These three women have been my pillars of strength and did not expect me to carry out chores traditionally perceived as a woman's duty while I was studying. Most importantly, I thank my supportive and selfless husband, Tim Hlongwane, for investing so much in my career life and studies. Dear roommate, thank you so much for allowing me to be an 'absent' wife when you most needed me. Your mentorship and understanding of women's challenges made me who I am today. I love you.

- I could not have completed this study on time if it was not for Microsoft Team's **M&D Writing Group 2022**. Anelien Venter, my beautiful twin sister, thank you for starting this amazing group and for your willingness to assist all of us with our work. You put so much of your studying time aside to help us. Your expertise in formatting, searching for information, diagrams, tutoring, and mentoring stands out. M&D Writing Group 2022 is like a free academy of learning. You are a superhero 'supervisor'.
- Special gratitude also goes to the 91 000+ members of my Facebook group, **South African Teachers**. Their engagement in educational discussions led to my growth during my study.
- I wish to thank all the teaching staff participants in this study. My friends, principals Aggy and Basani, thank you for going beyond my request by organising your schools' staff to participate. Thank you so much, the School Governing Body members, unions, associations, and district officials.
- I want to thank the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) for allowing me to conduct interviews in their schools.
- UNISA played a significant role in my study by offering me a bursary.
- Lastly, I thank God for His guidance and love throughout this study. God has been my pillar and strength when I could not move.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>MANWELEDZOGUTE .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>XIANAKANYIWA .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>DECLARATION .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>DEDICATION .....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES.....</b>	<b>xviii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>xix</b>
<b>ACRONYMS .....</b>	<b>xx</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Introduction and Background .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1.1 Global Evidence for Organisational Transformation .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.1.2 International Policy Frameworks on Supporting Gender Equality .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.1.3 National Policy Frameworks on Supporting Gender Equality .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.2 Rationale for the Study .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.3 Statement of the Problem.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.4 Aim of the Study.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.5 Objectives of the Study .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.6 Research Questions.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.6.1 Subordinate Sub-Questions.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.7 Literature Review .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.7.1 Definition of Leadership.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.7.2 Definition of Empowerment .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.7.3 Discourses on Leadership and Empowerment in Education.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1.7.4 Leadership Styles .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>1.7.5 Transformation and Institutional Change .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>1.7.6 Theoretical Framework.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>1.8 Contribution of the Study .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>1.9 Research Methodology and Design.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>1.10 Definitions of the Key Concepts .....</b>	<b>19</b>

1.11 Outline of Chapters .....	19
1.12 Chapter Summary .....	22
<b>CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT</b> .....	<b>23</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	23
2.2 The Feminism Theory .....	24
2.3 Perspectives of Feminism .....	26
2.3.1 The Marxist Perspective .....	26
2.3.2 The Socialist Perspective .....	27
2.3.3 Radical Perspective .....	28
2.3.4 Liberal Perspective .....	29
2.3.5 Masculinity Perspective .....	30
2.3.6. The Eco-Feminism Perspective .....	31
2.4 Revisiting the Principles of Feminism.....	32
2.4.1. Patriarchy .....	33
2.5 Social Institutions and Supremacy.....	34
2.5.1 Economic Participation .....	35
2.5.2 Political System .....	36
2.5.3 Family.....	36
2.5.4 Religion and Culture .....	37
2.6 Theory of Change.....	38
2.6.1 Capacity .....	39
2.6.2 Household Influence.....	39
2.6.3 Productivity .....	40
2.7 Transformational Leadership Theory .....	41
2.8 Chapter Summary .....	47
<b>CHAPTER THREE: WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL</b> <b>EFFORTS</b> .....	<b>48</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	48
3.2 International Frameworks on Transformation and Empowerment .....	48
3.2.1 The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against iWomen (CEDAW) .....	49
3.2.2 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights .....	54

3.2.3 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)	55
3.2.4 The African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (ACHPR)	55
3.2.5 The Beijing Platform for Action	56
3.2.5.1 Education and Training	56
3.2.5.2 Unequal Access to Healthcare Services	58
3.2.5.3 Resources Allocation	59
3.2.5.4 Representation in decision-making Structures	60
3.2.6 The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)	60
3.2.6.1 Eradication of Poverty	61
3.2.6.2 Achieving Universal Primary Education	61
3.2.6.3 Promotion of Gender Equality	62
3.2.6.4 Child Mortality	63
3.2.6.5 Combating HIV/AIDS	64
3.2.7 The Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SGD)	64
3.3 Overview of the South African Women’s Empowerment Agenda	66
3.3.1 Women’s Charter of 1954, and Women’s Charter for Effective Equality, 1994	66
3.3.2 The South African Constitution, 1996	67
3.3.3 Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 (EEA)	68
3.3.4 Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 (SDA)	68
3.3.5 Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act	69
3.3.6 National Policy Framework for Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality	70
3.3.7 The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE)	71
3.3.8 The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC)	72
3.4 The Condition of Gender Equality in South Africa	73
3.4.1 The Status of Gender Equality South African Public Institutions	76
3.5 The Condition of Gender Equality in the South Africa Education Sector	81
3.6 Chapter Summary	82
CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	84
4.1 Introduction	84
4.2 Research Design	84

<b>4.3 Research Philosophy</b> .....	<b>86</b>
4.3.1 Interpretivism.....	87
<b>4.4 Research Strategies</b> .....	<b>88</b>
4.4.1 The Qualitative Research Strategy .....	89
<b>4.5 Research Site</b> .....	<b>91</b>
<b>4.6 Research Population and Sampling</b> .....	<b>92</b>
4.6.1 Probability Sampling.....	93
4.6.2 Non-probability Sampling.....	94
<b>4.7 Research Instrument</b> .....	<b>96</b>
4.7.1 Interview guides .....	96
4.7.2.1 <i>Interview Guide for Educators</i> .....	97
4.7.2.2 <i>Interview Guide for School Governing Board Members</i> .....	97
4.7.2.3 <i>Interview Guide for Union Representative and District Officials</i> .....	98
4.7.3 Review of Secondary Data.....	98
<b>4.8 Pilot Study</b> .....	<b>99</b>
<b>4.9 Administration of the Interview Guides</b> .....	<b>99</b>
<b>4.10 Data Analysis</b> .....	<b>100</b>
<b>4.11 Trustworthiness</b> .....	<b>102</b>
<b>4.12 Elimination of Bias</b> .....	<b>103</b>
<b>4.13 Limitations of the Study</b> .....	<b>104</b>
<b>4.14 Ethical Considerations</b> .....	<b>104</b>
<b>4.15 Chapter Summary</b> .....	<b>106</b>
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS</b> .....	<b>107</b>
<b>5.1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>107</b>
<b>5.2 Demographic Data of Participants</b> .....	<b>107</b>
5.2.1 Gender Composition of Participants.....	108
<b>5.3 Summary of the Major Emerging Themes and Sub-themes</b> .....	<b>111</b>
<b>5.4 Discrimination</b> .....	<b>112</b>
5.4.1 Colonialism.....	114
5.4.2 Apartheid .....	117
<b>5.5 Culture and Discrimination Against Women</b> .....	<b>120</b>
5.5.1 Patriarchy and Women’s Subordination .....	122

5.5.2 Stereotypes and Women’s Discrimination .....	124
5.5.3 Home-work Conflict .....	127
5.6 Institutional Factors .....	128
5.6.1 Glass Ceiling .....	129
5.6.2 Coaching for Leadership.....	130
5.6.3 Mentorship.....	132
5.6.4 Networking .....	134
5.6.5 Lack of Support.....	136
5.6.6 Male Gender Preferences .....	139
5.7 Personal and Psychological Challenges.....	142
5.7.1 Self-confidence and Self-esteem.....	142
5.7.2 Poor Self-image.....	146
5.7.3 Family Responsibility .....	147
5.8 Education and Training .....	148
5.8.1 Qualifications .....	149
5.8.2 Work Experience .....	151
5.9 Support Structures.....	152
5.9.1 Political Support.....	153
5.9.2 Family and Community Support.....	155
5.9.3 Supervisory and Managerial Support.....	156
5.10 Leadership .....	158
5.11 Governance .....	161
5.11.1 Political Governance.....	161
5.11.2 School Governing Body Governance.....	163
5.11.3 Labour Union Governance .....	165
5.12 Recruitment .....	167
5.13 Unethical Practices .....	169
5.14 Chapter Summary .....	171
<b>CHAPTER SIX: TOWARDS OVERCOMING WOMEN LEADERS’ CHALLENGES THROUGH TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP .....</b>	<b>173</b>
6.1 Introduction .....	173
6.2 Demographic Incongruities .....	173
6.3 Towards Resolving Historical Challenges .....	175



<b>6.4 Addressing Sources of Women's Challenges .....</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>6.4.1 The Obstinate Primitive Culture .....</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>6.4.2 Obstinate Primitive Religious Elements .....</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>6.4.3 Stereotypes as a Barrier to Women's Leadership.....</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>6.4.4 Home-work Conflict .....</b>	<b>190</b>
<b>6.5 Towards Resolving Institution-based Challenges for Women’s Leadership. 192</b>	
<b>6.5.1 Institutional Glass Ceiling .....</b>	<b>192</b>
<b>6.5.2 The Diagnostic Potential of Coaching for Leadership.....</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>6.5.3 In Pursuit of Mentorship.....</b>	<b>198</b>
<b>6.5.4 Utilising Networking to Overcome Women's Leadership Challenges.....</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>6.5.5 Towards Eliminating Male Gender Preferences .....</b>	<b>204</b>
<b>6.6 Dealing with Personal and Psychological Challenges.....</b>	<b>207</b>
<b>6.6.1 Lack of Self-confidence and Poor Self-esteem .....</b>	<b>207</b>
<b>6.6.2 On Self-image and Leadership .....</b>	<b>211</b>
<b>6.6.3 Women's Family Responsibilities and Leadership .....</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>6.7 Education and Training .....</b>	<b>215</b>
<b>6.7.1 Qualifications and Leadership.....</b>	<b>215</b>
<b>6.7.2 Work Experience and Leadership .....</b>	<b>218</b>
<b>6.8 On Support Structures and Ascendency to Leadership.....</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>6.8.1 Women’s Empowerment and Political Support.....</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>6.8.2 Exploring Family and Community Implications on Women Leadership..</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>6.8.3 Supervisory and Managerial Support.....</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>6.9 Governance and Women Leadership .....</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>6.9.1 Political Governance and the Plight of Women.....</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>6.9.2 Women’s Leadership and School Governing Body Governance .....</b>	<b>233</b>
<b>6.10 Women and Labour Union Governance .....</b>	<b>235</b>
<b>6.11 Women's Challenges and the Recruitment Process .....</b>	<b>237</b>
<b>6.12 Unethical Practices as Challenges for Women.....</b>	<b>240</b>
<b>6.13 A Proposed Framework for Resolving Challenges for Women Leaders .....</b>	<b>242</b>
<b>6.14 Chapter Summary .....</b>	<b>245</b>
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>247</b>
<b>7.1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>247</b>

<b>7.2 Summary of Study Findings.....</b>	<b>248</b>
<b>7.2.1 Findings from the Literature.....</b>	<b>248</b>
<b>7.2.2 Findings from the Primary Research.....</b>	<b>255</b>
<b>7.3 Conclusions.....</b>	<b>263</b>
<b>7.4 The Contributions of the Study.....</b>	<b>266</b>
<b>7.5 Implications of Study Findings .....</b>	<b>267</b>
<b>7.6 Future Research Directions .....</b>	<b>270</b>
<b>7.7 Chapter Summary .....</b>	<b>270</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>272</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>302</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE BY THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA</b> <b>.....</b>	<b>302</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM .....</b>	<b>304</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS.....</b>	<b>305</b>
<b>APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SGB (PARENT COMPONENT) .....</b>	<b>307</b>
<b>APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR UNION REPRESENTATIVES,</b> <b>ASSOCIATION AND DISTRICT OFFICIALS .....</b>	<b>308</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure 1: Transformational Leadership Structure.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Figure 2: The Six Articles of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Figure 3: Top Management by Gender (All employees).....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Figure 4: Gender Composition of Participants .....</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>Figure 5: Job Titles of Participants.....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>Figure 6: Duration of Participants in Current School.....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>Figure 7: Duration Employed by GDE .....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>Figure 8: Proposed model for resolving challenges of women leaders in South African schools .....</b>	<b>244</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1: Themes and Sub-themes .....</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Table 2: Occupation levels of teachers and managers.....</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>Table 3: Managerial Qualification Score .....</b>	<b>150</b>

## **ACRONYMS**

BPA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CGE	Commission of Gender Equality Act of 1996
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
EEA	Employment Equity Act, No 55 of 1998
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy
HRD-SA	Human Resources Development Strategy for South Africa
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
PEPUD Act	Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act No. 4 of 2000
PSC	Public Service Commission
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SA	South Africa
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
USA	United States of America

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

#### 1.1 Introduction and Background

The post-apartheid era of democracy, whose primary intention is to ensure a non-racial, non-cultural, and non-sexist society in South Africa, ushered in opportunities for employment equity and empowerment for all, irrespective of the citizens' race or gender. The era also brought about a policy framework for the emancipation of women and gender equality through affirmative action in private and public sectors, including the education sector, mainly the Employment Equity Act, No 55 of 1998. The Bill of Rights in Chapter 2 of the Constitution includes 'The Right to Equality' (Republic of South Africa, 1996). To enforce the Constitution, the Commission of Gender Equality Act of 1996 provides for gender equity in the labour market, among other areas. Currently, gender equity grids are also deployed in government departments to assess the number of employees per gender each time personnel are recommended for senior positions. There have also been increasing international and national frameworks, and pieces of legislation meant for the empowerment of women since the 1970s. This highlights the resilient efforts by governments to ensure that women are mainstream in development efforts. However, despite the various efforts in South Africa, the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, particularly within schools, is still a challenge. This study therefore explored the challenges of women leaders in South Africa and focused on the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE).

This chapter provides a background on a selected number of international and national frameworks to highlight past and current efforts meant for the empowerment of women and the ejection of all forms of acts that discriminate against women in South Africa. The main aim is to highlight the extent to which South Africa has lived up to both the international guidelines and its own legislation in terms of organisational transformation and women's empowerment. The frameworks outlined in this chapter are discussed in

detail in Chapter 3. In addition, based on the literature review, the chapter also outlines the various challenges to women who have an interest in leadership or managerial positions in schools. Furthermore, the chapter outlines the objectives, justifies the necessity of the study, presents the research methodology, defines key terms, and provides an overview of the remaining chapters.

### **1.1.1 Global Evidence for Organisational Transformation**

Evidence shows that where organisational structure comprises both women and men, organisations are likely to benefit both by transformation and ideas that can improve organisational operation and performance. The perceptible exclusion of women within the leadership structures of an organisation is a global challenge. While there is evidence of a remarkable number of women involved in agricultural, educational, and political activities in recent years, the assumption of leadership positions within organisations by women remains a challenge even though they make up the majority of the workforce of most organisations (Schuster, 2018). Jacqui (2019) found that in South Africa 41 per cent of the working population are women, yet in general women remain within the lower ranks of leadership structures. Similar challenges have been reported elsewhere. For example, in the United States of America (USA), gender diversity only started in the 1960s. There, the inclusion of women on the Board of Directors structures remains as low as 15,2 per cent even for influential organisations such as the Fortune 500 (Rummery, 2020). In Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Asian countries like China, only 5-14 per cent of women were CEOs of their companies in 2008.

### **1.1.2 International Policy Frameworks on Supporting Gender Equality**

There is a rough link between the discourse to integrate women into conventional development and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) that took place in 1979. This convention is a binding legal and lawful agreement for the countries that signed it. It was adopted at the United Nations General Assembly in 1979 and focused on women's rights and issues worldwide (CEDAW, 2016). South Africa is also a signatory to this international agreement. Three principles contained in the document are Substantive Equality, Non-discrimination, and State Obligation

(CEDAW, 2016). Substantive Equality draws from the corrective approach, which seeks to prevent discrimination against women caused by human beliefs and stereotypes. The corrective approach leads to substantive equality recognising differences between men and women but affirms equality. It also provides opportunities for women and ensures they access these opportunities and the attendant benefits. The principle of non-discrimination related to both direct and indirect discrimination. Direct discrimination occurs when women are not allowed to perform or benefit from certain activities while men are allowed to do so.

The principle of state obligation necessitates the state to report to the CEDAW committee every four years on measures it is taking regarding respect, protection, promotion and fulfil. Signatory states are required to respect women's rights and should also repeal all the discriminatory laws in the countries that disadvantage women. The state should also ensure that it imposes sanctions against individuals and organisations discriminating against women. Furthermore, signatory states are required to ensure that women are capacitated to perform duties like men (CEDAW, 2016). As signatories to the CEDAW, governments have to implement temporary special measures immediately.

In 1975, the target of empowering women was initially made possible by the United Nations International Conference on Women. The conference took place in Mexico in 1975. This was the first-ever conference on women which 4 000 NGO participants attended. The conference was called by the United Nations General Assembly. The main aim was to demand attention and advancement on eliminating gender discrimination against women, the inclusion of women in strengthening world peace and integration of women in economic development (Amrani et al., 2020). This was also augmented by the declaration of the International Decade for Women. According to Mwambene (2010), in 1975 and 1985, three United Nations (UN) conferences on women took place. The first was hosted in Mexico, the second in Denmark in 1979 and the last one within the same decade took place in Nairobi in 1985. The main focus of all three conferences was discrimination against women.



The above efforts revolved around equality, peace, and development and initiated new discourses on gender equality. Since the launch of these initial efforts, follow up conferences on women, including the one that took place in Nairobi in 1985 and the conference that was hosted in Beijing in the year 1995, have been convened to push forward the purpose of gender equality and the need to include women in societal structural evolution. What remains clear in all these efforts has been the need to reduce poverty, improve economic development, and pave the way for sustainable development. With the collective efforts of countries globally, international declarations such as the Agenda 21, Millennium Development Goals, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development have emerged as part of an effort to eliminate women discrimination and improve women social and economic empowerment.

As part of the action to continue with the effort to address human challenges across nations, countries which are signatory to the UN decided to adopt the UN Millennium Declaration in the year 2000. The main aim of the declaration was to commit various countries to an international corporation whose aim was to reduce people's poverty. The set target year to achieve these goals was 2015. There were eight goals, namely:

- Eradicating Extreme Poverty and Hunger
- Achieving Universal Primary Education
- Promoting Gender Equality and Empowering Women
- Reducing Child Mortality
- Improving Maternal Health
- Combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases
- Ensuring Environmental Sustainability
- Developing a Global Partnership for Development.

The empowerment of women was addressed in goal three. The Millennium Development Goals were developed into Sustainable Development Goals, which are meant to be achieved by 2030.

The third goal of the MDGs as well as the fifth and tenth goals of the 17 SDGs seek to ensure that equality exists between men and women as part of an effort to reduce destitution and ensure that individuals are in a position to engage fully in development initiatives where they live (Hermann et al., 2021). These two goals also require that women and men have equal opportunities to take leadership positions. (Kulik & Metz, 2015). They also require these genders to participate equally in all different education levels and also have equal opportunities in taking up paid employment (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2016). What is apparent in these two goals is that cooperation is indispensable for the benefit of the genders and could improve the lives of all people regardless of gender. This, therefore, underlines the importance of the inclusion of women within leadership structures. Gender and gender dynamics inherent within organisations need to be considered if the condition of women within workplaces is to be improved for their benefit and the benefit of organisations, including in the education sector.

Another vital declaration has been Agenda 21. This is a product that over 18 countries sanctioned as an action plan for sustainable development at a UN Conference (Maxton & Bushe, 2017). The Agenda 21 framework was intended to promote the inclusion of women in development initiatives. It aimed to empower marginalised groups like children, women, young people, and indigenous people (Kuriakose et al., 2019). The Agenda emphasised the need to develop marginalised groups, such as women, through access to finance, education, skills training, capacity building, and global institutions with regard to partnerships and legal proceedings with information management (Naidu, 2018). As a result of these interventions and actions both locally and internationally, the need for critical sustainable development goes beyond matters of gender to include the social and cultural requirements of communities (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2016).

Agenda 21 also advocates for the need to permit women to play meaningful roles in organisations and communities to contribute to developmental initiatives. South Africa is a signatory to the Agenda 21 agreement. It also hosted the World Conference on Sustainable Development and the National Land Summit in 2002. This highlights the country's committed efforts to realise the empowerment of women.

### **1.1.3 National Policy Frameworks on Supporting Gender Equality**

Other than Chapter 2 of the Constitution which addresses issues of people's rights, South Africa adopted the National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality (Gender Policy Framework). This was part of the collective effort to initiate the realisation of women's empowerment in a country emerging from decades of colonialism and apartheid. The framework outlines South Africa's vision for gender equality and how the goal is attained. The whole document comprises eight chapters, which include the following important aspects: Vision and principles for gender equality; proposed intersectoral coordination framework and process for gender mainstreaming; and monitoring and evaluation

The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 aims to advance equal opportunity and fair treatment in places of work (RSA, 1996). It also advocates for the execution of affirmative action measures that would help redress former biases in workplaces and ensure the employment representation of all groups of people at different levels in the workplace. The Act is intended to eliminate unfair discrimination against certain groups of South African citizens. Louw (2015a) posits that the Act fits within the broader ideology of the democratic transformation of South Africans. The interests of South African women regarding the elimination of inequality and discrimination are outlined in the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000. The Act also aims to rectify all the injustices caused by colonialism and the apartheid system. The other South African pieces of legislation relevant to non-discrimination of women include the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 and Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, which are both aimed at the promotion of developing and improving the skills of employees in the workforce regardless of the employees' gender.

However, despite these efforts, there remains increasing evidence showing that women still face insurmountable challenges when trying to climb positions of leadership, particularly within South African schools (Statistics South Africa [Stats SA], 2017). In recent years, it has been reported that in many schools, women remain teachers while a large number of men become principals (Motshekga, 2013). It is reported that the South

African labour market is characterised by inequality between men and women who occupy leadership roles and positions (Fritz & Knippenberg, 2017). In 2016, it was reported there were 294 675 (70%) women teachers in the South African public education sector, out of 418 613 (Stats SA, 2017). This is evidence that numerous teachers in South African schools are women. Sadly, in 2018, only 36 per cent of women were in the post of principal (Davids, 2018). This is the reality despite the constitutional efforts described above about equality and gender equity over the past two decades. Therefore, an exploratory study was needed to explore the content and nature of the various issues that pose challenges to women's ascendancy to leadership positions within schools. Available studies primarily focus on the male-women leadership nexus in general (Gipson et al., 2017; Mosese & Mearns, 2016; Shvindina, 2016). This is despite increasing evidence that demonstrates the importance of diversity within organisational leadership structures (Jali et al., 2021). However, despite the evidence, researchers have not been motivated to focus on women's underrepresentation in school management, including their challenges. There remain inadequate studies which should aim at bringing to attention women's qualities that can result in structural transformation within the education sector in SA. It is this lack of interest and the underrepresentation of women in senior positions in South African schools and their leadership challenges that inspired this thesis.

## **1.2 Rationale for the Study**

As a direct result of the patriarchal outlook of South African institutions, the potential of women as leaders is rarely explored. This is caused by the nature of patriarchy in the country's institutions. While a slight number of studies on women exist in the context of universities, the potential for women within the context of school remains understudied. Given this, the study is an opportunity to contribute to knowledge and the literature on school management by exploring the challenges and opportunities for the inclusion of women within school leadership structures. More expressively, the thesis brought to light the various generic qualities of women, namely gentleness, sensitivity, empathy, caring, sweetness, tolerance, deference and affection, and many others. The thesis also demonstrated how these qualities could make a marked contribution in the context where women are placed into leadership positions in South African schools. The primary

conceptual framework being supported is the need for the inclusion of women within leadership structures as part of the continued efforts toward the realisation of gender transformation within schools.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

There is a significant lack of empirical studies on the importance of women's inclusion, particularly in schools, as part of the broader transformation agenda. This is regardless of incessant calls both by gender-based organisations and several national legal frameworks to empower women as a way of transforming and ensuring transformation and gender equality in institutions. The study was prompted by the fact that men still dominate within the leadership structures of South African schools, although the general workforce is dominated by women (Motshekga, 2018). As part of an effort towards achieving sustainable development and transformation in the post-independence period it is, thus, important to investigate the gender imbalance and particularly the challenges women leaders or those seeking to ascend to school leadership in South Africa face. There have been inadequate studies aimed at bringing attention to the challenges faced by women leaders or women aspiring to leadership positions in South Africa. As a result, our understanding of the challenges to women's ascendancy to leadership within schools remains embryonic. This study sought to close this gap and used the GDE as a case study.

### **1.4 Aim of the Study**

The study aimed to explore the various challenges women leaders face within South African schools. The intention was to push forward the transformational leadership style as a potential tool for reducing and possibly alleviating these challenges.

### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To explore the leadership status of women in the GDE leadership structures;

2. To identify the challenges faced by women when seeking to ascend to leadership positions in the GDE schools;
3. To make recommendations on how women can be empowered to compete for leadership positions in GDE schools.
4. To explore opportunities that exist for women seeking to ascend to leadership positions within GDE schools.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

How do transformational leadership experiences serve as a potential tool in dealing with barriers faced by women in school leadership?

### **1.6.1 Subordinate Sub-Questions**

1. What is the leadership status of women in the GDE leadership structures?
2. What challenges do women face when seeking to ascend to leadership positions in the GDE schools?
3. What recommendations can be made on how women can be empowered to compete for leadership positions in GDE schools?
4. What opportunities exist for women seeking to ascend to leadership positions within GDE schools?

## **1.7 Literature Review**

This section summarises the literature that is associated to the thesis. The literature on leadership has increased in recent decades (Liao et al., 2018). There have also been various interpretations of the concept of leadership by scholars. The following subsections define the concepts of leadership and empowerment and summarise the various discourses on leadership and empowerment in South Africa and beyond. In addition, various types of leadership styles are discussed. Lastly, an overall conclusion is made.

### **1.7.1 Definition of Leadership**

According to Moreno et al. (2022), leadership is defined as an interaction between the leader, the followers, and the situation that acts as both an art and science, which is not a position but a process. It is the talent of stirring a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal (Robertson et al., 2021). In a business context, this can mean directing workers and colleagues with a strategy to meet the organisation's needs (Pranathi & Lathabhavan, 2021). In the educational context, leadership refers to the various activities through which the School's Governing Body (SGB) provides the vision statement, creates a code of conduct, and appoints deserving personnel to positions. It also involves implementing processes that will accomplish the mission statement and developing classroom and school rules directly extracted from the code of conduct.

Bass (1985), as cited by Oosthuizen (2018), describes transformational leadership as the style of leadership that increases the staff's interest to achieve higher performance through the development of the commitments and beliefs in the organisation. Considering the socio-cultural and political nature of South African societies, the deployment of transformational leadership styles can be a key to overcoming the challenges which women face as leaders in schools.

### **1.7.2 Definition of Empowerment**

Many scholars have put through numerous definitions for the term women's empowerment (Chu & Posner, 2013; Dercon & Gollin, 2014; Gregory & Osmonbekov, 2019; Majova, 2016). Some scholars understand the term as a revolution (Dercon & Gollin, 2014), others as an institutional change through which women are able to take control over material assets, intellectual resources, and ideology (Majova, 2016). The material assets over which control can be exercised may be physical, human, or financial, such as land, water, forests, people's bodies, and labour, money, and access to money. Intellectual resources include knowledge, information, and ideas. Control over ideology signifies the ability to generate, propagate, sustain, and institutionalise specific sets of beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviour – virtually determining how people perceive and function in a given socio-economic and political environment (Dercon & Gollin, 2014).

Chu and Posner (2013:7) define 'empowerment' as the "enhancement of assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to engage, influence and hold accountable the institutions that affect them". Chu and Posner add that the process of empowerment "operates from below and involves agency as exercised by individuals and groups" (Ibid.). This explanation seems to emphasise the trickle-down effect and considers the top-down approach to development as disempowering; therefore, there is a need for a more participatory approach to empower stakeholders, particularly women. Eboiyehi et al. (2016) explain that empowerment of women involves altering relations of power which constrain the options and independence of women and adversely affect their health and wellbeing. This definition focuses on women's ability to make choices to enhance their own empowerment and wellbeing.

For Majova (2016:12), women's empowerment emphasises the components of cognitive and psychological aspects which involve their "understanding of the conditions of subordination and the causes of such conditions at both micro and macro levels of society." The empowerment of women also involves understanding the need to make choices that are considered inconsistent with prevailing cultural and social expectations. According to Gregory and Osmonbekov (2019), women empowerment is a process whereby women can organise themselves to increase their self-reliance, assert their independent right to make choices and control resources which will assist in challenging and eliminating their subordination. According to this view, women are conscientised collectively to challenge the condition of subordination. In addition, some schools of thought consider women's empowerment to be a developmental rather than a gender issue. Dietz et al. (2020) perceive empowerment as a process that makes people realise they are able and entitled to decide what they want from their own lives. It is the capacity to decide one's choices in life and to be involved in choosing the direction of change through the ability to gain control over critical material and non-material resources. For women to be able to compete for leadership positions within South African schools, it is crucial that they be empowered to transcend socio-cultural and political factors that constrain them.



### **1.7.3 Discourses on Leadership and Empowerment in Education**

The reviewed literature highlighted that women leadership within the educational context is a salient alternative in developing education in Africa in general (Akudo & Okenwa, 2015; Inceoglu et al.,2018). Scholars posit that women are, by and large, not adequately represented in leadership positions in institutions of learning: schools, colleges, and universities (Eboiyehi et al., 2016; Habib, 2013). The insufficiency of women leaders in South African schools may result from the patriarchal and traditional values and practices adopted by the larger society. These tendencies can be seen in teaching, learning, and ambitions to ascend to leadership positions within the sector (Holeta, 2016; Jones, 2013). This is supported by Jali et al. (2021) who argue that the nature of education received in teacher and other academic training institutions today, can even disempower women by blending the learning process with creed, beliefs, and other socialisations.

In addition, the micro-politics (interactions and other informal relations) in schools and many other institutions seem to disregard the potential of women (Akudo & Okenwa, 2015). Eventually, women, no matter how experienced they may be, tend to withdraw and reserve their aspirations for leadership positions. This further exacerbates the underrepresentation of women in enrolment, employment, and decision-making in schools, as noted by Nudelman (2015). With this truncated level of representation, the opportunity for women to attain positions of school leadership is even further reduced, just like in any other sector across the country (Mosese & Mearns, 2016; Njobvu & Xiu, 2014). For this reason, women continue to be seen at the peripherals of power, where they are less likely to lobby for recognition.

Consequently, there are not many women leaders within South African schools (de Bruyn & Mestry, 2020). This makes it very difficult for women to mobilise and form groups from which they can begin to challenge the status quo regarding the leadership composition of South African schools. Although, there is no specific law that discriminates against them, they continue to be discriminated against anyhow. Unspoken discrimination tends to edge them out from leadership (Holeta, 2016).

#### 1.7.4 Leadership Styles

Rummary (2020) simplifies the many leadership styles discussed by many authors by using the analogy of four animals based on their personalities: lion, elephant, hyena and rooster. He classifies them in such a way that they integrate the well-known traditional types, as it is evident for one person to possess different styles of leadership:

- *Lion* - a lion delegates, is charismatic and strategic – *laissez-faire and charismatic*.
- Elephant - group sympathetic, warm, reflects the path-goal leadership style – *team-oriented*.
- *Hyena* - ultimate team-oriented, well organised, agenda plan oriented, thorough tactics with his team members – *team-oriented*;
- *Rooster* – depicted as a solo leader, enjoys control and discipline. The rooster is protective and likes to draw attention – *autocratic*.

Other earlier studies (Bass, 1985) have outlined additional types of leadership styles, including transactional, transformational, and paternalistic leadership. Paternalistic leadership manifests in a context characterised by decentralisation, low formalisation, harmony building and personalisation (Rummary, 2020). In the past three decades, many scholars have researched transactional and transformational leadership styles as they posed to be the most effective leadership styles among the rest (Oosthuizen, 2018). According to Habib and Habib (2020), leaders who demonstrate transactional leadership monitor the work of their subordinates and ensure that they follow the prescribed path. Therefore, women leaders need authority, planning, control, and most important, power.

James Burns, a pioneer of transformational leadership, defines transformational leadership as a process in which leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation (Vial et al., 2016). According to Iscan et al. (2014), a transformational leader is someone in a leadership position who has a positive vision for the organisation's future. It is a leader who engages in improving the self-confidence of employees through bringing out their potential and communicates his vision and mission of the organisation with his subordinates.

A large number of schools in South Africa have employed women as teachers. However, the majority of managers, especially in top management positions (i.e., principals and deputy principals), are men. This has been attributed to a number of socio-economic and political reasons (Rummery, 2020). Researchers such as Gipson et al. (2017) have outlined different challenges women face around the world. These include stereotypes, unconscious biases, lack of confidence, fears of failure, family, and work balancing, as well as favouritism towards men. This study, therefore, focused on how concentrating on transformational leadership could assist in overcoming challenges that South African women face. The argument for the transformational leadership style is informed by numerous scholars who agree on the practical functionality of transformational leadership (Jacqui, 2019). Although Jacqui elaborates that transformational leadership and transactional leadership work the best while combined for organisations, he emphasises transformational leadership.

Conversely, some researchers like Kim and Beehr (2020) do not agree much on the effectiveness of transformational leadership. Kim and Beehr did not find any statistically significant correlational relationship between students' performance and leaders' attributes who embraced transformational leadership. According to Kim and Beehr (2020), transactional and autocratic leadership styles carry more weight in organisational leadership. The challenge with these leadership styles is that they focused on any gender without focusing on the challenges that women face even in implementing these styles.

### **1.7.5 Transformation and Institutional Change**

In the context of institutions, transformation is a process of profound, reflective and deep-seated revolution that places the entire institution on a new course, thereby mobilising not only its resources but also its employees and all stakeholders to move towards a different level of efficiency (Jali et al., 2021). Transformation is understood by Kim and Beehr (2020) as a type of ratified adjustment that is planned and targeted at bringing about remarkable changes in the way an organisation is run. Transformation can be understood as a process by which a conducive work environment can be generated and sustained to reach organisational objectives (Inceoglu et al., 2018). This requires that the organisation

have a leadership that can create a work environment that is not biased and is contemplative of the demographic actualities of all its stakeholders (Gregory & Osmonbekov, 2019).

This argument is taken further by Mancour et al. (2015), who, when writing about the empowerment of employees, argue that many workers in South Africa are still operating under structures that, by international principles, are dictatorial in outlook. In the context of learning and training institutions, it has been argued that drawing from colonial administrative tendencies, in most countries today, educational institutions' leadership is a male-dominated and male-perpetuated construction (Kuriakose et al., 2019). The effect of this nature of power and, consequently, decision making, is to create organisations with individuals who are unable to stand up on their own (Nudelman, 2015). One of the most important studies in South Africa on transformation has been by Jackson and Holvino (in Foster et al., 1988). Their study has resulted in a model that summarises three stages of development that an organisation goes through. The three stages are:

- *Mono-cultural* – This stage uses implicit or explicit criteria to exclude racial minorities and women. This could be linked to the culture that prevailed during the apartheid era and was based on whites' discrimination against other races. While it cannot be asserted that this culture is no longer operational in organisations, what can be said is that South Africa is slowly moving towards non-discrimination.
- *Non-discriminatory* - characterised by a sober aspiration to eliminate the unfair exclusion of others by ensuring the friendliness of the organisation for all employees.
- *Multi-cultural* - This does not exclude people based on race, gender, or any other ways used to exclude other people or groups. This stage can only be brought about by eradicating all forms of discrimination.

This realisation of a multi-cultural society requires the reception of leadership styles that have the potential to move organisations to levels that are not only inclusive, but that can move the organisation forward in terms of the realisation of its objectives. This should be bolstered by recognising the potential of all employees in the organisation, including men and women.

This study thus sought to highlight the diagnostic potential of transformational leadership in overcoming the challenges that women face when seeking ascendancy to power within the context of schools. To do this, it was crucial to review the various theoretical frameworks that have been contributed by previous scholars on topics of a similar nature.

### **1.7.6 Theoretical Framework**

This study combined three theoretical frameworks as part of an effort to ensure the study is rigorous and trustworthy. The first theoretical framework is the transformational leadership theory in which a leader teams up and works together with all employees to achieve the needed change in the organisation. Together with the employees, a transformational leader detects the changes needed, creates a vision that is used to monitor the changes, and collectively works towards the realisation of the changes (Moreno et al., 2022). Transformational leadership helps to boost the enthusiasm, self-esteem, and job performance of subordinates through a range of mechanisms, including mobilising the enthusiasm of employees towards tasks, challenging them to take ownership of their work, and understanding their strengths and weaknesses (Pranathi & Lathabhavan, 2021). This enables the leader to link workers with tasks that improve their performance (Moses & Mearns, 2016).

The transformational leadership theory was used to explore whether existing leadership structures within South African schools can encourage and support women seeking to ascend to leadership positions or not. It was also used to push forward some recommendations on how the role of women leaders within schools can be mainstreamed into the general transformation agenda of schools.

This study also utilised the feminism theory both to provide a background and highlight how women continue to be side-lined within South African schools based on patriarchal practices. Feminism highlights the domination and exploitation of women within levels of society, including workplaces. At the same time, feminism is an action by members of society, both men and women, to challenge the status quo (Nienaber & Moraka, 2016). This theory is based on the understanding that society organises people into male and

women and consequently assigns roles based on gender. This situation is considered to disadvantage women when compared to men. Feminism stems from several theoretical underpinnings, and it is grounded on historical and cultural authenticities and categories of consciousness, perception, and action.

In this study, the feminism theory was deployed alongside the theory of change. Moreno et al. (2022) describe the theory of change as an approach applied for making explicit assumptions in a change project. The theory is traced back to Peter Drucker (see Chapter 2). The theory of change includes utilising the desired outcomes of the project as a mechanism to guide the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project (Moreno et al., 2022). To ensure the success of the project, the theory of change provides long-term goals that are backwards, evaluating the whole process from planning, to identify and solve preconditions that might hinder the set goals. These theories are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

In conclusion, the reviewed literature shows that South African women within schools face many challenges when seeking to ascend to leadership positions or when they are in these positions. These challenges range from socio-economic, institutional, personal, cultural, religious, and political factors.

## **1.8 Contribution of the Study**

The study can be valuable to government officials and development practitioners interested in school management in South Africa. In addition, future researchers could use the issues raised in the study to explore further the intertwining issues of gender, feminism, and school management.

The study could also redirect professorial focus from merely ideological to empirical approaches in understanding what should be done to realise transformation in South Africa, particularly in the workplace. By conceptualising leadership within schools as a development-oriented process construct, the study could make an imperative step towards leadership research in a better workable direction. This research expands the previous research (Holeta, 2016; Jones, 2013). The findings of the study could assist

policymakers in constructing a much better theoretical and empirical basis on which future research on school leadership in the GDE and South Africa can be built. The study could also make a practical contribution that could emerge from both the use of the three theories used, namely, feminism, the theory of change, and the transformational leadership theory, as well as the results from the GDE schools.

## **1.9 Research Methodology and Design**

By research design, scholars mean the procedural guideline about how to make choices regarding how data for the particular study should be collected, interpreted, and communicated, as well as determine the costs of the study in terms of both time and budget (Leavy, 2017). There are several research design types. In this study, only three were utilised. These are exploratory (used for a problem which is new with no clear studies focusing on that specific problem), explanatory (used to explain the nature of the problem), and descriptive (used to describe characteristics of a population). The topic for the study is relatively new, mainly because the study used the GDE as the case study. In this case, it can be argued that it was suitable to conduct a study that is exploratory in nature. This enabled the researcher to familiarise herself with the challenges women face when seeking to ascend to or maintain positions of leadership within the GDE schools.

By deploying the above design, the researcher was able to gather and analyse information that could have been hard to obtain and interpret due to a lack of adequate previous studies focusing precisely on the same topic and using the same case studies. Although it is argued by experienced researchers that qualitative studies are not generalisable, the findings of the study offer profound insights not only on what could be obtained with regard to women leadership in the Gauteng Province, but also in South Africa since the national educational system is linked at the district, provincial and level levels. The exploratory design is reputable for its ability to generate in-depth data that can appease the curiosity of the researcher conducting the investigation (Creswell, 2018; Gravetter & Forzao, 2016). In this regard, the value of the study could surpass being merely a student dissertation but could actually be used to influence policy in the sector. The study was exploratory both during data collection and analysis.

Most importantly, the adopted design offers the chance to change direction when one discovers that another strategy is needed to continue with the study. The researcher considered it essential to deploy a design that was not rigid but one that was flexible and user-friendly. The design was also deeply rooted in the qualitative approach, which is also widely reputable for its capacity to deliver in-depth information instead of its quantitative counterpart (Gravetter & Forzao, 2016). The details of the research methodology in this study, including data collection, analysis, and sampling procedures as well as ethical considerations are presented in Chapter 4.

### **1.10 Definitions of the Key Concepts**

- **Challenges:** These are challenges or obstacles women face when seeking to ascend to leadership positions within South African schools.
- **Leadership:** The ability of a person in a managerial or leading position to motivate subordinates to share the vision of the organisation to achieve the intended goal(s).
- **Leadership styles:** Different styles used by leaders to lead others to achieve organisational goals.
- **Transformational leadership:** A leadership theory which enables the leaders to work together with their teams to identify change needed in the organisation.
- **Transformation:** A process of change that directs an organisation to a new or different level to reach its optimal level.
- **Discrimination:** Unjust exclusion of other people based on gender, race, or tribe.
- **Women leaders:** Women people in leadership or managerial positions in schools; in the study, a women leader is any women person that holds a managerial position at a school level such as Subject or Grade Head, Departmental Head, Deputy Principal or Principal.

### **1.11 Outline of Chapters**

#### **Chapter One: Introduction**



Chapter one makes an introductory overview discussion on women leadership, their challenges and how transformation leadership can help to overcome these challenges. The chapter provides objectives, research problem and the justification of the research.

## **Chapter Two: Theoretical Perspectives on Women's Empowerment**

This chapter focuses on the various perspectives under which women empowerment discussions are usually placed. The chapter first explores the effect of colonialism and apartheid as well as the African culture on the status of women in South African workplaces. It then discusses in detail the theoretical perspectives (feminism theory, the theory of change, and transformational leadership) upon which the study was based.

## **Chapter Three: Women's Empowerment: International and National Efforts**

This chapter focuses on both the international and national legislative frameworks regarding women's empowerment. The chapter first discussed the international frameworks and then moves on to South African frameworks focusing on women empowerment, particularly in the workplaces. The central argument in the chapter is that the inclusion of women within leadership positions in South African schools could result not only in inclusive development but also in the realisation of a society that is in harmony with itself. The chapter also provides a thorough literature review on women leaders worldwide, including South Africa. It also explores the various challenges South African women face in schools and how to overcome them. Major concepts concerning leadership are discussed to clarify how transformational leadership can be the path to overcoming challenges faced by South African women leaders. The chapter also provides detailed discussions on transformation leadership, the different styles of leadership as well as the various legislative frameworks meant to empower women in South Africa.

## **Chapter Four: Research Methodology**

This chapter discusses the research methodology used in the study to assess the significance of challenges faced by women leaders in the GDE schools and how to overcome them through transformational leadership. The chapter elaborates on the design methodology, paradigms, qualitative research goals, qualitative case study, population, sampling, data collection strategies, documents analysis, and the study's trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

### **Chapter Five: Women Leaders' Challenges in the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE)**

This chapter presents the data collected through detailed reviews of secondary literature and through in-depth interviews with various stakeholders in the GDE. The chapter is structured according to the various themes that emerged from the collected data.

### **Chapter Six: Towards Overcoming Women Leaders' Challenges through Transformational Leadership**

This chapter discusses and interprets the data presented in Chapter 5. The aim is to make sense of the data and also to link the discussion with previous studies. Empirical data collected by the researcher as well as the data collected through the review of secondary literature are merged to flag the history and nature of the challenges faced by women leaders in the GDE. The chapter also proposes a framework by which the challenges which women leaders face in the GDE can be resolved.

### **Chapter Seven: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

Chapter Seven concludes the thesis by summarising the study's findings and draws its major conclusions. This is followed by a discussion of the major contributions of the study, the experiences and challenges encountered during the study, and the implications of the findings. Lastly, the chapter highlights future research directions and then concludes the thesis. The chapter aims to highlight whether the research objectives that were set in the first chapter were achieved or not.

## **1.12 Chapter Summary**

This chapter shows that the challenges which women leaders face in schools are well-known and well-documented. However, there remains little progress in terms of resolving such challenges. This chapter introduced several frameworks which have been adopted both domestic and internationally. Despite the existence of these frameworks, there has not been much achieved in terms of improving their working environment as leaders. In this view, it is important that additional studies be conducted in order to highlight a clear path as to how this can be achieved. This study undertakes this task. This chapter provided a background to the study and the problem that necessitates a study of this nature. After that, the chapter outlined the research objectives and research questions that guided the study. This was followed by an abbreviated literature review of the theories used to guide the various processes of the study, including data collection and analysis. In addition, the key terms used in the thesis are also clarified.

The next chapter focuses on the various theoretical perspectives on women's challenges utilised in the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework used to guide understanding in the study. Theories assist researchers in comprehending the diverse undercurrents that drive society, as well as the diverse ways through which people interrelate and cooperate. Through an in-depth understanding of theoretical frameworks, researchers are able to make generalisations regarding the different characteristics that influence phenomena (Richard, 2013). The aim of this study was to explore the various challenges women face when seeking to ascend to leadership positions within South African schools. As such, a discussion of the existing theories which seek to advance the important role of women is important so as to identify the gaps with an aim of finding a solution. In the context of this study, the intention is to push forward the transformational leadership style as a potential tool for reducing and possibly alleviating these challenges.

The chapter explores three theories, namely, feminism, the theory of change, and the transformational leadership theory. The feminism theory allowed the researcher to understand why gender inequality exists in schools in South Africa. This was achieved by examining the social roles allocated to both women and men, the experiences of women, and their interests both within the household entity and in the workplace. In discussing the theory of change, the chapter focuses on factors that can contribute to women's empowerment in schools, enabling them to ascend to leadership positions and, thus overcome the socio-economic and other social realities that constrain their contribution to the broader economy and welfare. The theory also enabled the researcher to focus on how an enabling environment could be created to enhance the competition and participation of women in leadership positions. In addition, it allowed the researcher to argue for legislation that promotes gender equality in South Africa. Last, the transformational leadership theory, enabled the researcher to insert discourses on the

diagnostic potential of transformational leadership in alleviating the challenges that women face when seeking to ascend to leadership positions in schools.

## **2.2 The Feminism Theory**

Smith (2019) defines feminism as the belief in social, political, and economic equality between men and women. Amirault (2019) describes feminism as a movement and a revolution that includes men and women who want equality in the world without boundaries. A feminist is a person who supports the equality of social, political and equality between genders. Feminism is also a movement that raises awareness and highlights the subjugation and abuse of women within the various levels of society, including the workplace and the household. It is also a deliberate action by members of society to change the situation of women from a bad state to a good one (Nienaber & Moraka, 2016). This theory is based on the view that society categorises people into men and women and subsequently dispenses roles based on gender. This is viewed as disadvantaging women both within the household setup and in the workplace (Harding et al., 2013; Letherby, 2013). These scholars contend that the human body is not static, but is an evolving phenomenon. Thus, the view of women's bodies as incubators and unpaid workers in the 19th century should be abandoned as more women enter the workplace on equal footing with men (Crafford, 2015). Numerous women also now head their own households as unmarried women (Bayu, 2019).

Feminism emerges from various theoretical backgrounds and is grounded on historical and cultural authenticities and categories of consciousness, perception, and action (Rummery, 2020). Malapit et al. (2014) opine that feminist theories explore the link between being a woman and occupying a particular class and performing specific roles, and the way women negotiate how they are beheld and treated by society. The efforts through which women have been negotiating the world since the 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> centuries have had an enormous influence in paving the way for modern feminists.

There are three waves of feminism in the literature. The first took place in the 19th century, around 1848. Its primary concern was to push for the right of women to vote and to gain

political equality with men (Ranjan, 2019). During the first wave, women mainly fought for representation and inclusion in politics and government (Carter, 2013). However, the first wave was criticised, largely, for standing up for upper- and middle-class women. It neglected the other categories, such as peasant farmers and industry workers (Bayu, 2019; Crafford, 2015). Black women and other minority groups were also underrepresented (Wanner & Wadham, 2015).

The second wave of feminism occurred in the 1960s. This wave was essentially about the civil rights movement (Nienaber & Moraka, 2016). The second wave sought to dislodge social and cultural inequalities that women suffered. During this second wave, women had already obtained the right to vote even though they remained restricted to domestic roles as wives and household care givers (Carter, 2013; Ranjan, 2019). Thus, this wave sought to address issues of workplace inequalities, fertility rights, and health issues that repressed women (Nienaber & Moraka, 2016). The wave resulted in the passing of pieces of legislation that protected women's rights to equality and fought against social and cultural inequalities. In addition, the legislation protected women from discrimination in education and criminalised marital rape (Carter, 2013). However, it made no robust progress in fighting for the equal division of labour within the household structure. Domestic work remained the responsibility of women rather than a shared one with men. This led to the emergence of the third wave.

The third wave of feminism commenced around the 1990s and continues. This wave focuses on the mobilisation of women to fight for their right to participate in politics, public spaces, and workplaces. It also fights for the abolition of stereotypes concerning how women are portrayed in the media and other platforms (Sebola, 2015; Wanner & Wadham, 2015). The third wave of feminism maintains that men and women should be viewed as equals in everything. It requires the empowerment of women to enable them to enjoy greater sexual choices just like men do (Ranjan, 2019). Because of this, the third wave can be viewed as anti-sex and as pro-sex, that is to say, while it rejects the categorisation of people based on gender, it also advocated for the right of women to pursue sexual choices.

The feminist theory does not view women as a homogenous group. It posits that the way women negotiate the world continuously varies in culture, politics, religion, sex, ethnicity, age, level of education, and marital status. Therefore, they cannot be simply considered identical (Letherby, 2013). These aspects have a significant bearing on how women negotiate the world. It is also posited that feminism theories are based on the concept of power. This implies that these theories fundamentally deal with concepts of exploitation, discrimination, oppression, and patriarchy. The theories stress that power is unequally shared between men and women (Harding et al., 2013). Men are considered the custodians of power. Due to the power they have, men are able to control most economic activities for their own benefit. This includes reserving leadership positions in schools for themselves. Feminism thus regards power as unfair because it dominates and creates an uneven and unfair environment, including the work environment. This view is shared by Bayu (2019), who argues that in power relationships, men are considered powerful and brave whilst women are considered passive and emotional. Worldwide, the power relations between men and women have also continued to make it difficult for women seeking to ascend to leadership positions. Because women are viewed as inferior, it is not surprising that they remain underrepresented in the school leadership structures in many countries, including South Africa, thereby compromising their rights to equality and limiting their potential to contribute to schools' leadership.

## **2.3 Perspectives of Feminism**

Several strands of feminism were identified in the reviewed literature, namely the Marxist, radical, liberal, socialist, eco-feminism, and masculinity perspectives. These are detailed in the following sub-sections.

### **2.3.1 The Marxist Perspective**

The Marxist view of feminism is based on the capitalist class of employer-employee exploitation (Szálkai, 2019). This perspective posits that women remain exploited, oppressed, and discriminated against because of how men in society have been socialised. Men have been socialised so that they regard leadership as their responsibility

(Eckert & Assmann, 2021). These tendencies are not only pervasive in the homes but also the workplaces, including schools (Szálkai, 2019). This results in the disregard for women who seek ascendancy to leadership positions, even in schools in countries like South Africa. Similarly, women have also been socialised but into submission, which culminates in providing unpaid or underpaid labour (Egan, 2017). Women also consider themselves caregivers (Choudhry et al., 2019). Thus, they remain domestic workers and childminders and are not in positions of power where they can make decisions.

The Marxist component of feminism considers women as servants to men, especially as they perform most of the unpaid work in the home and the workplace. This is considered a capitalist behaviour because it benefits men; thus, the idea of the employer-employee exploitative relationship. What is worrisome about this view is that apart from the unequal power relationship between men and women, men are regarded as adversaries (Rafay et al., 2016). Marxist feminists argue that to achieve equality and stop the discrimination and exploitation of women, the capitalist system needs to be conquered by both the oppressor and oppressed, which are women and men. In workplaces, including in schools, the cooperation of men and women could see the empowerment of women by enabling them to ascend into leadership positions.

### **2.3.2 The Socialist Perspective**

Socialism is defined as a political and economic theory emphasising that the community should take responsibility for regulation and ownership of production, distribution and means of exchange (Nkenkana, 2018). Socialist feminism was interspersed through the development of many women's programmes of studies from as early as the 1960s to date (Nkenkana, 2018). Gardiner (2005) avers that feminism theory developments and ongoing activities changed, and greatly affected, socialist feminism. Today, Fritzt and Knippenberg (2017). Carli and Eagly (2016) assert that organisations and laws fighting violence and social injustices against women are becoming extensive worldwide. The work and leadership positions previously meant for men redirected to women continue to flourish vigorously. Rummery (2020) posits that women need to be liberated from all economic and social exploitation.



Eckert and Assmann (2021) contend that the theory of socialist feminism broadens Marxist and radical feminism theories. According to Eckert and Assmann (2021), this theory focuses on the interconnectivity of patriarchy and capitalism because the argument is that the only way to the liberation of women is by working on economic and cultural sources of women's oppression. Social feminism explores how the values of patriarchy determine the lived, affective relations of reproduction and consumption to stabilise capitalism. They seek to imagine how an integral theory of patriarchal capitalism has the ability to produce new subjects and sites for the struggle for the feminist revolution (Carli & Eagly, 2016).

### **2.3.3 Radical Perspective**

The radical component of feminism emerged around the 1960s because of the discrimination women experienced in terms of civil rights (Harmer, 2021). The radical perspective mainly focuses on the challenges that emerge from patriarchy. These issues defined women's position and experience in society (Akpan, 2015). Harmer (2021) defines radical patriarchy as a feminist theory that is based on the assumption that a society consists of opposing genders (men and women) whose relations are based on the fact that men dominate women; hence it is referred to as a conflict theory. According to Jali et al. (2021), the basic concepts of radical feminism are power, patriarchy and oppression. Regarding patriarchy, the situation has been accepted by the multitudes and is perceived as 'normal'.

As defined by Harmer (2021), power is the essence of patriarchy and the central concept of abstract enemies that feminists should face. Power is the process of dynamic interaction. Having power means having access to influencing things to be done the way the person with power wants. However, one individual cannot allocate power to themselves; it is the effort of a large group of individuals gives an individual power, and such power is given to the person who dominates. In the patriarchal society, women are subordinates of men while men are the rulers. Therefore, patriarchy is regarded as the leading cause of the oppression, inequality, and injustice that women face daily. The patriarchal system is unjust and hierarchical, with male domination over women.

Proponents of the radical perspective argue that patriarchy is the cause of women's subordination in society (Bayu, 2019; Choudhry et al., 2019). Different from the Marxist viewpoint, which does not consider men as enemies, radical feminism regards men as the problem for women. Radical feminism requires women to form some lesbian relationships and other such formations that will enable them to challenge male oppression. Radical feminism considers marriage an institution that enables men to oppress and exploit women (Wanner & Wadham, 2015). It argues that men's ability to impregnate women empowers them to render women powerless. As a form of advice, the perspective conscientises women to have power over fertility rights by using technology to control whether they want to have children or not (Bayu, 2019).

The radical perspective, just like its Marxist cousin, posits that the power men enjoy is not only confined to the home environment but is also pervasive in workplaces (Choudhry et al., 2019). It is argued that for discrimination against women to be eliminated, it is indispensable that women themselves stop prolonging the practices that enforce discrimination against them (Robertson et al., 2021). Radical feminists argue that a peaceful co-existence between men and women could result in well-established households and a robust economy (Eckert & Assmann, 2021). It is posited that men and women need to work together in the homes and economic activities. It is believed that the peaceful and reverential co-existence will enable women to ascend to leadership positions unopposed by men (Nkenkana, 2018).

### **2.3.4 Liberal Perspective**

Liberal feminism emerges from the political ideology of liberation, which commences from the credence that all people have the right to freedom, independence, and individualism (Dalimonte-Merckling, 2020). The main argument espoused in liberal feminism is to change women's status and opportunities within the existing political and economic structures. Liberal feminists like Rachel Chu, Mary Astell, Mary Wollstone, and Virginia Woolf assert that activities and traditions that serve as stumbling blocks to women's progress in leadership roles should be terminated (Harmer, 2021). Jali et al. (2021) assert that the uniqueness of women as sexual beings can be rationally understood. If women

are allowed the same opportunities as men, they will be more productive just like men. Although Jali et al. (2021) acknowledge that liberal feminism is somehow contradictory as it recognises the masculine differences between men and women, they aver that all the unfair activities that hinder women's success in their careers should be terminated.

Rummery (2020) posits that equality between men and women can be changed without changing the social structure but through political and legal reforms. To liberate someone simply means to free them from imprisonment, slavery, or oppression (Online Concise Oxford dictionary). Liberal feminism, therefore, focuses on women's ability to utilise their own actions and choices to maintain their equality (Dalimonte-Merckling, 2020). Rummery (2020) contends that the subordination by women toward men is rooted in the set of customary constraints that have been legalised and formalised. These constraints intended to create a barrier against men for women's entrance to success.

The argument in liberal feminism is that society is of an untrue belief that women are naturally less capable than men regarding strength and intelligence. Due to this belief, women are automatically discriminated against in education and the job market. Liberal feminists, however, admit that, in actual fact, the conditions of women have changed over the years, principally in recent decades (Wanner & Wadham, 2015). This has been observed in land ownership, access, and utilisation (Mbilinyi, 2016).

### **2.3.5 Masculinity Perspective**

The theories of feminism have been criticised for upholding a one-sided view on gender and for projecting men as the only problem faced by women. This view has led to the creation of masculinity viewpoints as a platform to examine male dominance and women's subjugation. It is argued that in its place of imploring analytical perspectives, the theories of feminism are largely politically-inclined (Alkire et al., 2015). It is argued that feminist theories disregard the role men play in terms of taking care of household financial responsibilities (Qaisrani et al., 2016). Ignoring the role men take up within households and within the broader society is viewed as very ill-fated on the part of feminist theories. For example, Amirault (2019) argues that men have created platforms, especially within

workplaces to generate gender and equality awareness. However, this view is dismissed by McLoughlin and O'Brien (2019), who argue that men who promote women empowerment have, more often than not, faced stigmatisation and sometimes violence as they are considered cultural renegades who throw manhood into disrepute. This criticism has discouraged men who would have joined in the campaigns for women's rights and gender equality. Furthermore, women who challenge the dominance of men are often ostracised both by men and even other women. This serves to reinforce the patriarchal order in society.

Because of the above, it can be argued that feminism could perform better if it could start acknowledging the role of men instead of considering them as the problem. Masculinities provide a stage from which to inspect the causes of subordination instead of further aggravating friction between men and women. Masculinities are considered a social construct because men are born to discriminate and dominate women, but they are socialised to it (Harmer, 2021). Women spend a noteworthy proportion of their time with children, and it is they who socialise male children to power while socialising girls to dependency. The societal social order which forces women to be subordinated to men has already been entrenched in women's psyche, and they subconsciously maintain patriarchy without questioning it (Sebola, 2015). It is thus unfair to hold men responsible for the subordination of women whilst women themselves are also conscious and unconscious drivers of the subordination.

### **2.3.6. The Eco-Feminism Perspective**

The Eco-feminism Perspective views both men and women as having a connection with nature because they can create life.

Eco-feminists are of the view that patriarchy and male domination are detrimental to women as well as the environment (Szálkai, 2019). There is a connection between a man's longing to dominate rowdy women and the wilderness (Robertson et al., 2021). Men feel it to be their responsibility to discipline and conquer in order for them to have control. The thinking is that environmental complications emerge from a human-centred

ideological point, and they can only be resolved when the needs of nature are addressed on the same level as human needs. Because of its nature, eco-feminism is viewed as a theory of philosophy and politics (Ngcobo & Chisasa, 2018). It is a movement which merges concerns of feminists and ecology (the study of how people relate to each other and their environment) as they are both concerned with male domination in the world.

Ecofeminism is also known as ecological feminism because it studies how women are connected to nature. In this theory, women are compared to nature because most women who are not economically independent depend on the men to provide for them. In contrast, nature relies on a human being to take care of it because it cannot do anything for itself (Ngcobo & Chisasa, 2018). Biologically, the law (Labour Relations Act in the case of South Africa) makes it natural that women are homebound due to their fertility. In South Africa, an employed woman may stay at home for a minimum of three months and as much as one year after giving birth, while a male can only stay for a maximum of 5 days for paternity leave. Also, nature is regarded as “mother nature” in a male-centred world, making nature and women share the same exploitation.

Pranathi and Lathabhavan (2021) bring another side of eco-feminism in the context of under-developed countries, especially in rural areas of Africa where it is the duty of women to get water from the streams, dams or rivers. The similar oppression on nature is drawn to the men who hunt animals and kill them for meat or money. Andi et al. (2020) provide an example of a horse which is also dependent on its master, like women also explain how the horse is used economically to carry goods for economic purposes mostly by men although women also use horses. Therefore, both nature and women suffer the same oppression of empowering men with more wealth as women provide men with household services such as cleaning and cooking, while in most cases, wealth made out of this setup belongs to the male alone (Andi et al., 2020).

## **2.4 Revisiting the Principles of Feminism**

As mentioned, feminism is a belief in the social, economic, and political equality of all sexes. Feminism highlights the domination and exploitation of women within levels of

society, including workplaces. Although feminism primarily originated in Western countries, it is manifested and embraced worldwide. Many institutions and organisations have committed to feminist activities to promote women's rights.

The main principles of feminism (radical, liberal, and Marxist) were established during the second wave (Bayu, 2019). The main aim was to bring equality between men and women within the existing social system's framework (liberal) feminism and to analyse women's oppression exclusively from an economic point of view by linking gender inequality and women's oppression concerning capitalism (Marxist); and lastly, to provide changes on all oppressive social institutions by disclosing how patriarchy plays a major role on women's oppression (radical).

The reviewed literature indicates that feminism runs on specific principles, all of which are anchored in issues of patriarchy and male dominance in socio-cultural, religious, economic, and political spheres. The revolution of these institutions could result in the realisation of gender equality and women's empowerment in societies. These issues are detailed in the following sub-sections.

#### **2.4.1. Patriarchy**

Patriarchy is "a society, system or country that is ruled or controlled by men" (Online Concise Oxford dictionary). Although sociological and anthropological studies have long been using the concept of the rule of the father in the house, in feminists' language, patriarchy is "a systematic organisation of male supremacy at the expense of women" (Eckert & Assmann, 2021:54).

Jacqui (2019) posits that democracy is unattainable in a patriarchal society. Democratic roll-back continues to exist due to omissions of patriarchy. Jacqui (2019) asserts that patriarchy is a system of power and inequality that favours men in social, economic and political areas and provides men with greater access and opportunities. Today, there is still unfinished liberation of women in countries such as Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan and Eritrea (Jacqui, 2019). According to Harmer (2021), patriarchy is a concept of

signifying power differences between men and women where women are victims while men are unnamed perpetrators. Due to patriarchy, other women are able to oppress other women because patriarchy has class, ethnicity, nationality, race, age, demographic, and religious dynamics (Eckert & Assmann, 2021).

Scholars such as Harmer (2021) contend that there is a need for the conceptualisation of patriarchy as there are insufficiencies in the existing paradigm. Addressing gender inequalities and discrimination against women by narrowly focusing on economic empowerment is insufficient (Robertson et al., 2021). Men have not yet been fully engaged in overcoming patriarchy; hence even today, many boys still grow with the mindset of not helping with house chores while girls automatically accept the responsibility.

Naidoo (2020) lays down six areas of patriarchal oppression faced by women:

- In the home, women are expected to do domestic chores.
- In the workplace, there is a gender wage gap between a man (favourable) and a woman (unfavourable).
- In the government, women are under-represented in parliaments, military, and legislatures.
- In terms of male violence, 11 rapes are carried out every hour.
- Men and women are judged differently according to their gender.
- The patriarchal gaze is still powerful in education, religion, media, and culture.

## **2.5 Social Institutions and Supremacy**

There are certain roles and responsibilities which men and women perform based on gender. These roles are not biological; instead, people are taught to go by them. The roles and responsibilities have evolved over the years, and society admits them as natural. The roles are reinforced by several institutions, including socio-cultural, political, and economic institutions. These roles and responsibilities are the sources of women's

subordination to men, and they constrain women from accessing property, thereby undermining their socio-economic and political contributions.

### **2.5.1 Economic Participation**

The participation of women in the economy could be making a significant contribution to reducing poverty, in Africa in particular (Ndhlovu, 2017). Reviewed discourses posit that most women, particularly in Africa, are poor (Moyo, 2016; Rusenga, 2019). A number of challenges block women from fully participating in the economy. One of the factors that have undermined the capacity of women to participate in the economy is their subordination to men caused by patriarchal tendencies that limit education for girls (Mbilinyi, 2016). Women, particularly those in rural areas, have low literacy levels (Ndhlovu, 2017). This situation makes them unable to take part in decision-making structures even where men could have accommodated them. Lack of access to credit due to lack of collateral is another factor raised in the reviewed literature. Because most women do not own the land they cultivate, credit institutions disqualify them since they lack collateral (Crafford, 2015). This further complicates the chance by women to accumulate and to be independent financially.

Ledwaba and Makgahlela (2017) posit that poor extension services due to biases toward men coupled with customary practices that downgrade women to reproductive roles serve to disenfranchise women financially (Haselip et al., 2014). Around 70 per cent of the food consumed in the world is produced by women in Africa (Moyo, 2016). This indicates that women play a crucial role in the food security system of numerous countries, hence they also contribute to the economy. However, they remain invisible due to the lack of decision-making power and, thus, are used as cheap labour by men in decision-making positions. If they were promoted to positions of leadership within workplaces, this would be another factor that could empower women and ladder them out of poverty. Also, the unfair division of household labour between men and women is considered another factor that constrains women in terms of active participation in the broader economy, including in the workplace. Furthermore, reproductive work leads women to take up poorly paid jobs as they have to balance reproductive and productive roles (Akpan, 2015). The reproductive



roles performed by women can, therefore, be viewed as crucial because they create and nurture a society or working class as posited by Marxist theory.

### **2.5.2 Political System**

Concerning the political participation of women, customary practices are still viewed as the most significant barrier to women (Amirault, 2019; McLoughlin & O'Brien, 2019). Even where women attend meetings or interviews for leadership positions, customary practices still block them from being offered such positions. The uneven division of labour within households and workplaces makes it problematic for women to participate in the economy or politics at the same level as men, as most of their time is spent on reproductive roles than productive ones (Szálkai, 2019). It is thus argued that it remains imperative that women find representation at all levels as part of an effort to mainstream gender issues into political and economic processes. Political arrangements need to support women's empowerment and the elimination of gender inequality to increase their chances of being promoted to positions of leadership within the workplace (Ranjan, 2019; Tong, 2018).

The participation of women at the political level could afford them a greater opportunity to sway policy so that there are policies that are sensitive to gender (Powell et al., 2018). When women have political power, they are able to make recommendations in terms of decisions and thus, influence how resources are distributed. When women can have some influence at a political level, it would also spill over into households and workplaces and thus, increase their chances to ascend to leadership positions.

### **2.5.3 Family**

The family is one of the most important institutions where socialisation occurs. People are socialised in the home to perform gender roles before it spills over to how men and women participate in politics, the economy, and religion. It is within the household system that children are taught to associate specific roles with gender based on how parents or guardians present these issues to children. The family is considered the primary institution that perpetuates women repression and discrimination. Male dominance is a behaviour that children learn as they connect gender and the power relations related to it

(Ngoma & Mayimbo, 2017). The value placed on boy children in the family context empowers them to realise that they are meant to achieve more than the girl. This is also apparent in the division of household labour. Boys are socialised to know that they should be able to make decisions, protect others, as well as to be independent and assertive (Alaqahtani, 2020). In contrast, girls are taught to be submissive, please men, particularly the future husband, become mothers, be soft, sensitive, and dependent housewives (Nehere, 2016). It is this nature of socialisation that promotes self-sufficiency for boys and dependence for girls (McLoughlin & O'Brien, 2019).

In view of the above discussion, it is clear that it is the socialisation of women to become dependent on men, which is the main cause of their subjugation by men. Due to this form of socialisation, many women today are either in marriages or relationships they do not want anymore (Mokoena, 2018). Most of them remain in the relationship for societal circumscribed conventions. Where women have already been 'captured' like this, it is difficult for most of them to desire to seek ascendancy to a position of leadership and influence.

#### **2.5.4 Religion and Culture**

Some scholars also consider religion as teaming up with patriarchy to worsen the condition of women across the world (Crafford, 2015; Egan, 2017). It is argued that certain aspects of religion are commonly deployed to oppress women. This happens especially when women are taught to be obedient to their husbands (Ranjan, 2019). This situation is said to perpetuate male dominance because men are already socialised to be strong and to control women (Nkenkana, 2018). Through religion, men are socialised to reaffirm patriarchal practices (Khurshid, 2016). These practices constrain women's efforts to fight for realisation as they do not want to act against providence (Davies & Bennett, 2016). Özler et al. (2020) considers Muslim beliefs based on the Qur'an as promoting male supremacy.

Qaisrani et al. (2016:17) quote the Qur'an which posits that "if there are not two men available as witnesses [in a case], then bring a man and two women, of such as you

approve as witnesses, so that if one woman errs (*tudilla*) the other can remind her...” In the traditionalist view, a man is given a higher status than a woman. Conceptualising this verse would be necessary because the reason for two witnesses is to combat corruption and confirm what the other witness testified.

Regarding marriage, Islamic laws allow a man to marry more than one woman (Pranathi & Lathabhavan, 2021). This, unfortunately, has led most Muslim men to polygamy, which has resulted in a lack of attention toward women. What exaggerates this disregard for women if seen through non-Islamic eyes is that some laws also allow men to marry temporarily. According to Vyas-Doorgapersad (2018b), men can pay a certain amount of money to their preferred woman or her family and receive a marriage certificate with a marriage duration that automatically expires after a stipulated date.

Vyas-Doorgapersad (2018) continues explaining how Muslim women are not allowed to marry a non-Muslim man or denounce the religion, while Muslim men can marry a non-Muslim woman or even denounce their religion. Additionally, as punishment a woman can get a death sentence for not adhering to these rules. As stated in the previous chapter, South African statistics consist of several of different religions, including Muslims (Stats SA, 2021). This has a significant effect on the leadership of schools with an enrolment of Muslim children and teachers. According to the Islamic and African cultures, women are responsible for taking on house chores while men’s responsibility is to lead the family and take care of it. As a consequence, men are regarded as guardians when divorce occurs between an Islamic man and woman; the woman should leave empty-handed while the man retains all the assets (Harafesheh, 2018:2). Furthermore, this leads to less recognition of women as leaders both in their homes and in workplaces.

The other theory used in the thesis was the theory of change, discussed below.

## **2.6 Theory of Change**

This section focuses on the following aspects of change: (i) capacity, (ii) household influence, (iii) access, and (iv) productivity. The main argument being supported is that a

transparent distribution of power dynamics can be deployed to address inequality and hence increase the chance of women ascending to leadership positions within workplaces.

### **2.6.1 Capacity**

Women need knowledge and skills in order for them to perform the duties and responsibilities as members of families and workplaces. The reviewed literature posits that women who suffer are located in rural areas. Rural women have low literacy levels compared to urban women (Mokoena, 2018). In this regard, it is crucial that women, especially rural women, be capacitated with work skills that can enable them to stand up independently without always requiring the support of men (Qaisrani et al., 2016). Moreno et al. (2022) describe change theory as a tool used to bring about effective changes in society by social scientists, program evaluators, educational institutions, organisational leaders, and government organisations. These changes should be sustainable for longer. In addition, Moreno et al. (2022) explain the theory of change as an approach applied for making explicit the assumptions in a change project. It can be traced back to Peter Drucker, the leading figure of a theory of change.

Theory of change includes utilising the desired outcomes of the project as a mechanism to provide guidance on the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project (Pranathi & Lathabhavan, 2021). To ensure the success of the project, the theory of change provides long-term goals that are used to evaluate the whole process from planning, with the aim of identifying and solving preconditions that might hinder the set goals. In the context of women's leadership, the goal of the theory of change is to understand the grounds and conditions that will make women's leadership effective and how and for whom the desired change will work.

### **2.6.2 Household Influence**

The reviewed literature posits that there is a need for women also to be empowered to share household decision-making power, especially regarding the division of household labour and the management of land commodities (Ranjan, 2019; Szálkai, 2019).

Socialisation is the major determinant of household division of labour. This form of socialisation buttresses the position of women as inferior members even when they are in the workplace. It is, therefore, crucial that women be allowed also to have a voice over household decisions to alleviate their subordination in the workplace.

In the workplace, most women are may be given duties that are considered feminine, while men take leadership roles which are viewed as masculine. The gender division of labour which happen within the household disadvantages women and makes it hard for them to challenge male dominance when they encounter it in the workplace (Mbilinyi, 2016). Women's access to education would enable them to gain the necessary training to compete with men in terms of leadership roles. This would increase the bargaining power of women both within and without the household. Educated women tend to have more bargaining and decision-making power than women with low literacy levels (Nehere, 2016; Nkenkana, 2018). Educated women also know where to get support and, therefore, tend to be more empowered when compared to their rural counterparts.

### **2.6.3 Productivity**

Eboiyehi et al. (2016) summarise Ducker's way of managing through change. For the change manager to be productive, the following attributes are vital:

- A change leader gathers data and information.

Both the School Governing Body members and the appointed woman leader should gather information on the school's mission, the stakeholders, what parents and learners (consumers) value and should have a plan on the way forward.

- A change leader filters new insights through marketing and innovation.
- Such a leader should be bold and have a strategy for achieving the organisation's goals.
- A change leader should be willing to get rid of the old. As explained in the previous sections, it should be noted that patriarchy is the oldest way that, according to

feminists, was implemented to oppress women. In this case, the SGB and the Gauteng Department of Education's leadership officials should move from their old ways of thinking that men make greater leaders than women do.

- Lastly, a change leader is an effective manager. At school, an effective and productive school leader should be able to manage the learners and staff.

For women to be competitive, they need knowledge and skills to improve productivity at work and increase their chances to ascend to leadership positions. Reviewed literature indicates that women play a vital role in the world regarding food production, career giving, and many others (Akpan, 2015; Mbilinyi, 2016). In the context of the workplace, in order for women to increase their promotion to leadership positions and have economic emancipation, they need to be empowered through education and training just like men. It is therefore crucial that support within the household and workplaces be tailor-made to meet the needs of women by also taking into consideration their potential to make meaningful contributions at leadership levels.

## **2.7 Transformational Leadership Theory**

Studies on leadership have been slowly increasing in recent years, particularly in the field of social science (Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Simola et al., 2012). The concept of transformational leadership was introduced by James MacGregor Burns in the 1970s. With the increased focus on this field, there has also been an evolution in the conceptualisation of leadership. While leadership studies were, at one point, focused on the study of politicians, generals and people of great standing (Jovanovica & Ciricb, 2016), modern-day leadership research now additionally examines the influence of leadership on myriad professions, including education, health, sports, and parents. This represents the scope for the deployment of leadership theory. As a result, leadership is now considered a universal phenomenon in human lives (Pounder, 2014).

Leithwood (1994) is one of the scholars who contributed to the conceptualisation of transformational leadership in educational environments. Using data collected for seven different quantitative studies, Leithwood (1994:506) concluded: "Transformational

leadership practices, considered as a composite construct, had a significant direct and indirect effect on progress with school-restructuring initiatives and teacher-perceived student outcomes.” By seeking to understand the impact of transformational leadership, Leithwood (1994) identified as many as 20 studies that evidenced the positive nexus between leadership and the educator’s outcomes. Many researchers have found that transformational leadership steadily projected the readiness of educators to offer extra effort and change teaching practices or attitudes (Stenling & Tafvelin, 2014; Tran, 2014; Vella et al., 2013). Several scholars also link transformational leadership with organisational learning, effectiveness, and culture (Pounder, 2014; Tran, 2014; van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013).

In recent decades, several studies have focused on the association between transformational leadership and several variables. They found that this style has a positive impact on satisfaction (Jovanovica & Ciricb, 2016), motivation (Bogler et al., 2013), commitment (Stenling & Tafvelin, 2014), professional growth (Kele & Pietersen, 2015), organisational conditions (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014), learning culture (Jacqui, 2019), organisational culture (Thomas, 2013), and student achievement (Stenling & Tafvelin, 2014). These indicate that the patterns of transformational leadership are harmonised with the organisational culture and structure of the institution and their effect on the meaning that people link with their job and their desire and readiness to take change risks. Leaders who deploy transformational leadership style convince, inspire, and motivate subordinates to realise admirable results.

Some early trait theories on leadership tried to classify the common features that distinguished leaders from non-leaders but then failed to accept the importance of situational and contextual factors. Responses to the weaknesses of the trait theory resulted in the development of situational contingency (Fielder, 1971) and the emergence of some behavioural approaches to leadership and the acknowledgement of divergent leadership styles. This shifted the focus from ‘what’ a leader is (in terms of characteristics) toward ‘how’ leaders lead (behaviour). One of the behavioural models that emerged from this shift is the transformational leadership theory.

Transformational leadership has, in recent decades, emerged as one of the most important and most used theories in the study of leadership. Today, transformational leadership and the stress on transformational behaviour have become the sole dominant paradigm (van Knippenberg et al., 2013). Leaders are portrayed as heroes (Stenling & Tafvelin, 2014) and are encouraged to transform the loyalties and behaviours of their staff through a shared organisational culture (Thomas, 2013). The transformational approach is also viewed as matching the challenges of a shifting sector (globalisation and user-driven demands) and is a leadership approach that can better enable the creative solutions needed to meet those challenges. Certainly, the role of school leaders as change agents has become increasingly important. However, whilst scholars agree on the existence of the diverse positive individual and organisational results of transformational leadership, there is less agreement regarding the features of the concept and the behaviours that transformational leaders employ (Black et al. 2013). Since its conception as a theory, transformational leadership has often been defined in terms of its effects on subordinates and organisations rather than behaviours (Graves & Luciano, 2013). It is for this reason that many definitions and conceptualisations exist today.

One of the most dominant frameworks in the conceptualisation of transformational leadership has been Bass' (1985) model - the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). Bass' model originally comprised three components which were constitutive of the concept of transformational leadership. These components are charismatic-inspirational leadership, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration. Charismatic-inspirational leadership refers to how leaders behave and act as role models for their subordinates, lead by example, and foster close relationships through a positive attitude. Intellectual stimulation refers to behaviours that raise awareness of problems and encourage subordinates to examine them from new perspectives. Individualised consideration refers to the support given by the leader in providing encouragement and paying attention to individuals' specific needs.

The MLQ also included transactional aspects, specifically contingent reward, passive management by exception, and active management by exception. Contingent reward



refers to clarification of work standards needed to obtain rewards and the use of incentives for motivation. Passive management, by exception, speaks to the use of corrective action in response to a lack of adherence to acceptable performance standards. Active management by exception refers to actively seeking mistakes and taking pre-emptive action to avoid mistakes.

The early varieties of the MLQ encountered intense criticism related to the scale's factor structure (Bogler et al., 2013) and the discriminant legitimacy and vagueness of the subscales (Bonne & Johnston, 2016). For example, Bonne and Johnston argue that the individualised aspect comprised two theoretically different constructs, specifically developmental and supportive aspects. The original MLQ scale underwent several revisions, which led to the existence of a variety of MLQ versions that exist today. The newest, developed and most widely used form of the MLQ consists of nine aspects that measure transformational, transactional, and non-leadership aspects to capture what has been viewed as the full-range leadership model (Bourne et al., 2013). The transformational aspects are inspirational motivation, idealised influence (attributed), idealised influence (behaviour), individual consideration and intellectual stimulation. The transactional aspects are contingent reward, passive management by exception, and active management by exception. Finally, laissez-faire reflects the non-leadership component or the lack of leadership.

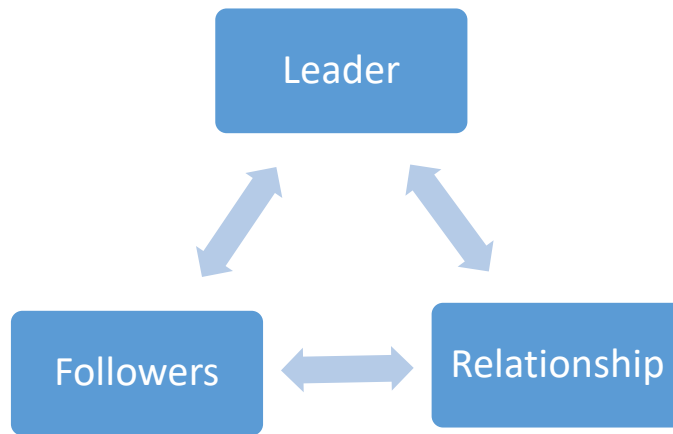
The continued use of the MLQ in leadership research today represents an acknowledgement of its value to behavioural research. However, some scholars have continued to raise questions regarding the psychometric properties and validity of the scale (Stenling & Tafvelin, 2014). Overall, the backing for the construct validity of the MLQ has been mixed, which has provoked researchers to explore other factor structures within the MLQ. For example, collapsing the transformational dimensions into a single transformational leadership factor that combines dimensions to generate a reduced-factor model (Vella et al., 2013) or additionally subdividing the existing dimensions (Stenling & Tafvelin, 2014). While the MLQ itself uses a differentiated conceptualisation of transformational leadership, most studies that use it do so with a global measurement

approach, regularly combining all of the transformational leadership dimensions into a single factor (Pounder, 2014).

The Differentiated Transformational Leadership Inventory (DTLI) (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013) is a fully differentiated model built on the previous models of the MLQ as part of an effort to respond to the calls for more differentiated models of transformational leadership (Jovanovica & Ciricb, 2016). The model was first developed in the military, and it consists of six transformational leadership dimensions, namely inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, appropriate role modelling, high-performance expectations, and fostering acceptance of group goals.

Research has been conducted in many different contexts, including schools. However, it is only in recent years that this kind of research has begun to attract research attention in the context of education. Several cross-sectional studies have indicated the importance of transformational leadership in higher education (Simola et al., 2012; Stenling & Tafvelin, 2014). These studies established that transformational leaders are able to apply their positive influence on subordinates in educational settings even when there is a distance between leader and follower. The literature on transformational leadership in higher education has provided some preliminary understanding of the applicability of transformational leadership in this context.

Transformational leadership is not an identical harmonised category, nor does it involve a single conception of transformation. Instead, it could be regarded as transformative in the context of South African schools due to its combination of elements of leadership which are generally recognised as thriving, with aspects of cooperative governance. Figure 1 below shows the link between a transformational leader and the followers, as well as the nature of the relationship between the two.



*Source: Author (2021)*

**Figure 1: Transformational Leadership Structure**

Trust is one of the critical aspects for transformational leaders. According to Habib and Habib (2020), leaders nowadays should create trust amongst their staff members. Habib and Habib (2020) explain further that this can occur through the identity of values, integrity building and by sharing the vision and mission of the organisation. Thus, transformational leaders are seen as servant leaders by their followers, not as negative people who want to make their lives difficult. Jali et al. (2021) characterise a transformational leadership as follows:

- Usage of influence and charisma.
- Inspire and motivate.
- Allow subordinates a chance for innovation and creativity. The leader allows employees to bring in new ideas for the benefit of the organisation.
- A transformational leader considers employees individually. An employee's strong points, personalities, and challenges are considered a suitable strategy for working with them effectively.

It is evident that schools, as educational institutions with numerous stressors, will benefit greatly from transformational leadership, as Fernandes (2018) explains the effectiveness

of this kind of leadership in educational environments compared to other styles of leadership. Transformational leadership does not contribute to the work stress in the organisation but contributes to employees' work turnover (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2018).

Buvinic et al. (2020) elaborate on the positive relationship between transformational leadership and the climate of the organisation. According to Buvinic et al. (2020), transformational leadership has huge implications for the climate of any organisation. The common values of employees within different groups within the organisation are improved by transformational leadership. While all employees have been motivated to progress and to improve their productivity, they are also encouraged to take note of their managers' concerns regarding their vision of the organisation and support them.

The reviewed literature, however, revealed that, although there seems to be an improvement in other areas, South Africa is still finding it difficult to achieve its gender equality set targets. For example, the UN (2020) has outlined that socio-economic challenges such as women's unemployment rate are still higher than that of men. More so, it is still reported that women's share of non-agricultural wage is still below 50 per cent (Rummery, 2020). Violence against women has increased in 2020 (UN, 2020).

## **2.8 Chapter Summary**

This chapter included a theoretical framework of feminism to assist researchers in comprehending the diverse undercurrents that drive society. The chapter will also assist in outlining the diverse ways through which people interrelate and cooperate. Special attention was paid to three theories, namely feminism, the theory of change, and the transformational leadership theory, due to their relevance in this study. In feminism theory, the Marxist, radical, liberal, socialist, eco-feminism, and masculinity perspectives were explored. Understanding where people come from with regards to feminism, it would be reasonable for people to change their ways (change theories) and progressive and inevitable to apply transformational leadership.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL EFFORTS**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the literature related to this current study. Focus is placed on both the international and national legislative frameworks regarding transformation and women's empowerment. With South Africa being one of the countries on the continent to gain independence from colonial rule, the chapter firstly reviews the literature related to some international frameworks that have provided the basis for the transformation and women's transformation agenda since the country's independence. The international legislative frameworks reviewed include the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA), The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to name a few. After that the chapter moves on to review South African frameworks on transformation and women's empowerment with a deliberate focus on what occurs within workplaces. Some of the frameworks at the national level which are reviewed in this chapter include the South African Constitution, the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) of 1996, Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative – South Africa (ASGISA) of 2004 and Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of 1994. The central argument of the chapter is that organisational structures that comprise both women and men are likely to benefit both in terms of transformation and operational performance.

#### **3.2 International Frameworks on Transformation and Empowerment**

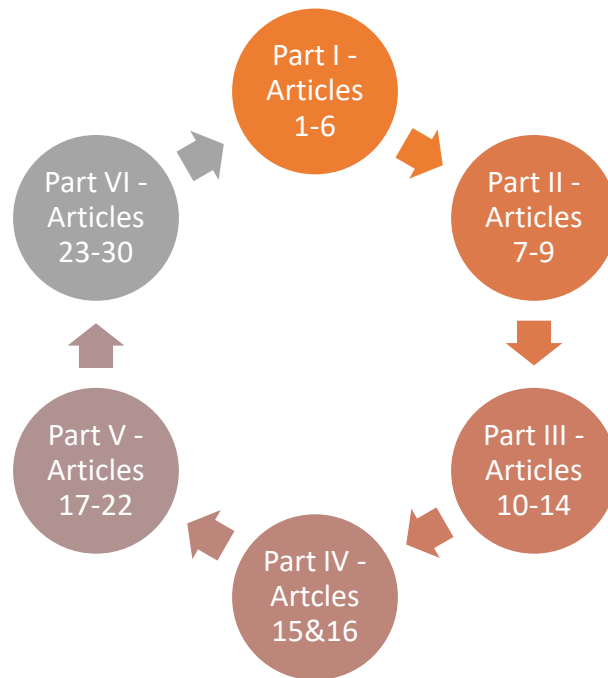
This section discusses some of the main legislative frameworks at the international level that have served as the basis for transformation and empowerment efforts globally. South Africa has also drawn inspiration and guidance from these frameworks in drafting its own

transformation and empowerment frameworks meant to empower its vulnerable sections of the population, particularly women.

### **3.2.1 The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**

One of the key legislative frameworks, which also specially focus on women, is the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The importance of this framework is that it combines various elements from a number of legislative frameworks that had occurred before its promulgation and introduces new elements meant not only to transform societies but also to empower women. Due to its composite nature, the CEDAW is widely viewed as the “supreme law” (McGlynn & Erika 2017:38) or “the international bill of rights for women” (McLoughlin & O’Brien, 2019:2). Bangani and VyasDoorgapersad (2020) posit that women were unfairly discriminated against, thus leading to the emergence of CEDAW as an international Bill of Rights for women. The CEDAW was adopted in 1979 and came into effect in 1981 after being ratified by around one hundred and eighty-seven countries.

The Convention was formulated specifically to regulate protection of women (Samargandi, 2019) and eradicate all types of discrimination against women (Habib & Habib, 2020). It contains ethics of equality and binding principle to countries that are signatories, meaning that men and women should be treated the same way. The CEDAW is made up of 30 articles in six parts, as shown in Figure 2:



Source: Author (2021)

**Figure 1: The Six Articles of the CEDAW**

- Part I – outlines non-discrimination, stereotypes on sex and sex trafficking.
- Part II – explains women's rights to equality in marriage and other legal spheres.
- Part III – outlines women's social and economic rights in education, employment and health. It also addresses challenges faced by women in rural areas.
- Part IV – focuses on the rights of women to equality in the context of marriage and other legal spheres.
- Part V – outlines the procedures for the Convention and its Committee.
- Part VI – elaborates on the effects of the Convention, State Parties' commitment and administration processes (CEDAW, 2016).

Article 1 of the CEDAW explains discrimination as:

*Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status on the basis of equality of women*

*and men, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.*

South Africa is located in Africa – one of the continents known for discriminating against women. Discrimination against women on the African continent, according to Nkenkana (2018), manifests through the denial of women's voices and views in traditional gatherings, but also workplaces. This penchant limits women's latent contribution and frustrates the transformation agenda (Amirault, 2019). Harding et al. (2013) aver that the CEDAW is built on the idea of gender equality in society. For Khurshid (2016), the emphasis of the CEDAW is on the need for the transformation of society to eliminate the discrimination suffered by women. The framework requires member countries to submit periodic reports showing progress in gender equality and transformation with particular reference to the promotion in workplaces and in other public spaces (Oosthuizen, 2018). The CEDAW signatories are obliged to "take all appropriate measures, including creating legislation to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women" (Quoted in Nehere, 2016:12). The CEDAW has several articles which are particularly relevant to this study.

Discrimination against women is not only an African problem. Bayu (2019) and Fineman (2013) posit that both developed and developing countries are lacking when it comes to the empowerment of women. In Africa, only Malawi and Kenya are reported as having constitutions that adhere to article 1 of CEDAW. In Asia, only India is viewed as a better example, while in Europe and the West, no country is pointed to as an example (Pranathi & Lathabhavan, 2021). The Constitution of India is popular for promoting gender equality regardless of gender, caste, religion, or place of birth (Tong, 2018). Contemporary India uses Hindu and Muslim laws to promote gender equality both within the household unit and workplace.

Malawi ratified the CEDAW and adopted other treaties that advance gender equality in 1987. These instruments have been used to structure the Constitution of Malawi and other legal statutes, including the Malawi National Land Policy of 2002 and the Wills, Inheritance and Protection Act No 14 of 2011 (Mwambene, 2010). Malawi's efforts are in



line with Article 5 of CEDAW, which requires all signatory members to make efforts towards the transformation of all practices in which women are seen to be discriminated against. Member countries are required to work towards the adoption of new legislation that protects women and empowers women. They are also required to abolish current laws, customs, and practices that violate human rights and discriminate against women. These requirements are also covered by Sections 20 and 24 of the Constitution of Malawi.

In Kenya, the country assures the protection of women from discrimination under Chapter 5 of its Constitution. The Constitution of Kenya requires that gender equality in public spaces be observed and dealt with in a way that is unprejudiced, sustainable, effective, and industrious. The Kenyan Constitution requires gender equality in property access and utilisation, as well as employment opportunities.

The CEDAW Article 5 places emphasis on: "...modifying the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and all other practices which are based on the idea of gender inferiority or superiority." The article emphasises the need for the adoption of measures which can effect change in social and customary practices to eliminate the discrimination against women (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020). The discriminatory household labour division, which continues to suppress women from assuming public space roles with decision-making influence, falls under Article 5. The article spells out how women spend most of their time performing vital household duties which are viewed as without any economic value. The article calls for the end of cultural practices that impede gender equality efforts in societies. The South African Constitution deals with such discriminatory cultures and practices under its Bill of Rights as discussed later in the chapter.

Article 14 of CEDAW explicitly deals with issues such as education and training, which are issues that directly translate to women's employment. Article 14 requires member countries to:

*Take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women ...in order to ensure...equality of men and women that they participate in and benefit from...development.*

Article 16 of CEDAW places particular focus on household issues that might affect the choices and capacity to play leadership roles in society. The article requires the state to

*...take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations in particular shall ensure on a basis of equality, the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property.*

Countries that are signatory to the CEDAW are required under Article 22 to

*...refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and ensure that public authorities and institutions act in conformity with the obligation and take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise.*

The requirement applies to both public and private institutions which fall within countries that are signatories to the convention. Several countries amended their constitutions after ratifying the CEDAW. These include Brazil, India, Malawi and Kenya. Brazil adopted the CEDAW in 1981, and in 1988 it implemented a clause in its Constitution that prohibited discrimination to improve women's legal status. Brazil also introduced legislation on gender equality and reviewed previous laws under which women experienced discrimination (Jovanovica & Ciricb, 2016). Today, Brazil's Constitution guarantees gender equality both in private and public spaces as it guarantees the rights of any other citizen.

However, although around 187 countries had endorsed as of 2021, commitment to its doctrines and requirements cannot be accurately measured. It is thus not easy to monitor progress on whether nations implement laws and programmes that protect women's rights. The general supposition is that by submitting reports, countries will also be observing CEDAW requirements, while failing to submit is construed as failure or reluctance to amend legislation and have plans meant to promote gender equality (Choudhry et al., 2019). Report submission assists the CEDAW Committee in evaluating areas that require particular focus in the gender equality discourse and practice (Bayu, 2019). It would also aid countries in developing strategies designed to address gender

inequality issues. However, failing to submit reports does not automatically represent reluctance or unwillingness to improve the condition of women. A number of countries are reviewing their Constitutions to improve the conditions of women.

### **3.2.2 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) was adopted in 1966. By the year 2004, around one hundred and fifty-four countries had ratified the framework. Signatory countries are expected to submit some reports from time to time to show how they are faring concerning the protection of women's rights. Like the CEDAW, Article 23 of the ICCPR requires that appropriate steps be taken to promote equality of genders, particularly within the household unit. In several nations, women are considered inferior both within the household and within the workplace (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020; Amirault, 2019). As a result, women are often discriminated against in decision-making and employment opportunities. In some cultures, women are even viewed as part of the property to be inherited when the husband dies (Makombe, 2006). A husband can also decide whether the wife should be employed or not. The husband can also decide whether they need their daughters to attend school or not.

According to Khurshid (2016), male children also tend to occupy a better rank than grown-up women within the household and can even make decisions when the father is away or when he requires them to do so. In the case of the father's death, sons automatically become the heirs (Kele & Pietersen, 2015). Human rights frameworks, thus, seek to have these kinds of situations abolished so that both genders in society can enjoy equivalent opportunities as part of the collective effort to ensure inclusive development (Nkenkana, 2018).

There are some resemblances between CEDAW and ICCPR. Both frameworks identify customary, historical, and religious practices as some of the fundamental reasons women continue to be oppressed within public spaces, such as workplaces and within private spaces, such as the household. Patriarchal inclinations, both in public spaces, including in workplaces and within households, tend to capitalise on religion to sustain the male dominance in leadership positions across structures. At the same time, women remain at

the bottom where they serve as secretaries, for example (Habib & Habib, 2020). The oppression of women and their denial of leadership positions within organisations is further sustained by the lack of strong laws to protect them directly in workplaces (Nkenkana, 2018). Most countries only introduce rules instead of laws regarding women's empowerment. As a result, the situation of women has remained the same across countries (Nienaber & Moraka, 2016). In many places across countries, particularly in Africa, women are always required to obey men in most religions where some churches do not recognise them as church leaders, and thus, they cannot challenge men (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014).

### **3.2.3 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)**

This framework was adopted in 1966 and is currently being supervised by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which deals with complaints of human rights violations in countries. Unlike the CEDAW and the ICCPR, the ICESCR deals with grievances and objections brought forward by individual persons and by non-profit establishments that deal with human rights, particularly pertaining to women (Ranjan, 2019). The committee also deals with issues of women in the context of workplaces. It also promotes the need for and rural women to have access to, control of, and ownership of productive assets such as land to have women empowered to take charge of their own lives both within and without public spaces. It protects widows from land evictions in cases where husbands are dead. The framework requires nations to ensure women are shielded against unjust dismissals from workplaces and evictions from land and that legal action is taken against perpetrators.

### **3.2.4 The African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR)**

Africa has also been making efforts ensure that the condition of women is improved. In 1981, it adopted the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR). Like the aforementioned frameworks, the ACHPR seeks to defend the fundamental human rights of people regardless of gender, age, and race. The ACHPR framework promotes equality of genders both within public and private institutions and before the law itself, traditional or modern. It requires the establishment of systems deliberately meant to protect the

rights of women and the implementation of laws that specifically focus on the protection of women. This was especially vital in the context of African cultures, where women are disempowered not only in workplaces but also within private spaces, particularly within the household unit where women exist at the mercy of men (husbands, sons, and male relatives). In agrarian Africa, women do not have equal opportunities to employment and when their husband dies, they can also easily lose the land itself, which is their means of survival (Amirault, 2019; Klaa, 2020).

### **3.2.5 The Beijing Platform for Action**

In 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPA) was adopted. The framework also seeks to empower women both in public and private spaces. The BPA emerged from the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China. The BPA was adopted by 189 countries, and it supports the protection of women's rights, the eradication of poverty, and the promotion of the economic liberation of both genders, including equal opportunities and access to employment opportunities. The framework requires signatory countries to adopt rules and laws which support the rights of women and girl children to access education, employment, as well as productive assets such as land, credit, capital, and other forms of property (Mokoena, 2018). The BPA is concerned about the unceasing poverty burden on women which has resulted in the feminisation of poverty. The BPA covers 12 key areas identified as central in the gender equality discourse (Klaa, 2020). These key areas range from poverty issues, violence issues, health, to issues of power and decision-making. The framework is fundamentally a campaign for the empowerment of women. It aims at speeding up the implementation of plans for advancing women, and eliminating hindrances to their participation in society (Qaisrani et al., 2016). The BPA also endorses commitment to CEDAW. Some of the key areas of the BPA and their relevance to this study are discussed next.

#### **3.2.5.1 Education and Training**

Inadequate education and training are part of the challenges that women face and they continue to compromise women's positions within workplaces. Both international and domestic frameworks on women's empowerment identify patriarchy as problematic

because it promotes male dominance. Patriarchy deliberately endorses the education of boy children more than girl children (Al-Ashri, 2016). It is for this reason that there remain low levels of literacy for women across the world, especially in rural Africa (Bemba, 2018; Turkmen, 2018). This situation has affected the ability of women to access and compete for job opportunities across sectors (Buvinic et al., 2020). This consequently frustrates global efforts to realise inclusive development through the empowerment of all members of society, including women (Balboni et al., 2020).

In the context of Africa, traditional customs bar women from participating in councils where important decisions are made. As a result, women do not engage with men in public (Banerjee et al., 2018). This has translated into workplace oppression (Berry et al., 2018). However, according to Campos et al. (2018), due to lack of education and limited training, most women do not know whether there exist conduits through which they can challenge the oppressive nature of patriarchy.

Reviewed literature shows that women with high literacy levels have greater chances of accessing economic resources and paid employment than those without or with low literacy levels (Choudhry et al., 2019; Croke et al., 2017). However, the percentage of women with high levels of literacy is tiny compared to those without education and training (Hillesland, 2019; Karimli et al., 2019). As a result, they do not have enough support from other women to oppose the status quo strongly. It has also been found that the women who stand up against patriarchal oppression are viewed in a negative light even by other women (Mbilinyi, 2016; Nehere, 2016). This situation is worsened because some of the women who lobby for gender equality and women's rights are not in marriages. This makes them lose the support of other women who blame them for seeking to disrupt their marriages (Nienaber & Moraka, 2016). As a result, women remain without a strong base from which they can lobby for release from patriarchal tendencies and thus continue to be oppressed.

For women to make a meaningful contribution to society, it is vital that they be capacitated with education and training, and with knowledge about how to train for specific careers

they desire to pursue. This then calls for the involvement of extension support to capacitate women with new skills to improve outcomes (Nkenkana, 2018).

### **3.2.5.2 Unequal Access to Healthcare Services**

Women are found not to have equal opportunities in accessing health facilities and services, particularly in times of pandemics, such as Ebola, HIV, and COVID-19, among others (Davies & Bennett, 2016; Smith, 2019; Ndhlovu & Tembo, 2020). This has been attributed to the fact that women lack resources they directly own. As a result, women's chances of consulting health services, are very limited, mainly where these services are privately provided (Ndhlovu & Tembo, 2020). The UNCTD (2020) found an enduring relationship between gender and health. This is supported by scholars who argue that women are more concerned about health issues, for themselves, their children, and their husbands, than men are (Samargandi et al., 2019).

This suggests that women are more exposed to health dangers than men. Ngoma and Mayimbo (2017) posit that, in reality, women are more exposed to health dangers beyond their control than men, largely due to their biological nature. For instance, reproductive health hazards are borne mainly by women, while men are exempted both by nature and culture. Price et al. (2019) argue that the link between health and gender calls for the need to explore the various dynamics, not essentially about women's health, but about the rapport between gender and health. Women are facing more health challenges as they fail to afford the increasing expenses for healthcare, particularly in the private sector. For this reason, some scholars have associated women's ill-health with poverty (Day & Gray, 2017; Price et al., 2018). According to the BPA, these conditions all serve to disempower women and undermine their ability to stand up and contribute to society.

As a signatory to the BPA, South Africa has introduced the National Health Insurance to ease pressure on the public sector, which is used by the majority of the population enabling the private sector to intervene. Women's inadequate access to healthcare due to their poverty also leads to increased health challenges, including poorer nutrition as food savings are diverted towards health. Price et al. (2018) conclude that low-income families are highly likely to suffer poor health due to a myriad accompanying attributes of

poverty which may lead to compromised healthcare access, especially in the private sector where payment is required. The sickness or death of household members due to insufficient healthcare exposes women and entire households to greater poverty and worsens health insecurity (Hillesland, 2019). Health requirements force women to use their savings to pay for the hospitalisation of sick members. Women are also likely to leave employment to step up as caregivers to the sick (Ndhlovu & Tembo, 2020). The result of this goes beyond economic implications and health in terms of morbidity and mortality. It also affects livelihoods and women's ability to be empowered. The caregiver roles that women offer result in unwaged women labour and serve to subsidise the social reproduction of male labour. Thus, the BPA suggests that the poverty of many women today is the major cause of their poverty and health challenges.

The BPA postulate that women's empowerment through the recognition of their human rights could improve their situation and that of their households in terms of access to health resources.

### **3.2.5.3 Resources Allocation**

The BPA also pushes forward the need for equality in resource access between men and women. Equality in resource allocation could lead to the empowerment of women. Women need equal access to property and productive assets, such as land. This requires deploying laws and programmes that eliminate customary observances which discriminate against women in property access (Kele & Pietersen, 2015). Efforts should also be made to improve not only access and utilisation but also ownership of resources and power to decide what resources can be used for. It is, thus, important that women be empowered to participate in decision-making structures that control how resources are to be redistributed (Karlan et al., 2017). This will increase their access to economic and productive resources. Powell et al. (2018) found that women continue to be underrepresented in most decision-making structures, thereby compromising their chances of being heard on matters that affect them. The participation of women in leadership and decision-making structures could help pave the way for them to have access to productive resources, employment opportunities, and hence, empowerment



and the general transformation of societal operations (Kilroy et al., 2019). The BPA requires that policies and laws in its signatory member countries be sensitive to gender issues. It also requires that its members create a balance in resource distribution.

#### ***3.2.5.4 Representation in decision-making Structures***

Imbalanced power relations between genders have often resulted in gross violation of the rights of people, including the denial of economic resources to women (Klaa, 2020) and closing-off likelihoods for the redress of discrimination (Karimli et al., 2019). The equal participation of women in decision-making structures would result in a balance that replicates the structure of society and is a precondition for the transformation of society (Naidoo, 2020). According to Ranjan (2019), the reason why women need representation in decision-making structures emerges from the current imbalanced division of resources and opportunities both within places of work and within the household itself. The unequal spread of opportunities has a damaging effect on societal transformation and the empowerment of women because it places in the hands of men all power for decision-making. In dealing with inequality between genders in the sharing of decision-making power, the BPA requires the governments of its members to promote gender viewpoints in all policies.

#### **3.2.6 The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

The MDGs are eight international development objectives adopted during the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000. This followed the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. All the 189 United Nations member countries committed to achieving the goals by 2015. Among other things, the MDGs were meant to promote gender equality to fight the poverty that continues to wreck countries (Ngoma & Mayimbo, 2017). Eight goals were set to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability, and develop a global partnership for development. There are specific goals of the MDG that have a specific target on women's empowerment in terms of access to economic resources and equal treatment in public and private spaces.

What makes the MDGs different from other frameworks is that the MDGs set eighteen targets with forty-eight indicators which were time-bound. These ranged from social, economic, political, and environmental targets which were supposed to be reached by the year 2015. The MDGs that deal with the need for women's empowerment are summarised in the following sub-sections.

### ***3.2.6.1 Eradication of Poverty***

The first MDG focused on the need to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, which appear to have been the basic challenge for women across the world (Tong, 2018). The majority of the poor in the world are women (Salia et al., 2018). This underlines the importance of giving women equal opportunities for employment and access to productive assets. The eradication of poverty through equal employment opportunities can enable women to improve their own lives and the future of their children and society (Samargandi et al., 2019). The various factors that lead to poverty by women range from their powerlessness to access employment and work opportunities, exclusion from decision-making structures, cultural and religious biases, as well as discriminatory inheritance systems (Bayu, 2019). When developing rules and regulations that seek to eradicate poverty, it is important to give deliberate attention to women, particularly the uneducated, who are, for the most part, confined in the countryside.

### ***3.2.6.2 Achieving Universal Primary Education***

As indicated above, one of the factors that have resulted in women's empowerment and the dominance of men in all sectors of the economy has been the lack of adequate education and training for women (Bemba, 2018; Berry et al., 2018; Campos et al., 2018). As a result, the second MDG focused on the need for UN member countries to achieve universal primary education. The second goal was meant to enrol all children in primary school and close the gap between the enrolment of boys and that of girls (Hillesland, 2019; Karimli et al., 2019). Some scholars posit that patriarchy promotes the education of boys more than that of girls (Buvinic et al., 2020; Naidoo, 2020). Bayu (2019) argues that this is why most girls will not complete primary school while more boys will and do. .

Patriarchy is structured so that girls remain confined to household chores rather than go to school (Ngoma & Mayimbo, 2017).

The United Nations' Millennium Development Goals report of 2013 indicates that the enrolment trends for girls only started gradually changing in the late 1980s. The levels of girls' literacy increased from 68 per cent in 1990 to 89 per cent in 2011, particularly in Northern Africa, and from 60 per cent to 81 per cent in Southern Asia (Van den Broeck & Maertens, 2017). Worldwide, the percentage of girls in primary education is rising more than for boys (Salia et al., 2018). However, this statistical evidence does not mean that girls finish primary school as the number of boys who finish primary school is still higher than that of girls (Özler et al., 2020). It is also reported that in developing countries across the world, girls record higher school absenteeism rates due to household chores before and after school (Hillesland, 2019). According to OECD (2021), poverty also plays a key role in girls' school absenteeism. This is particularly observable during their menstrual periods when a lack of adequate resources, such as sanitary towels, becomes a major obstacle to being out in public. Boys record high school attendance rates than girls (Das, 2021). In addition, girls are also more likely to leave school to help take care of siblings, the elderly, and the sick (Ndhlovu & Tembo, 2020). In adulthood, these girls fail to obtain formal employment due to their limited education and training. This subsequently leads to the feminisation of poverty (Choudhry et al., 2019).

### ***3.2.6.3 Promotion of Gender Equality***

The MDG3 acknowledges that numerous factors undermine women's participation in the broader economy. Available empirical evidence shows that low literacy level is one of the factors that sustain gender inequality both within public and private spaces (Buvinic et al., 2020; Kele & Pietersen, 2015; Khurshid, 2016). Religion and culture, among others, coupled with low literacy disempowers women to lobby for rights that can empower them and participate meaningfully in decision-making activities (Dhar et al., 2018). The MDG3 thus posits that gender equality has the potential to empower women to make considerable contributions to the economies of countries. When women are empowered, the other MDGs are also likely to benefit from their empowerment. For example, hunger

could be eradicated (MDG1), child mortality could be reduced (MDG4), and the enrolment of children, especially girls at primary school, could improve (MDG2) as women are generally more concerned with the welfare and the future of their children than men are. Improving girls' education could translate into empowered future mothers who have both the knowledge and the resources to deal with issues of hunger, child mortality, education, and the health of their children.

#### **3.2.6.4 Child Mortality**

This MDG was meant to reduce the mortality rate of children under the age of five due to malnutrition and other preventable conditions and diseases. Mortality is a matter of more grave concern for women as mothers and caregivers than for men. Women are more inclined to sacrifice their little resources and employment to take care of their children (Al-Ashri, 2016). At the global level, the mortality rate has been dropping significantly since the 1990s (Hillesland, 2019; Klaa, 2020). UN Reports state that globally, there was a 47 per cent decline in extreme global poverty in 1990 to 14 per cent in 2015. Most importantly, work and productive work for all, including women, improved from 1,6 per cent of the GDP in 1990 to 5,3 per cent in 2015. Furthermore, there was an improvement in the number of girls in schools from 74 girls for every 100 boys in 1990 to 103 for every 100 in 2015. Summarily, an improvement of 50 per cent in the reduction of extreme poverty, people suffering from hunger, child dropouts, and deaths caused by malaria and tuberculosis diseases was achieved as had been targeted.

However, at regional levels, Sub-Saharan Africa has not been exhibiting exciting results (Buvinic et al., 2020). In this region, numerous children are still dying of malnutrition (UNCTD, 2020). Women's empowerment through equal employment opportunities could easily address this problem as women are more inclined to sacrifice their resources for food and the welfare of their children (Nkenkana, 2018; OECD, 2021). If women could have equal access to employment opportunities, including ascendancy to leadership positions, they could earn more and also influence organisations' decisions regarding social responsibility. This would then translate not only to their own empowerment but also to the eradication of the child mortality rate caused by malnutrition.

### **3.2.6.5 Combating HIV/AIDS**

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has disrupted the world social order and further intensified the feminisation of poverty. This is because the effect of the pandemic has been particularly heavy on women (Özler, 2020; Qaisrani et al., 2016). Women who lose their husbands because of the virus or other diseases face the risk of losing property to the relatives of the deceased (Ngoma & Mayimbo, 2017). In most African cultures, male relatives have the responsibility to inherit the household of the deceased, including the wife and children. A woman who refuses to be inherited faces expulsion from the family (Nkenkana, 2018). Where this occurs, the woman is plunged further into poverty and exposed further to HIV related diseases as she tries to eke a living with her children. According to Ngoma and Mayimbo (2017), the lack of laws that protect women's rights has resulted in the gross violation of their rights. The empowerment of women through equal access to employment and productive assets could assist them in better navigating cultural inclinations that disadvantage them, such as wife inheritance which usually further exposes them to more sexually transmitted diseases.

### **3.2.7 The Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SGD)**

In 2015, the leaders of 193 nations across the world assembled to update one another about their progress on the MDGs. They found that famines, drought, wars, plagues, and poverty persisted. Therefore, they formed another plan known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which comprises 17 goals to be achieved by 2030. Women's empowerment is addressed under several goals, including Goal 1- No Poverty. In 2000, the world had committed itself to halve the percentage of people living in extreme poverty by 2015. According to the UNDP (2017), these goals were met because hunger dropped by almost half (Goal 2). A number of countries which used to battle hunger and famine were now able to meet the nutritional needs of their people, particularly women and children (UNCTAD, 2020). What remained was to end hunger totally by promoting sustainable agriculture and supporting smallholder farmers, especially women (Salia et al., 2018). However, over 800 million people worldwide are reported still to be surviving on less than \$1.25 a day (Samargandi et al., 2019). This number included women in

extreme poverty. The empowerment of these people to fight poverty and hunger was thus critical.

Of the SDGs, it is Goal 4 – Equality in education and Goal 5 – Gender equality - directly deal with the issues of women empowerment. Goal 4 focuses on the importance of all-encompassing and equitable quality education access and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for everyone. It was found that improving education for all remained a challenge across the world (Duvendack & Mader, 2020). Natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, and armed conflicts keep many children out of school (Harper, 2020). Children from the poorest households were most vulnerable (UNDP, 2017). Girl children also needed to be supported to attend school. Signatory countries were encouraged to provide universal primary and secondary education for their people. Specifically, Goal 5 focused on the need for gender equality and the broader empowerment of women and girl children because they are considered as lagging in almost everything and, therefore, need d to be empowered (Malhotra & Elnakib, 2021; Oosthuizen, 2018; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018).

There were also still substantial disparities in terms of employment opportunities, nature of employment, and also in terms of wages. Many women continue to serve as caregivers to children and the elderly with no remuneration (Duvendack & Mader, 2020). There was, however, some emerging optimism as more girls now attended school compared to the year 2000 (Duvendack & Mader, 2020) and gender in primary education was also rapidly increasing in most regions (OECD, 2021), and so was paid employment for women (Das, 2021). The SDGs aimed to improve these accomplishments to increase gender equality in countries.

South Africa is a signatory to the SDGs, and it has also made some significant strides in increasing the representation of women in public spaces, including in politics. It has also put in place a number of programmes and legal frameworks as part of its committed effort to achieve inclusive development and bolster its democracy. The following section focuses on South Africa and the legal frameworks and programmes it has adopted in this regard.

### **3.3 Overview of the South African Women's Empowerment Agenda**

The empowerment of women in South Africa required that entire structures and systems undergo a total transformation. Transformation is the creation of new paradigms through the deployment of conducive reforms that have the potential to lead to the desired outcome in terms of societal and organisational change (Iscaan et al., 2014; Nudelman, 2015). Transformation is all about altering socially-based relationships that influence how people think and how organisations are run (Holeta, 2016). According to Odumeru and Ogbonna (2013), transformation is not simply a replacement of systems; instead, it is all about changing the culture and systems of organisations to support inclusive representation and voice.

The reviewed literature shows that South Africa inherited public and private structures with serious problems that required transformation (Habib, 2013; Holeta, 2016; Nudelman, 2015). The legacy of apartheid created structures and organisations that lacked justice, proficiency, equality, and fairness (Jones, 2013). At independence in 1994, the government needed to change the culture of institutions to foster democratic principles. According to Van Niekerk (2015), however, the process of reform transformation has been compounded and clouded by enormous challenges. The aim of the post-apartheid administration was to democratise institutions with a view of realising equality. Since 1994, the government has introduced measures and reform initiatives to transform society to realise equality, both among races and gender equality. To achieve gender equality, specific obligatory processes needed to be adopted. This included the introduction of various instruments, such as the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act No. 4 of 2000, that would enforce the realisation of equality ideals.

#### **3.3.1 Women's Charter of 1954, and Women's Charter for Effective Equality, 1994**

South Africans have always been aware of the gender inequality and the oppression that continued to hold them down in the country. As a result, women in the country have made some efforts to eliminate some injustices deliberately developed by colonialism, apartheid, culture, and traditional beliefs (Holeta, 2016). These socially-motivated

injustices compromised how women engaged the broader society and its political economy of resource access, ownership and utilisation; hence, even in workplaces, they continued to be considered inferior (Crafford, 2015). The Women's Charter of 1954 and the Women's Charter for Effective Equality of 1994 are direct efforts of women's struggle against injustice and oppression in South Africa.

The Women's Charter for Effective Equality, together with the South African Constitution of 1996, envisioned and highlighted the formation of governance systems, such as the National Office of the Status of Women, the Commission on Gender Equality, and a multi-party women's caucus. Some of the intentions set out in the Women's Charter for Effective Equality have been to develop systems and governance structures that mainstream gender into national legislation in all legislation (Dlanjwa, 2018). Besides, the foreword of the Women's Charter of 1954 posits the need to remove all "...customs that discriminate against women and that deprive us in any way of our inherent right to the advantages, responsibilities and opportunities that society offers to any one section of the population" (Federation of South African Women, 1954). Thus, South African women have always been aware of the various forces that combine to oppress them and compromise their empowerment.

### **3.3.2 The South African Constitution, 1996**

The Constitution adopted by the new government of South Africa outlaws any discrimination, which the previous government cherished, based on race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, language, social origin, culture and religion, conscience and belief. This became one of the first steps toward realising women's empowerment in democratic South Africa. The Constitution also includes non-sexism in the Bill of Rights (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The Constitution was adopted to address the injustices of the past and establish a country founded on democratic principles. These rights are detailed in the Bill of Rights in Chapter 2 of the Constitution.

The Constitution of South Africa is now regarded as one of the best in the world. Women's empowerment is dealt with in several sections in the Constitution. These include Section 9 - Freedom from unfair discrimination based on gender and the right to equality; Section



15 - Freedom of religion, belief and opinion which recognises customary and religious practices stressing that they should be compliant with the Constitution; Section 25 - The right to property; Section 26 - The right to adequate housing; Section 29 - The right to basic education, this includes basic adult education, and Section 34 - The right to access to courts.

The Constitution is a key legislation for gender equality in South Africa which also provides the basis on which women's rights to equality may be achieved. If South Africa's Constitution lacked a clause on gender equality, then women's rights would be difficult to achieve in the workplace.

### **3.3.3 Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 (EEA)**

The Employment Equity Act was adopted to ensure a representative workplace within organisations and equality and fairness in the treatment of employees within workplaces (Bangani & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020). The EEA No. 55 of 1998 illegalised unfair discrimination and required transparent and justice systems of management for all employees regardless of gender (Nhlapo, 2019). All organisations, therefore, had to formulate their own rules and regulations on how they deal with employees but taking into account the need to operate within the Act (Nhlapo & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2016). Additionally, the Employment Equity Act seeks to help organisations eliminate unfair discrimination in the workplace and work towards an equitable representation of employees from designated groups through Affirmative Action measures (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2017). The Employment Equity Act has also covered issues of equal remuneration for the same jobs and tasks. This is a concern that is often experienced by women and previously disadvantaged groups in South Africa who are paid less while whites are given higher salaries for the same jobs (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2018a).

### **3.3.4 Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 (SDA)**

The EEA No. 55 of 1998 is backed up by the SDA No. 97 of 1998 which provides a compulsory institutional outline for the need for employees' development and training by

organisations. The SDA No. 97 of 1998, the Human Resources Development Strategy for South Africa (HRD-SA) was formed to achieve this goal. The HRD-SA

*...refers to the formal and explicit activities which will enhance the ability of all individuals to reach their full potential. By enhancing the skills, knowledge and abilities of the individual, HRD-SA serves to improve the productivity of people in their areas of work whether these are formal or informal settings (RSA, 2009).*

The women in South Africa can only reach their full potential once they are equipped and supported to compete for employment opportunities with men without being discriminated against.

### **3.3.5 Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act**

Following the EEA No. 55 of 1998 and the SDA of 1998 was the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act No. 4 of 2000 (PEPUD Act). Section 9(4) of the 1996 Constitution gave effect to the PEPUD Act, which requires democracy consolidation through eradicating social and economic inequalities emerging from the country's history (Nhlapo, 2019). The PEPUD Act thus aims to amend social and economic inequalities in the democratic era through promoting equality and social justice predicated on the country's philosophy of living and caring for others (*Ubuntu*) (RSA, 2000). Redressing the social and economic inequalities conditions of the past were envisaged to result in the realisation of an equal and just society in line with the various international and national frameworks to which the country was a signatory or had designed and adopted (Bangani & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020). Section 14 of the PEPUD Act addresses issues of unfair discrimination – ideas which are echoed in the EEA of 1998. Section 1(1) of the PEPUD Act of 2000 defines discrimination as:

*Any act or mission including a policy, law, rule, practice, condition or situation which directly or indirectly – (a) imposes burdens, obligations or disadvantages; or (b) withholds benefits, opportunities or disadvantages from any person on one or more of the prohibited grounds (RSA, 2000).*

The PEPUD Act of 2000 also reiterates the importance of acknowledging the unfairness of all discriminations if used to defend persons who once had been advantaged (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015). Fair discrimination is only justified when used to correct, address, and redress inequalities created by past and present systematic unfairness (Sibanda, 2015). The Office on the Status of Women (2000) requires that it be understood that while efforts are made to empower women, such efforts should go beyond giving men and women equal treatment. The disregard of gender issues would lead to the continuation of gender disparities that favour men.

### **3.3.6 National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality**

The government of South Africa also established a National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality. The aim of this framework is to attempt to change the attitudes and behaviours of society in ways that can lead to the achievement of equal participation of sexes (Bangani & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020). The framework also summarises the government's vision for gender equality and facilitates the designing and execution of programmes that can promote and quicken gender equality in all sectors of society (Nhlapo, 2019). Furthermore, the framework is a national point of reference that both public and private sectors should refer to and consult in dealing with factors and situations that see the dominance of men in society at the expense of women (Goko, 2013). The framework places the gender equality discourse at the centre of all development debates. It posits that gender equality need not be treated as an add-on but rather as an ultimate goal of all democratic efforts (Dlanjwa, 2018).

The framework also highlights how the attainment of gender equality is a two-tier development. Firstly, it has to address people's basic needs. Secondly, it must deal with strategic needs. In communities characterised by high levels of inequality and economic variances, the realisation of the people's basic needs is equally important as ensuring the balance of strategic needs (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2018a). In this view, basic needs must be achieved as a precondition for realising strategic needs. As detailed in the previous sections, the empowerment of women is an indispensable first step toward attaining gender equality in any existing society (Dlanjwa, 2018). Gender equality creates self-

confidence for women to aspire to make visible contributions to society but are constrained by societal circumscribed conventions. Gender equality, therefore, in all spaces, including workplaces, is essential in altering retrogressive attitudes and behaviours that oppress women and block their ability to contribute toward the realisation of good that would benefit the broader society (Oosthuizen, 2018; Sheoraj, 2015). Women's empowerment aims to address the fundamental needs related to well-being and social needs (OECD, 2021). In contrast, the gender and development approach seek to address the strategic needs of women, especially how much they can offer for organisational development. Thus, women's empowerment is a precondition to gender equality and development.

### **3.3.7 The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE)**

The South African Constitution provides the formation of independent state institutions authorised to support democracy which is constitution based. Such institutions are meant to oversee the various processes and programmes targeted at ensuring and speeding up the achievement of a free and equal society in the country. The CGE is one of the six independent constitutional institutions mandated with this role. The CGE is authorised to oversee efforts and programmes meant for the promotion of gender equality in South Africa (Bangani & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020). It monitors and evaluates organised gender practices, investigates gender-related complaints, and conducts research, educates, advises, and reports on gender equality issues (Bangani & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020). One of its vital roles is to assess the effect and execution levels of employment equity within state organisations. The CGE is also mandated to evaluate policies on gender equality; the position of women within workplaces in the country and release reports each year on these issues (Habib & Habib, 2020).

There is, however, no latest gender-disaggregated data and expenditure allocation for gender equality and transformation initiatives in South Africa (Dlanjwa, 2018; Goko, 2013). Thus, gender equality data, which may be used to hold the government and its various entities to account, is not available. This is a considerable challenge as entities become slow and reluctant in their transformation agenda, knowing that they are likely to

proceed undisturbed. Available information from the Commission, however, reveals that the reason for the lack of data on gender equality in South Africa ranges from poor accountability, poor implementation and vague penalties for noncompliance with employment equality targets., poor understanding of the EEA No. 55 of 1998 and related duties; lack of seriousness in promoting gender equality in the workplace, skills shortages, and lack of adequate political support on how to achieve desired levels of employment equality compliance (Bangani & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020; Dlanjwa, 2018; Goko, 2013; Habib & Habib, 2020). This also points to the need for transformation leadership, which is zealous about transforming how obligations are pursued across various structures of various institutions. However, regardless of its various challenges, the CGE remains one of the important institutions that guides South Africa to realise its gender equity goals and objectives.

### **3.3.8 The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC)**

Another framework that addresses the plight of women concerning gender equality is the SAHRC which emerged from section 184 of the Constitution. The aim of this framework is to “promote the protection, development and attainment of human rights.” This commitment is in line with the CEDAW, which requires all its signatory members to make a commitment to the designing and implementation of laws that are targeted at the protection of the rights of people regardless of gender. The SAHRC supports a constitutional democracy and promotes respect for human rights for people within South Africa regardless of gender, race, and nationality (Ngoma & Mayimbo, 2017). The SAHRC was adopted in October 1995 under the Human Rights Commission Act 54 of 1994. Its mandate is to:

- Promote respect for human rights and a culture of human rights;
- Promote the protection, development and attainment of human rights; and
- Monitor and assess the observance of human rights in the country.

The SAHRC has the powers to examine and report on the adherence to human rights, take steps and design and implement suitable compensation where human rights have been desecrated. It also has powers to call for and carry out research and launch

awareness campaigns for all South African citizens' rights and responsibilities (Nhlapo & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2016). However, the SAHRC has its own challenges, which include budgetary constraints.

### **3.4 The Condition of Gender Equality in South Africa**

The reviewed literature shows that, although South Africa is a signatory to several international treaties and has adopted its own frameworks on gender equality, South Africa has not made pleasant progress in this regard (Nkenkana, 2018; Oosthuizen, 2018; Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2018a). Statistics SA reports that in 2016, only 39,2 per cent of women in South Africa held seats in provincial parliaments (Stats SA, 2021), while in 2017, the figure somewhat moved to 42 per cent (Habib & Habib, 2020). The percentage of women in managerial positions was 31,1 per cent in 2014, 30,8 per cent in 2015, 32,1 per cent in 2016, and 32, 1 per cent in 2017. Therefore, the realisation of gender equality remains a basic challenge not only in schools but across all government institutions and structures.

Habib and Habib (2020) found women in South Africa were stuck at the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy and that inequality and introspection had to be dealt with. The former President, Jacob Zuma, also posited that the structure, systems, institutions, and ownership patterns as well as economic management needed to be in favour of all citizens, especially women, as they were a larger percentage of the country's poor group (Zuma, 2017). Habib and Habib (2020) aver that despite the Constitutional guarantees on full and equal enjoyment of rights of all genders, as well as all the strides in women's empowerment and gender equality, many women in South Africa still suffer inequality, discrimination, sexism, patriarchy, and institutionalised inequality. Habib and Habib (2020) acknowledge that patriarchy is still a massive problem. The *Gender Mainstreaming Initiatives in Public Service*, a report published by the Public Service Commission (PSC, 2006 quoted by Bangani & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020:9) posits that:

*Empowerment of women is not happening in any significant or meaningful way in departments. Apart from general policies and practices that affect all staff,*

*there are no specific programmes that recognise women as a separate interest group with specific interests and needs. This includes issues related to recruitment, training and addressing the practical needs of women.*

Furthermore, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) released a report which highlighted that “women mostly occupy lower levels where earnings and power to influence decisions are equally less” (cited in Nhlapo & Vyas-Doorgapersad 2016:171–172). While the inclusion of women in the lower levels of management will eventually enable them to compete for jobs at the entry-level, it does not guarantee their appointment. In actual fact, these women will need to wait for longer for a vacancy to arise for them to be promoted. As a result, they are stuck in the lower levels of management for long durations. When this occurs, the efforts and discourse on gender equality and empowerment do not bear fruits. In its 2017 report, the SAHRC revealed that by the end of 2016, around 16 per cent of the total complaints it received had something to do with the violation of the right to equality in employment promotion within institutions (Sebola & Tsheola, 2014). Such violations undermined and compromised the aims of the EEA No. 55 of 1998, which seeks to promote and protect gender equality within institutions through transformation. The EEA No. 55 of 1998 requires that issues of gender equality be taken into account in job promotions and the formation of organisational leadership structures (Republic of South Africa, 1998).

This setup exposes the extent of the marginalisation of women in workplaces. It shows how the mainstreaming of gender requires attention, not only rhetorically but also in execution by South African policymakers and transformation planners. To improve this situation and achieve gender equality within places of work, particularly in the public sector, the DPSA recommended the adoption and implementation of the Strategic Framework for Gender Equality within the Public Service (SFGEPS) in 2005. However, compared to other countries, such as the Netherlands and Australia. South African public institutions, including schools, still lag in terms of gender inclusivity within the various structures of organisations (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2017). Attempts to resolve these challenges culminated in the inclusion of gender in the public service in a framework entitled SFGEPS. Vyas-Doorgapersad (2018b:123) posits that:

*South Africa faces a range of socio-economic and cultural challenges that continue to underpin aspects of gender inequality. There are a number of factors that play a crucial role in assessing progress towards achieving gender equality. These include the need to encourage a more equitable and non-gendered division of labour; and the need to ensure equitable access to employment opportunities for women.*

According to the DPSA (2006:9), attaining

*...the goal of gender equality is premised on the fundamental integration of women and gender issues within all structures, institutions, policies, procedures, practice, programmes, and projects of the government.*

The DPSA (2006:3) also posits that:

*Priority focus on increasing women's participation in decision making, and the concomitant adoption of the Public Service employment equity target of 50% representation for women at all levels of the Senior Management Service (SMS), are built into the current strategy. This translates to a concerted effort needed across all government departments, at national, provincial and local levels, in addressing women's empowerment and leadership development.*

The purpose of this framework is to create an environment that is conducive for public service departments to meet their goals and reach their potential (Bangani & VyasDoorgapersad, 2020:76):

*To adapt their organisational management and planning methodologies to suit the anticipated realities of the environment. Due to the constantly changing environment, organisations will have to reflect on the realities of the time in order to be really responsive and responsible.*

When a conducive environment is created, institutions and departments will be able to mainstream gender equality issues, much to the transformation of the institutions themselves and the broader society. The framework:



*Provides a wide set of options for the transformation of the workplace premised on the promotion and protection of human dignity and the rights of women. It recognises the role of the government in promoting non-sexism and non-discrimination for employees in the Public Service (DPSA, 2006:3).*

Because of this, the purpose of the public service is to create a workplace that is permitting, and barrier-free, and that operates free from gender biases (DPSA, 2006:4). This indicates that the frameworks also seek to promote equal opportunities and equal employment opportunities in public institutions. Equal opportunities in government institutions imply the occasion to have equal treatment for all employees regardless of gender, race or any other such differences.

According to Bangani and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2020:4):

*...there are two characteristics to the concept of equal opportunities, namely that of a principle enshrined within the ideal of a representative Public Service to ensure equality in employment for the equal enjoyment of rights, opportunities, benefits and access in the workplace and a tool to eradicate discrimination and unfairness in the workplace in pursuit of a representative Public Service.*

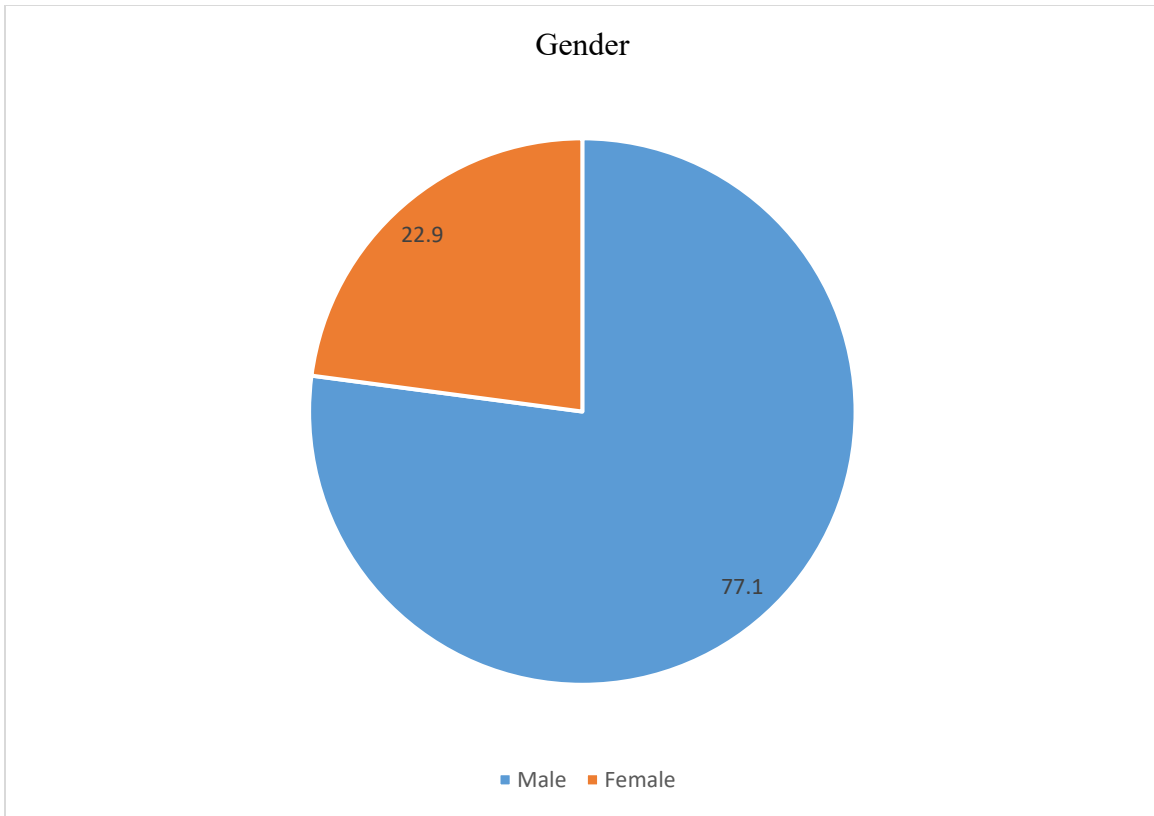
In the view of the above, it is posited that gender mainstreaming would guarantee that women receive equal treatment with their male counterparts and that they are empowered to compete for similar employment positions. Consequently, transformed workplaces would result into transformed communities that value and benefit from gender equality (Sheoraj, 2015:77). According to Bangani and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2020), gender equality is not just about human rights. However, it is also about how development can be realised by allowing all members of society to contribute to the amassing of the broader economy.

### **3.4.1 The Status of Gender Equality South African Public Institutions**

The discrimination and underrepresentation of women in the South African workplaces can be linked to the country's cultures and traditional beliefs and its colonial and apartheid

history, as discussed above. Mokoena (2018) posits that since 1994 when the country gained its independence, only a limited number of women have experienced growth in the workplace. Only a few women have managed to gain entrance to supervisory and managerial roles, while a few others have assumed positions in which they perform technical roles. The rest of the women remain underrepresented, especially at management levels. According to Thompson and Woolard (2002), the underrepresentation of women within places of work was at its worst in 1995, when the country was emerging from a century of colonial rule and decades of apartheid. The presence of women particularly in politics only began to be noticed between 1995 and 2000 (Thompson & Woolard, 2002). However, even though there began to be increased women's presence in workplaces, the number of men assuming leadership positions soared significantly, making the percentage of women in leadership positions insignificant. According to Mokoena (2018), this situation has still not changed on an outright basis since even though in 2005, after the adoption of the SFGE, South African institutions witnessed an upturn of women from 30 per cent in 2005 and 40 per cent in 2014, this increase remains below the country's 50 per cent target.

Moreover, the data released by the DPSA (2017) show that various government departments had also lost interest in dealing with equality issues as they now focus on other issues which they consider requiring urgent attention. The ascendancy of women to senior management has continued at an average of 1 per cent, with no signs of efforts to deal with the situation (DPSA, 2017). This shows that, if anything, the 50 per cent target can only be reached by 2025 if no efforts are made (DPSA 2017). This view is supported by the CEE Annual Report 2016–2017, which reveals the dominance of men in senior management positions (66.7%) (Department of Labour [DoL], 2018a). The report reveals that women's representation is at just about half their economically active population at the top management level, as shown in Figure 3 (DoL, 2018b).



Source: Department of Labour (2018b)

**Figure 2: Top Management by Gender (All employees)**

The DPSA (2017) revealed that most departments have been hovering between 45 per cent and 49 per cent since 2015 and seemed not to make efforts to reach the 50 per cent target. Some of the departments were still below 30 per cent regarding women’s representation (DPSA. The dominance of men in leadership positions also increased with salaries so much that the difference between men and women in terms of salaries was 15.98 per cent (DPSA, 2018). At the Director-General level (salary level 16) difference was 47.56 per cent. In contrast to the level below senior management, the percentage of women is less than that of the men for all senior management salary levels (DPSA 2018). The Department of Labour (2018:36) posits that:

*Although there is an increase of women’s participation in the economy of the country they still remain over-represented in low-income employment as the majority have jobs as unskilled elementary workers. As such, a clear gender*

*disparity remains in terms of the implementation of equity targets within the skills development.*

In the context of the Public Service in South Africa, only eight departments (at the national level) and 19 departments (at provincial levels) have reached the 50 per cent women SMS target (DPSA, 2018). Only 32% of national departments had women's representation of between 40 and 49 per cent of women in senior management positions (DPSA 2018:32). Forty-four departments at the provincial and 13 departments at the national level had a representation of between 30 and 39 per cent women in senior positions (DPSA 2018). Nineteen provincial departments still had less than 30 per cent of women in senior managerial positions (DPSA 2018). The reason for the lack of progress in terms of the realisation of women's representation in government departments is that:

While 30% is used as the benchmark for departments to use as an indicator for the success of gender mainstreaming departments, when they reach the 30% target, they assume that they do not need to do more. Target setting could therefore create a barrier to the continued advancement of women, especially as gender mainstreaming in the South African public service is still seen as meeting only numerical targets (Bangani & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020:6).

Gender equality policies which are in alignment with the SFGE Strategic within the Public Service endorse that:

*Looking at the date of approval of some, it was unlikely that the gender policies/strategic frameworks had been aligned as they were developed long before the Gender Equality Strategic Framework of the Public Service came into existence (DPSA, 2013:13).*

The other challenge is that most departments designed their own policies and strategies, which they deploy to address gender equality issues. This has presented a challenge in that some of the designed policies focus on internal issues while the external aspects captured in the national frameworks hardly find their way into the operations of departments (DPSA, 2013). This has resulted in disjointed calls for gender equality among national and provincial departments across the country (Jali et al., 2021).

According to Nhlapo (2019), the lack of rapport among national and provincial departments has resulted in the general lack of understanding of how gender equality issues can be mainstreamed into the operations of the department. As a result, gender issues remain largely unaddressed in government institutions across the country.

Gender equality, therefore, remains an issue of great concern in South Africa, where women, in particular, do not find themselves ascending to leadership positions that can provide them with an opportunity to influence decision-making processes. The key challenge for the South African government, quoted by Bangani and VyasDoorgapersad (2020:7)

*Is to move beyond these targets and ensure that gender relations in the public service are fundamentally transformed to empower all the sexes to be equal participants and beneficiaries in the consolidation of the South African democratic state, as well as to cultivate an entrenched reflexive intervention for this, particularly at senior management levels. This will entail moving beyond setting only numerical targets. Critical to this is the creation of an enabling environment to ensure that women's talents and potential are harnessed and nurtured for the benefit of the South African society as a whole.*

The Department of Education is one of the departments struggling in terms of gender equality. With the various challenges currently being experienced in terms of underperformance (Kele & Pietersen, 2015; Naidoo, 2020), the need to improve the presence of women leaders, who might bring with them transformational leadership skills, has once again come under the spotlight. Empirical evidence shows that where organisational structure comprises both women and men, organisations are likely to benefit both in terms of transformation and ideas that can improve organisational operations and performance (Naidoo, 2020; Nhlapo, 2019; Oosthuizen, 2018; Samargandi et al., 2019). The next section focuses on what is currently occurring in the Department of Education.

### **3.5 The Condition of Gender Equality in the South Africa Education Sector**

In 2016, the South African education sector (public) had an estimated 294 675 (70%) women teachers out of 418 613 (Stats SA, 2017). This is evidence that a considerable percentage of teachers in South African schools are women. Sadly, in 2018, only 36 per cent of women were in the positions of school principal (de Bruyn & Mestry, 2020). de Bruyn and Mestry (2020) further reveal that while women made up 43,9 per cent of the educator workforce in 2018, only 21,4 per cent of them constituted to the total number of executive managers of the country and only 17,1 per cent of all directors. In 2017/2018, the Department of Basic Education had a ratio of 38 per cent of women to 62 per cent of men appointed in the Senior Management Service (SMS), while the target of 50 per cent of women in the Middle Management Service (MMS) was exceeded by 9 per cent. There is still a significant challenge in reaching the 50 per cent target of the SMS. Capable women in the SMS positions will need to wait for these men to retire while they capacitate themselves for the positions.

This situation is occurring despite the constitutional efforts described above regarding equality and gender equity over the past two decades. Therefore, an exploratory study was needed to investigate the content and nature of the various issues that pose challenges to women's ascendancy to leadership positions within schools. Available studies primarily focus on the male-women leadership nexus in general (Gipson et al., 2017; Mosese & Mearns, 2016; Shvindina, 2016). This is despite increasing evidence that demonstrates the importance of diversity within organisational leadership structures (Jali et al., 2021). The evidence has also not motivated the attention of researchers to focus on women's underrepresentation in school management, including their challenges. There remain inadequate studies which should aim at bringing to attention women's qualities that can result in structural transformation within the sector. The underrepresentation of women in South African schools and their leadership challenges inspired this study. The study highlights the diagnostic potential of transformational leadership in overcoming the challenges that women face when seeking ascendancy to power within the context of schools.

Transformational leadership is profound, reflective, and deep-seated. It has the potential to place entire institutions and systems on a new course, thereby mobilising not only its resources but also its employees and all stakeholders to move towards a different level of efficiency (Mancour et al., 2015). Transformation is a type of ratified adjustment that is planned, and targeted at bringing about remarkable changes in the way an organisation is run. It can be understood as a process by which a conducive work environment can be generated and sustained to reach organisational objectives (Chand, 2015). Transformation, therefore, requires that organisations have a leadership that can create a work environment which is not biased and is contemplative of the demographic actualities of all its stakeholders (McAleese et al., 2013). This view is supported by Mancour et al., (2015), who argue that many workers in South Africa are still operating under structures that, by international principles, are dictatorial in outlook and in which women remain subordinate to men. This situation continues to undermine the potential of women to ascend to leadership positions where they can have decision-making power that can be used to transform institutions.

### **3.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed the international and national efforts that countries have been taking as part of collective efforts to improve the situation of women globally. Besides designing its own frameworks and what is considered one of the best constitutions in the world, South Africa is a signatory to various international frameworks from which it draws to improve the condition of women within its borders. The chapter outlined some of the challenges that countries, and South Africa in particular, continue to face in their effort to achieve gender equality. The chapter revealed significant discord among government departments, both the national and provincial levels, in terms of how gender issues should be addressed. As a result, there has not been any significant improvement in the condition of women. The situation has been worse in the Basic Education sector, where, despite women being the majority of the workforce, they remain underrepresented in senior leadership positions. The chapter argues that for gender equality to be realised in the sector, it is crucial that a strong political will be motivated. There is a need to move from ideological standpoints to implementation.

The next chapter discusses the research methodology that was used in the study.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The understanding of how best to deal with the various challenges which women leaders experience within South African schools required the deployment of a research methodology that had the potential to capture as much detail as is possible to generate an in-depth view that would enable the researcher to reach conclusions, and consequently, recommendations. This was particularly important as the challenges that women face, as detailed in the previous chapters, are largely steeped into cultural, patriarchal, and religious systems that are, for the most part, resistant to transformation. This chapter gives a detailed discussion on the research methodology that was adopted for the study to achieve the objectives of the research and answer the research questions as outlined in Chapter One.

This chapter covers issues on the research design used in the study, the research philosophy and approaches on which the study was based, and descriptions of the case study area. This is followed by discussions on the data collection sources and instruments and how the instruments were administered to collect the data. After that, the chapter provides details on how the study population and sample were identified, how data were coded and analysed, and trustworthiness issues. The chapter also discusses the ethical considerations that were related to the study.

#### **4.2 Research Design**

In order to be able to conduct a study that would satisfy the research objectives and answer the research questions, the study needed to be placed in a clearly defined roadmap (research design) on how the study would be carried out. This would also enable the researcher to pull together, in a comprehensible way, the various challenges that women leaders face within South African schools. A research design is simply a detailed

chart showing how the researcher conducted a particular study to reach conclusions (Sundler et al., 2019). Research design options are exploratory, explanatory, experiments and quasi-experiments (Skoczylas, 2019; Stacks et al., 2019).

Researchers use the exploratory research design to acquire an in-depth view of a situation through the use of primary and secondary methods of research, such as in-depth interviews, observation, and focus group discussion, among others (Saunders et al., 2016; Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). The exploratory design is referred to as preliminary research because it is often used to have a quick glimpse into the situation (Abdullah, 2019; Creswell and Creswell, 2018). This design is popular in studies of a qualitative nature and is often praised for its flexibility and ability to address a myriad research questions (Brinkmann, 2018; Cohen et al., 2018).

The other roadmap is the explanatory design. This design is used to study a problem which is not common and for which studies are still limited or embryonic (Abdullah, 2019; Chad & Jensen, 2018; Dean, 2018). The explanatory design does not, however, offer decisive results and instead offers researchers a chance to understand how and why the phenomenon unfolds (Dee-Price et al., 2020; Krippendorff, 2019). Researchers use the exploratory design to explain the features of particular populations (Kross & Giust, 2019; Kuckartz, 2019). This explains why it is more popular in quantitative studies than in qualitative ones (Marvasti, 2019; Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

Another research design is descriptive research. This is used to describe the characteristics of the study population (Kuckartz, 2019; Leavy, 2017; O'Neil, 2019) and is very effective in non-quantified topics (Prasad, 2019; Ratan et al., 2019). The design is also important when the researcher wishes to use mixed- methods research where qualitative and quantitative data are integrated (Creswell, 2018; Krippendorff, 2019). However, the design cannot test or verify the research problem statistically (Stacks et al., 2019). In addition, due to the lack of statistical tests, bias is also very high.

Experimental research is another research design. This design provides a method to carefully strategise experiments before they are practically carried out so that results are objective and meet a validity criterion (Roth & von Unger, 2018; Skoczylas, 2019). In

using this design, one or more independent variables are controlled to measure their influence on dependent variables (Paulus et al., 2017; Roller, 2019). Experiments have three types: experimental (controlled), quasi-experimental (no manipulation of variables), and observational (non-experimental). However, experimental research can produce non-natural results that can only apply to one situation and are not useful in others (Nowell et al., 2017; O'Neil, 2019).

This study was based on the exploratory design, both in the data collection and its analysis. The study was exploratory since it explored the challenges faced by women leaders within South African schools using various approaches, namely, feminism, women empowerment, and the transformation theories. This enabled the researcher to understand what women themselves, and other stakeholders, consider to be the challenges that women face within schools in the Gauteng Province of South Africa. The issues of gender equality and transformation are still causing heated debates in South Africa, and the use of this design yielded several benefits in this study.

First, the researcher was able to disclose some personal reasons that act as challenges to women in leadership positions within schools. Second, it was flexible and adaptable to change (Mattick et al., 2018). This enabled the researcher to introduce new questions that had not been initially planned for but that emerged as important as the data collection process progressed. The researcher was able to take various directions suggested by the data collected (Gaus, 2017). The use of the exploratory design also necessitated selecting an appropriate research philosophy.

### **4.3 Research Philosophy**

In making suitable choices that guide understanding of the study, the researcher had first to understand the debate on research philosophies. This was also meant to justify the decisions made by the researcher throughout the study. This stance is recommended by several scholars who posit that adopting an appropriate research philosophy for a study requires one first to have an in-depth view of the research philosophy to know how best to review available discourses and also to engage with the research participants in an

ethical and trustworthy manner (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Farooq & de Villiers, 2017). Detailing the research philosophy adopted for a study enables readers to follow up on how a particular study was carried out (Dee-Price et al., 2020). It enables a researcher to understand debates on similar topics and how similar topics were studied (Flick, 2018; Kross & Giust, 2019). Research philosophy options include positivism (including post-positivism), constructivism, interpretivism, transformative, emancipator, critical, pragmatism as well as deconstructivism (Abdullah, 2019; Brace, 2018; Brinkmann, 2018). One interpretivism is discussed next because it was used in this study.

#### **4.3.1 Interpretivism**

The interpretivism research philosophy used in this study is widely associated with Husserl and Dilthey (Abdullah, 2019; Brace, 2018; Bryman & Bell, 2014; Creswell, 2018). It is an understanding of human experience based on what occurs in the natural setting and from the point of view of people or objects in that natural (Flick, 2018; Gaus, 2017; Gravetter & Forzao, 2016). In this study, the researcher relied on people located within schools in the Gauteng Province, South Africa, thereby ensuring that the reality reported in the thesis (Chapter Five) is socially constructed (Abdullah, 2019; Bryman, 2012; Kuckartz, 2019). In using this philosophy, the researcher sought to rely on the meaning provided by participants.

The interpretivism philosophy is linked to qualitative data collection approaches due to its subjective nature and language emphasis (Cohen et al., 2018; Dean, 2018; Krippendorff, 2019). The nature of the objectives and questions of this study required the use of qualitative research methods to generate in-depth views on the challenges women leaders face within schools in the Gauteng Province. In-depth views are also obtainable through the precise use of small samples, which can be assessed adequately (Kuckartz, 2019; Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019; Marvasti, 2019). The philosophy was helpful for the study because the challenges of women leaders within the case study province needed to be understood from their own perspectives, as detailed in the results chapter (Chapter Five).

#### **4.4 Research Strategies**

The researcher had to choose whether studying the challenges of women leaders within South African schools in the Gauteng Province required a qualitative or quantitative approach or a combination of both. Choosing between a qualitative and quantitative approach made as recommended by research experts who advise that every research should be located within at least one of these approaches (Brinkmann, 2018; Dean, 2018; Flick, 2018). In deciding which approach to use, the researcher relied on the nature of objectives and research questions set for the study as outlined in Chapter One. The researcher also utilised previous experience obtained during a Master's degree study to choose which approach would be manageable considering available resources and time. This was consistent with Bryman and Bell (2014), who support that previous experience, skills, and training, as well as the resources available, can also guide the research approach to be used in a study.

Furthermore, the researcher had to choose whether the study would be empirical or non-empirical to be able to link the study to suitable theories (Bryman & Bell, 2014). Bryman (2012) argues that although the link may not always be clear, a study that does not connect with theory is simply 'naive empiricism'. Skoczylas (2019) advises that a study can be connected to theory through deduction or induction, or both, and is determined by the study's objectives and question(s) (Brinkmann, 2018; Dean, 2018). Deduction involves testing theory through empirical observation, while induction enables researchers to develop theory from the observation of empirical reality (Leavy, 2017; Roller, 2019; Roth & von Unger, 2018). The researcher used induction because the focus was to understand the challenges faced by women leaders within South African schools to propose transformational leadership and various structures of leadership as having the diagnostic potential to deal with the identified challenges (see Chapter Five).

Even though there are two broad approaches, namely quantitative and qualitative approaches or a combination that researchers can use, in recent decades, pragmatism has increasingly emerged as a competing approach. The following sub-section discusses the qualitative research approach which was used in the study

#### **4.4.1 The Qualitative Research Strategy**

This study used a qualitative research in line with the views of research experts who posit that the qualitative research approach is more beneficial in studying social and cultural phenomena. As the focus of the study was on the challenges of women in a particular society, the researcher considered the approach suitable because the challenges women face are primarily steeped in cultural and societal circumscribed conventions (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020; Amirault, 2019; Bangani & VyasDoorgapersad, 2020; Croke et al., 2017).

The qualitative research strategy was also considered suitable as it utilises an inductive approach focusing on the generation of new information (Roth and von Unger, 2018; Sheppard, 2021). Qualitative research is a comprehensive and broad strategy that involves 'discovery' (Stacks et al., 2019; White, 2017). In this, the approach would enable the researcher to discover women's challenges are steeped not only in cultural, religious and other realities but also in the places of workplaces. Because of the empirical nature of this study, the qualitative research approach was suitable, as by nature, the approach in itself is a re-counting model that unfolds in a natural setting (Roller, 2019). This enabled the researcher to develop a level of detail from high involvement in the actual experiences of women and men in the education sector in the Gauteng Province. With several ideological and political studies on gender inequality already available in South Africa (Dlanjwa, 2018; Nkenkana, 2018; Oosthuizen, 2018), to bring new information outside of what is already known about the condition of women in the workplace, the researcher needed to locate the study in a particular setting and also allow participants to speak for themselves and reveal what they viewed as challenges for women.

What also made the qualitative approach suitable for this study was its purposeful use of description, explanation, and interpretation of collected data (Nowell & Albrecht, 2019; O'Neil, 2019). Marvasti (2019) and Mattick et al. (2018) posit that qualitative research is not very structured. Therefore, it can allow a researcher to adapt, adopt, and refocus methods to obtain the best results from the participants. This is precisely what this study

sought to achieve by locating itself in a real-life setting of the education sector of the Gauteng Province in South Africa.

There are five areas of qualitative research strategies which are emblematic of research that is based on analytic explaining and its related methodologies. These are ethnography study, theory of grounded nature study, phenomenological study, analysis of content and case study. Ethnography is a descriptive study of a specific human society (Kuckartz, 2019; Leavy, 2017). Ethnography relies entirely on fieldwork, and it requires the researcher to completely immerse themselves in the culture and the daily living of the people who are the subject of the study (Gravetter & Forzao, 2016; Kross & Giust, 2019). Grounded theory involves the use of inductive reasoning. The method is very flexible, and it is appropriate where the issues under investigation are little known. Where this is the case, the objective of the grounded theory will be to generate or build up an explanatory/descriptive theory which unearths a process intrinsic to the significant area of investigation (Flick, 2018; Gravetter & Forzao, 2016). One of the critical features of grounded theory is that it seeks to develop theories based on collected data (Prasad, 2019; Saunders et al., 2016). Phenomenological research focuses on the shared aims of a lived experience within a specific group. The findings obtained can be used to build the universal meaning of the situation and thus, arrive at an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Sheppard, 2021; White, 2017).

Content analysis is the study of what is contained in documents (Skoczylas, 2019). It involves gathering and summarising crude data into themes based on valid extrapolations and interpretations (Prasad, 2019; Roller, 2019). The method requires inductive reasoning whereby themes are allowed to emerge from the gathered data. Content analysis provides scholars with a chance to examine what is entailed in the documents.

This study was predicated on a case study method. A case study method examines current singularity in a real-life setting, using diverse references to construct a case description and case-based themes (McKim, 2017; O'Neil, 2019). With a focus on women leaders within Basic Education within the Gauteng Province, the researcher adopted the extended case method. This method uses reflexive science to ethnography to be able to

take out the general from distinctive, advance from the micro to the macro, connecting the past and the present and gaze on the future (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). The extended case study method encourages spending more time in the field connecting the observer with the participants by applying various methods that include participant observation, documents, and everyday interactions (interviews).

Given the above, the researcher, who is also a woman leader within the Basic Education sector in the Gauteng Province, spent seven months visiting schools around the province to observe and talk to employees in the sector. Central to the extended case method is the concept of reflexivity, which entails the self-monitoring behaviour where the researcher is aware of their presumptions leading to 'uncertainty in human action' (Krippendorff, 2019). It also requires that the researcher is not overwhelmed by the experiences and conditions of social actors. This enables the researcher to arrive at conclusions based on a critical analysis of findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Enas et al., 2021).

#### **4.5 Research Site**

The research site of this study was the province of Gauteng (GP). The GP is separated from the Free State province by the Vaal river, which is the province's southern border. It also shares a border with the North West province to the west, the Limpopo province to the north, and Mpumalanga to the east. Most of Gauteng is on the Highveld, a high-gratitude grassland (circa 1,500 m or 4,921 ft above sea level). Gauteng's climate, location, and infrastructure make it attractive for various businesses.

The province is the economic centre of South Africa, and it also houses South Africa's largest city – Johannesburg - and the capital city - the Tshwane or Pretoria. The province contributes enormously to the financial, manufacturing, transport, technology, and telecommunication sectors, among others. The largest stock exchange on the African continent is also in the Gauteng Province, namely Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) (du Toit & Lekoloane, 2018). The province is responsible for a third of South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), even though it is the smallest of the nine provinces in South Africa as it covers merely 1.5% of the total land area. GP generates about 10 per



cent of the total GDP of sub-Saharan Africa and about 7 per cent of the total African GDP (Stats SA, 2019).

The Gauteng Province is one of the most popular provinces in the country and is home to 15.7 million, with 25.8 per cent of the total South African population (Stats SA, 2019). Thus, the Gauteng Province has the largest population of any province in South Africa, though the smallest area. There were 15.5 million living in the province in 2021 (Stats SA, 2021). The population density of the province is 680/km<sup>2</sup>, while the density of households is 155.86/km<sup>2</sup> (Stats SA, 2019). According to the DBE, the province is divided into 15 districts, namely; Ekurhuleni North, Ekurhuleni South, Gauteng East, Gauteng North, Gauteng West, Johannesburg Central, Johannesburg East, Johannesburg North, Johannesburg South, Johannesburg West, Sedibeng West, Tshwane North, Tshwane South, and Tshwane West.

#### **4.6 Research Population and Sampling**

The study population is defined as all the people or elements with the same characteristics or traits and can be investigated (Creswell, 2018). In this study, the population included school and District employees of the Department of Basic Education in the Gauteng Province in South Africa, both men and women. These included School Principals, Deputy Principals, Departmental Heads, Teachers, and District officials. Other than the school employees, a Union Representative, a Representative of the South African Principals Association and SGB members were included. These had an equal opportunity of being considered to participate in the study. They comprised different categories of stakeholders within the department to gain an in-depth understanding of the various challenges women face when seeking to ascend to leadership positions within South African schools.

Considering the size of the Gauteng Province in terms of its districts, the number of employees, and other stakeholders in the DBE, it was impossible for all of them to be accommodated for participation in the study. Thus, the researcher selected a sample.

Sampling is a technique that researchers use to select a restricted number of items, places or human beings to include in particular research (Stacks et al., 2018). It is not always possible for researchers to consider all the units in the population. As a result, they settle for a manageable sample size. In quantitative studies, sample sizes are usually large, while they are relatively small for qualitative studies where saturation can be reached with as few as 12 participants (De Vos et al., 2011; Mason, 2010). This enables an in-depth understanding of the issues under investigation because participants have enough time to contribute as much as possible to a study. The worth of the data collected by any study depends on the quality of the sample in this study, a sample of 52 people was selected for participation. The following section discusses how sampling was carried out in the study.

#### **4.6.1 Probability Sampling**

Sampling is categorised into two main types, namely, probability and non-probability sampling. The probability type is based on the idea of random choosing (Enas et al., 2021; Farooq & de Villiers, 2017). This type of sampling is used to ensure that each unit of the targeted population of a particular study stands an equal chance of being considered for participation (Gaus, 2017). The techniques used in this type of sampling include simple random, systematic, clustered, and stratified sampling (Gravetter & Forzao, 2016; Leedy & Ormrod, 2015).

In the simple random type, each unit of the population stands an equal chance to be picked up for consideration in the study (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Saunders et al., 2016). The process usually employed in this kind of sampling is that all the units of analysis should be first identified and then allocated some numbers. The process of assigning numbers results in all units of the population standing an equal chance of being selected (Sheppard, 2021). Systematic sampling is when units are selected randomly but with a fixed, periodic interval – the sampling interval (Sheppard). The sampling interval is obtained by dividing the population size by the desired size of the sample (White, 2017). Clustered sampling involves dividing the population into multiple groups called clusters (Saunders et al., 2016). From the clusters, the researcher can select groups randomly or

systematically for investigation. The stratified type of sampling, on the other hand, is used where units can be categorised and where selection can be made. The above discussion shows that probability sampling is quantitative as it uses scientific assumptions about aspects of reality (Stacks et al., 2020). Probability sampling was not used in the current study due to its qualitative nature. The non-probability sampling, discussed in the following sub-section, was used instead.

#### **4.6.2 Non-probability Sampling**

The non-probability type of sampling used in this study was non-random, subjective and purposive in that the researcher chose the sample as well as the areas of study using standards other than those related to the randomness of selection (Saunders et al., 2016). The non-probability methods include convenience, quota, purposive, snowball and maximum variation (Cassell & Bishop, 2019; Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Convenience sampling involves selecting only those units or cases that are easiest to find (Babbie, 2016). Snowball sampling is when one participant suggests another for the study (Sloan & Quan-Haase, 2017). This guarantees that only participants with the crucial features are selected (Flick, 2018).

This study first undertook multi-stage sampling due to the vast expanse of the Gauteng Province. After purposively selecting Johannesburg and Pretoria as the heart of the province, the researcher found that the area to be covered was still large to be considered entirely in a qualitative study. Thus, the researcher had to choose particular districts on which to focus. Johannesburg East and Tshwane North districts were eventually chosen. These districts comprise 451 public schools and over 15000 teachers, including principals. These districts also constitute some of the leading metro districts in the country, and therefore, their systems of governance set the pace of what generally occurs in the country. From each of the districts, eight schools were chosen based on their willingness to participate in the study.

To select individual participants, the researcher first used purposive sampling in which certain school principals were approached based on their perceived understanding of the

issues under investigation. The principals had to meet inclusion criteria mentioned later in the next paragraph. When these principals accepted the invitation, they were also requested to recommend teachers, including their deputies, who could contribute to the study. This is snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is when the last participant suggests the next participant whom they think has the essential characteristics to participate in the study (Stacks et al., 2019). The snowball procedure was repeated until the researcher had reached the sample size of 52 participants in the Gauteng Province. The sample included six male and women principals; six male and women deputy principals; twelve heads of departments (Departmental Heads); eighteen male and women teachers; five SGB members consisting of men and women, regardless of their school amongst the six sampled schools as they are all governed by the same policies in the province; one Union (SADTU) representative; one Association (SAPA) representative; and three District Officials. The use of both snowball and purposive sampling was in line with earlier studies on women's leadership in South Africa (Fritz & Knippenberg, 2017; Khurshid, 2016). The researcher, however, admits that even though purposive and snowball sampling was easy, flexible, and economical, it may be possible that the selected participants were not representative of the study area. In other words, these sampling methods can be biased.

In selecting participants, the researcher developed inclusion criteria to ensure that only the participants who believed they had the necessary information and to participate were involved in the study. The inclusion criteria were:

- i. Be a stakeholder in the DBE (principal, teacher, SGB or Union representative)
- ii. Situated in the Gauteng Province
- iii. Available to participate;
- iv. Willingness to participate;
- v. Having more than five years' experience in the DBE;
- vi. Over 18 years of age.

The above profiling was used for all categories of participants as part of a continuous effort to increase the trustworthiness of the study, as discussed later in the chapter. The researcher also developed a research instrument which was used to gather data

## **4.7 Research Instrument**

In qualitative research, two main research instruments are used by researchers to collect data namely questionnaires and interviews. The current study used interviews

### **4.7.1 Interview guides**

This study used interviews to collect data. Interviews are methods of gathering information from people on a specific topic or range of topics (Roth & von Unger, 2018; Sheppard, 2021). Stevens (2021) defines an interview as oral communication between the interrogator and respondent. An interview is also defined as a “face-to-face encounter between the researcher and informants directed towards understanding informants’ perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations as expressed in their own words” (Creswell, 2018:179). Interviews have the potential to yield more information than that which the interviewer asks for because the interviewees can use their own words and elaborate as much as possible. This explains why interviews are appropriate for grounded theorising (Stevens, 2021). Further, the use of interviewees’ own words allows for more insight into their worldview, especially because interviews in qualitative research are all about understanding the experience of the participants and the meaning they make of that experience (Sloan & Quan-Haase, 2017).

The primary data collection for this current study was in-depth interviews. The interviews were conducted with stakeholders in the Department of Basic Education in the South African Province of the Gauteng. As indicated under the sampling section, various categories of participants were interviewed. It was the researcher’s view that the inclusion of a broad range of participants could enable an in-depth understanding of the issues under investigation. The interview guides used for all categories of participants are attached as C, D, and E in this thesis. A detailed discussion on the components of the interview guides is made later in this section.

Data were collected between 01 September 2021 and 30 January 2022. The data collection comprised scheduling the interviews with participants and administering the interview guides. In-depth face-to-face and virtual interviews were used in the study.

Three different interview guides were prepared for use with participants. One interview guide was prepared for educators (principals, deputies, and teachers) (Appendix C). The other interview guide was prepared for SGB (parent component) and SGB teacher component (Appendix D), while the other was prepared for Union representatives, SAPA representatives; and District Officials (Appendix E). The interview guides were developed by the researcher and reviewed by the study supervisor to ensure it was in line with the research objectives and questions. The interview guides that were used are described below.

#### ***4.7.2.1 Interview Guide for Educators***

The interview guide for educators (including principals, deputy principals, and teachers) comprised three broad sections. Section A gathered demographic data, and it was comprised four questions on gender, position at the school, duration in the job, and duration as an employee of the DBE.

Section B was made up of seven questions on women leadership from participants, both male and women. Section C also gathered information on women leadership but only targeted women managers. The section consisted of 10 key questions, although probing questions were also used. The interview guide for educators was made up of 21 question items (see Appendix C).

#### ***4.7.2.2 Interview Guide for School Governing Board Members***

The interview guide for school governing body members was not divided into sections. It consisted of 10 questions which gathered participant opinions on women leadership, attitudes on the gender of leaders, support given to leaders, opinions on women empowerment, challenges faced by women leaders, and some general comments (see Appendix D).

#### **4.7.2.3 Interview Guide for Union Representative and District Officials**

The interview guide for union representatives and district officials comprised 11 question items on the support provided to women leaders in schools, workshops/training specifically for women, the effect of culture on women's ascendancy to leadership positions, the effect of South Africa's history on women empowerment, challenges to women leadership types and effectiveness of male and women leaders, and recommendations for women leaders (see Appendix E).

#### **4.7.3 Review of Secondary Data**

The study also utilised secondary sources for data obtained in academic and grey literature. The sources that were reviewed included government documents and reports, including those by the DBE and Statistics South Africa. Books, journals, and newspapers from the library and the internet were also used. The key terms that were used to search for the documents included women leadership; women leaders in schools; women empowerment; challenges of women in leadership positions, and teacher challenges in schools. Secondary data were used to make background descriptions of the study area and provide the study's context. The major issues that were poignant in these data sources were that women experienced a number of challenges that consequently served as challenges when they aspired to ascend to leadership positions within schools in the country as a whole. The major challenge with the secondary sources, particularly with government documents, however, was that they did not specifically focus on the Gauteng Province, which was the case study area for the study, but instead, on broader South Africa. In trying to focus on the Gauteng Province, the researcher utilised academic articles. The researcher, however, still believes that this challenge did not undermine the message of the study because the documents were sufficient to allow for a detailed description of the case study area.

## **4.8 Pilot Study**

A pilot study is a preparatory study which researchers conduct as a test. It is defined as a preliminary study of the practicability of a study regarding time and resources, as well as the viability of the research instruments and any other methods that should be involved (Gravetter & Forzao, 2016; Leavy, 2017). Piloting is also understood as a pre-study process that gives researchers the chance to have a preview of the proposed study before they commit themselves to the difficult process of conducting the study itself (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The process enables researchers to deal with some of the unnecessary challenges that could arise during the actual study. Piloting, however, does not guarantee that the researcher will not encounter problems in the study. It only points to some of the problems and thus, shows researchers what to expect.

In this study, five participants (1 from each category) were purposively selected for the process of piloting, two in the Johannesburg East district, and three in the Tshwane North district. The primary assumption in selecting these participants was that they had the necessary information to facilitate the necessary feedback and also that they represented the characteristics of the desired participants. Any issues that seemed problematic during the piloting phase were fixed as part of the preparatory process for the main study. For example, several questions that were ambiguous were removed or paraphrased in the interview guides. It was also found that some of the question items, although important, were in the incorrect interview guides. For example, some questions which were most appropriate for SGB members were directed at teachers. This was corrected in all interview guides. During piloting, the researcher focused on the question items to see if they were adequate to measure what the researcher wanted to achieve in the study. The researcher also placed focus on the timing and duration of the interviews. As a result, some questions were eliminated from the interview guides so that the interviews could be completed within one hour each. Piloting was conducted in September 2021.

## **4.9 Administration of the Interview Guides**

In administering the interview guides, the researcher first approached every potential participant identified through snowballing as described above. The researcher then



revealed the study to determine if the individual was interested in participating. Once the individual accepted, the topic was introduced and the interview was conducted. Ethical considerations were also explained to participants to enable them to decide on participation. Participants were also required to sign a consent form to signify acceptance (Appendix B). Although interview guides were used, the researcher and the participants had the freedom to digress and pick up other relevant discussions related to women's empowerment and women leader challenges within schools in the Gauteng Province. All interviews were meant to be limited to an hour or less. However, sometimes interviews could be longer with participants giving a lot of background information. The researcher allowed participants to talk without interrupting them. All interviews were voice-recorded and transcribed once the interview was concluded.

All interviews were conducted in English as all participants understood and spoke the language. This was also easier for the participants as the results of the study were to be reported in English as per the requirements of the University of South Africa, where the researcher is registered as a student. The researcher transcribed all the interviews. There was no gender bias since both men and women participated in the study.

#### **4.10 Data Analysis**

Data analysis is defined as a process of making sense of the data collected in the field by a researcher (Sloan & Quan-Haase, 2017; White, 2017). Any data that are collected need to be analysed for them to be accessible, sensible, and beneficial to readers. Without being analysed, data is meaningless. Data have to be analysed so that when they are presented to readers, they can see and follow up on what the researcher wanted to communicate to them. Data analysis not only benefits readers but also the researcher to be able to make sense of the data before presenting them others (Sheppard, 2021). There are several ways of analysing data in qualitative studies. These include content analysis (studying documents and artefacts), narrative analysis (interpretation of stories), discourse analysis (analysis of written, sound or sign language use), and thematic analysis (identification of themes emerging from the data), to name a few. In this study, thematic analysis was used, whereby themes that emerged from the data were identified

and interpreted. Creswell (2018) posits that for a study located within a qualitative research approach, the analysis and interpretation of data entail converting raw information into new information. This rigorous process requires the researcher to be involved in an analytical process throughout all the stages of the study. In this study, data analysis was done manually to retain the in-depth aspect and originality of the data. The researcher did not use any computer programmes to analyse the data. The researcher believed that computer programmes would not capture the nuances that enhance the quality of the data and give it life. The advantage of this was that the researcher could engage with the data and link any feelings and actions displayed by participants during interviews to the data. When using computer-assisted data analysis, this cannot be done.

The analysis of data for the study involved sorting out the data by carefully reading the transcribed data, and then dividing the data into categories as part of the simplification process. Once data had been placed into clearly identified categories, the researcher engaged in a closer reading of the data with the aim of further categorising the data into thoughts or themes. This process allowed the researcher to select the information that needed to be included, or that was relevant to the study and that should be reported (Saunders et al., 2016). The initial stage of data analysis involved organising details in a logical order. This involved converting fieldwork data and secondary data through the process of selecting, simplifying, and transforming data (Leavy, 2017; Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). The data from the interviews and content analysis were summarised and organised according to emerging themes. In the second stage, grounded on judgment of the research objectives and questions, the researcher classified the findings into specific categories or themes related to women's challenges in the workplace. The third stage was the overall interpretation of all collected data for specific meanings relevant to the study. In the fourth stage, the researcher identified patterns and underlying themes in the data. All the data were examined for relevant themes concerning women's challenges within schools and women empowerment. In the last stage, all the data were edited, cleaned, coded and then blended into analysis in order to be able to make conclusions. The researcher the data from all the interview guides. Integration of the data occurred during both the analysis and interpretation phases. The overall view was that integrating all data sources would generate an in-depth view of the challenges women leaders face

within schools in the Gauteng Province. Data integration for the study involved combining the data from all interview guides.

#### **4.11 Trustworthiness**

According to Creswell (2018) four criteria should be satisfied and used for assessing the accuracy and trustworthiness of qualitative research. These are Credibility, Dependability, Conformability, and Transferability.

- **Credibility**

Credibility is a process used by researchers to ensure that the study has managed to measure what it was set out to measure and that the study reflects true value (Chad & Jensen, 2018). The realisation of credibility requires the researchers to be rigorous in the data collection and analysis. In this study the researcher first audited all the interview transcripts to ensure that the collected data was trustworthy. This included eliminating repetitions. Focus was placed on how participants considered the challenges of women leaders in schools and their proposed recommendations for dealing with the challenges. This ensured that only what participants contributed was considered in the write-up of the study. Transcript audits were done by the researcher. The results were also submitted to the supervisor for review. The review comments made by peers and by the supervisor resulted in detailed comments on the results and the elimination of personal views inserted by the researcher as part of the data. This ensured the credibility of the results.

- **Dependability**

Dependability is attained when the study can be replicated and when the results are comparable when the same study is repeated using the same methods (Kuckartz, 2019; Mattick et al., 2018). It should, however, be noted that qualitative studies may not be replicated as they are context-specific, unlike quantitative studies (McKim, 2017). Thus, even this study cannot be replicated as it was focused on the Gauteng Province. To ensure dependability, the same interview guides were administered to all participants of a particular category. The study's supervisor, an experienced researcher, checked both

the interview guides and the data that were collected., The researcher thus believes that the study results have a considerable degree of dependability.

- **Conformability**

Conformability is reached when the collected data is a true reflection of the evidence provided by the participants and when there is no sign of bias caused by the researcher's influence on the study (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). In this study, the researcher ensured conformability by verifying all transcripts with the participants of all categories. The researcher also reviewed secondary sources to ensure that the question items included in the interview guides conformed to previous studies on women empowerment in South Africa. An audit trail was developed to keep track of themes and sub-themes. The audit trail was used to lay down the process of data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation.

- **Transferability**

Transferability refers to how pertinent the results are to other settings; and the level to which results can be generalised to other settings, contexts, situations, times and populations (Sheppard, 2021; Bryman & Bell, 2014). Reviewed literature shows that qualitative studies may not be transferable, as indicated above (Stacks et al., 2019; White, 2017). The researcher ensured all research activities were described intensively so that other researchers could follow up on how these results were gathered and interpreted.

#### **4.12 Elimination of Bias**

The preconceptions in this study included the fact that the researcher lives in the Gauteng Province, is a primary school principal, and the researcher is also aware of the many various challenges faced by women within schools. The bias that would be caused by the researcher's status was reduced by having the research instrument reviewed by the researcher's supervisor. This ensured that only suitable questions were included in the interview guides. Before collecting data, the researcher also made a list of all her views

concerning women empowerment and women's challenges within schools. The aim was to ensure that personal views would not be considered facts and part of the study.

#### **4.13 Limitations of the Study**

The major limitation of the study arose from the fact that the researcher collected information through interviews as one of the data collections tools. As the country was under siege of COVID-19 and in various stages of lockdown, collecting data through face-to-face interviews became a serious challenge because of the need for social distancing and other COVID-19 safety protocols. As the number of COVID-19 cases continued to increase, the South African government, from time to time, implemented restrictions on travel to contain and mitigate the spread of coronavirus disease. In some instances, the researcher resorted to online interviews through Zoom meetings, Teams meetings and WhatsApp video calls. This proved to be costly in terms of internet bundles. It also restricted how the researcher originally envisaged interacting with participants.

The other challenge is related to the accessibility of the Unisa library that was closed due to COVID-19. As a result, the researcher could not access reading material from the university. This meant that other means to obtain reading material were needed. This was costly because the researcher had to purchase some of the material rather than borrow or access it from the library. However, despite these challenges, the researcher believes that the study still produced valuable data that can still be referred to and developed by future researchers.

#### **4.14 Ethical Considerations**

The ethical considerations in this study required the researcher to reveal her status, explain the purpose and nature of the research, reveal the research findings to the participants and assure e them of the confidentiality of their responses as per Marshall and Rossman (2011). In ensuring ethics in this study, the following aspects were also considered:

- **Ensuring Informed Consent**

Informed consent refers to the need to have participants agree to participate in the study and to know what they are agreeing to (Babbie, 2016). For informed consent, the researcher ensured that all participants were provided with all the necessary information to decide whether they should participate in the study or not. The participants were able to judge the value of their participation before they could accept the interview (Bryman & Bell, 2014; Cohen et al., 2018). Once participants had clear, adequate, and honest information, they chose whether to participate based on the information they had (voluntary participation). The researcher did not force, pay or even trick participants into participating in the study. Participants indicated their acceptance to participate by signing the consent forms distributed to them by the researcher. This was done both verbally and textually. Participants were also informed that should they wish to terminate the interview; they could do so without any consequences. This enabled the researcher to offer participants some freedom of choice.

- **Ensuring Privacy and Confidentiality**

Privacy relates to the need for participants to remain unidentifiable, while confidentiality refers to the need to have their information safeguarded (Creswell, 2018; Leavy, 2017). The participants' privacy was ensured throughout the study by not revealing the names of participants in the study. This also enabled the researcher to ensure the confidentiality requirements of the study. Fictitious titles were used to ensure that high levels of privacy and confidentiality were realised. The researcher did not ask participants to contribute very sensitive information since the study only focused on the challenges women leaders faced within schools. However, where such information was brought forward, the researcher did not report it in the study. In addition, all the information remains with the researcher, locked away in a computer and only accessible through a password.

- **Ensuring Protection from Harm**

This ethical requirement relates to the need to ensure that participants are not harmed (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Sheppard, 2021). Regarding shielding contributors from harm

(physical, psychological or social), the researcher did not gather any sensitive information and avoided any questions, actions and gestures that could make participants feel embarrassed in any way. The researcher, with the help of the study supervisor, had put in place arrangements to deal with any harm that might have emerged by providing participants with the contact details of the researcher and the study supervisor should, the participants need assistance. Participants reported no harm.

- **Ensuring that Permission is Obtained**

This aspect requires that permission to conduct a study be sought before the study is conducted (Stacks et al., 2019; White, 2017). Permission to conduct the study was granted by the University of South Africa, where the researcher is registered as a PhD student (see Appendix A).

#### **4.15 Chapter Summary**

Understanding the challenges women leaders face within schools and women's empowerment, in general, in the Gauteng Province was not an easy task. This is because women's empowerment itself, as a concept and an analytical framework, is a fervently debatable issue in South Africa. In this view, an appropriate research philosophy had to be chosen and adopted to guide understanding in the study. It is this commitment that led to the selection of the interpretivist philosophy. The aim was to ensure that in-depth data collection was gathered from those within the DBE space. This chapter described the various procedural issues that were adopted in this study. The aim was to set up suitable methodologies that allowed for an in-depth study of the various challenges women face in schools within the Gauteng Department of Basic Education.

The next chapter presents and analyses the data that were collected during fieldwork.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected, which are discussed in the next chapter. The aim of this study, as outlined in Chapter 1, was to explore the leadership status of women within South African schools' leadership structures; identify the challenges which women face when seeking to ascend to leadership positions within South African schools; propose transformational leadership as a potential tool in dealing with the challenges faced by women in South African schools, and make recommendations on how women can be empowered to compete for leadership positions within South African schools. As stated in Chapter Four, the data were collected through in-depth interviews with fifty-two participants consisting of six principals, six deputy principals, twelve departmental heads, eighteen teachers, five SGB members, three district officials, one SAPA provincial president and one union representative. These participants were drawn from three districts and 12 schools in the GDE.

The chapter commences by providing the demographic details of the participants. This is premised on the idea that demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, and level of education, among others, have a considerable bearing on how people understand, aspire for, and understand certain issues. Understanding the participants' demographic characteristics is, therefore, imperative. After that the chapter presents the data thematically as detailed in the previous chapter. Data are discussed under major themes and sub-themes that emerged from the analysed data. All direct quotations by participants are in italics to ensure easy access to the direct information provided by participants.

#### 5.2 Demographic Data of Participants

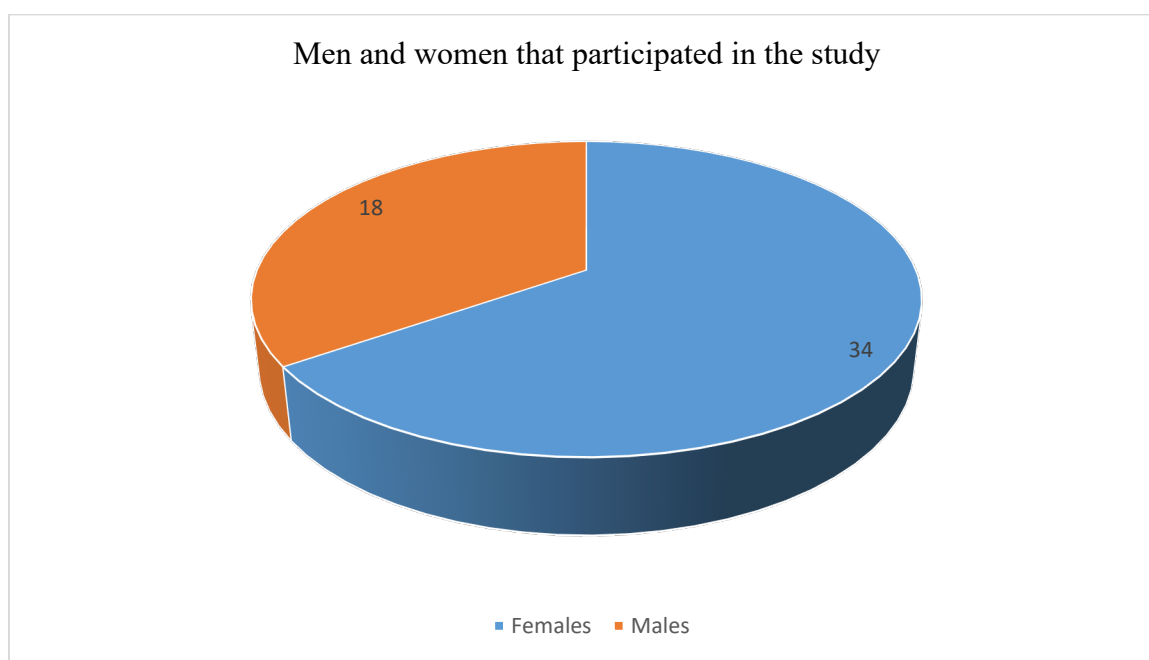
The demographic data collected included job titles, gender, and duration at the current school, duration as an employee of the Gauteng Department of Education, and duration



in the Union and SGB or their Association. The researcher used pseudonyms to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the participants.

### 5.2.1 Gender Composition of Participants

Thirty-four of the participants were women while 18 were men (see Figure 4). It was, therefore, imperative that more women be included as participants so that an in-depth understanding of their personal views could be gathered.

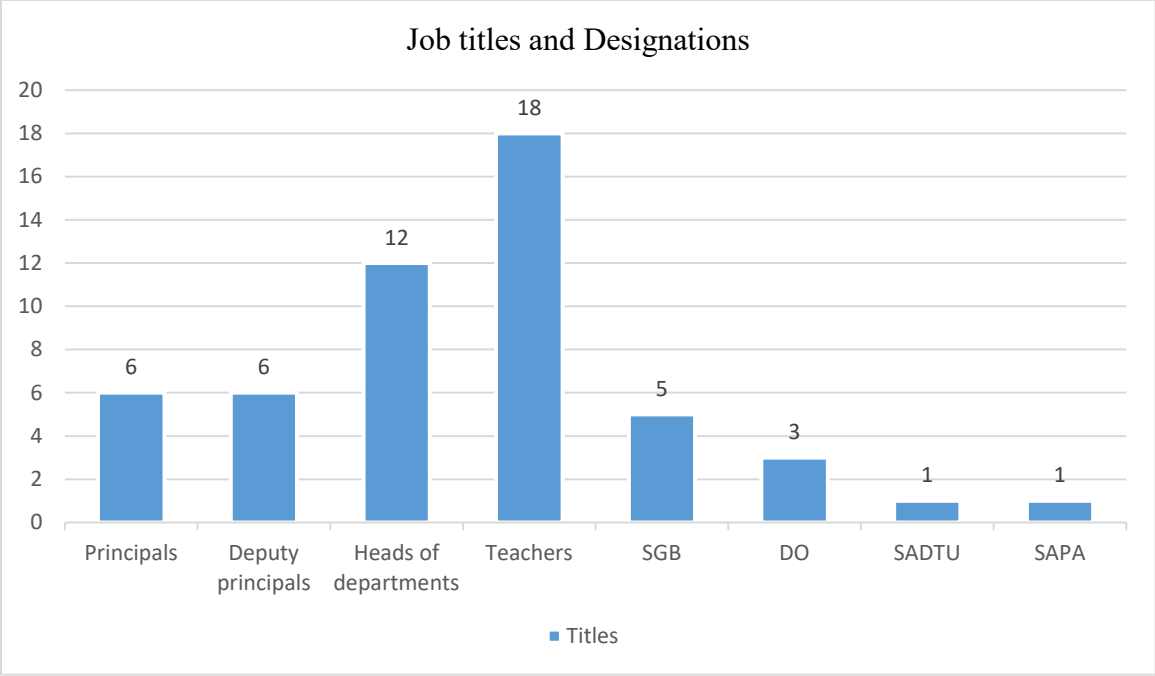


*Source: Author (2022)*

**Figure 3: Gender Composition of Participants**

- **Job Title**

Details on the participants' job positions at the time of the study were also gathered. A total of 6 participants were school principals; 6 were deputy principals; 12 were heads of departments; 18 were teachers; 5 were SGB members; 3 were District Officials and 1 was a SADTU representative while another 1 was a SAPA representative as shown in Figure 5.

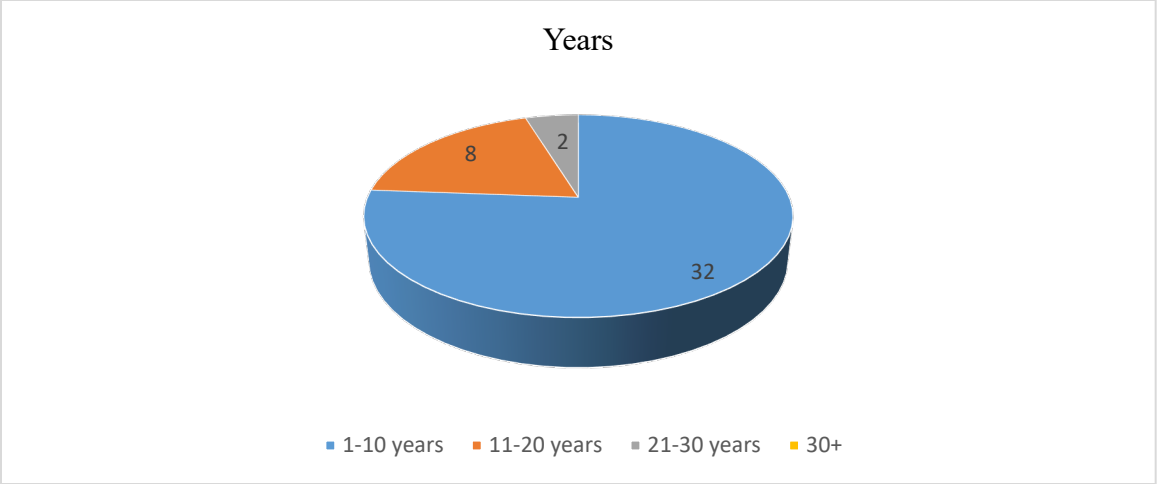


Source: Author (2022)

**Figure 4: Job Titles and Designation of Participants**

- **Duration at the Current School (principals, deputy principals, DHs and teachers)**

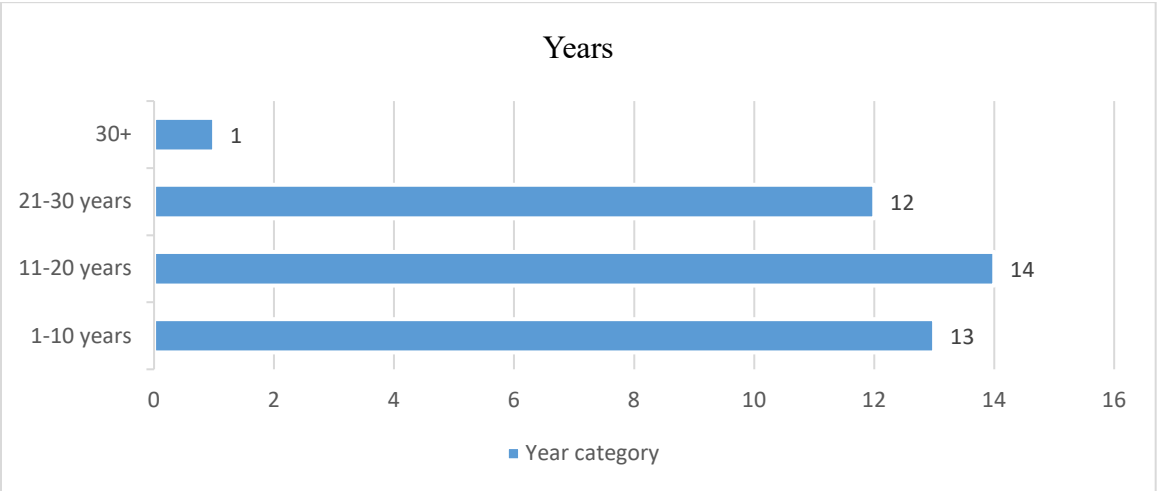
Concerning duration at their current schools, 32 participants were within the 1-10-year category. This was followed by eight participants in the 11-20-year category. Only two participants were in the 20-30-year category, while no participant had more than 30 years in their current school, as shown in Figure 6.



**Figure 5: Duration of Participants in Current School**

- **Duration as an employee of the GDE (principals, deputy principals, DHs and teachers)**

As shown in Figure 7, 13 of the participants had been employed by the GDE for between 1 and 10 years. A total of 14 participants had been employees for the department for between 11 and 20 years; 12 participants had been employed for between 21 and 30 years while only one participant had an over 30-year duration with the department.



Source: Author (2022)

**Figure 6: Duration Employed by GDE**

### 5.3 Summary of the Major Emerging Themes and Sub-themes

Ten major themes and 22 sub-themes emerged from the collected and analysed data. These themes and sub-themes are summarised in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Themes and Sub-themes**

<b>Theme 1</b>	<b>Discrimination</b>
Sub-themes	Apartheid Colonialism
<b>Theme 2</b>	<b>Culture and Women Discrimination</b>
Sub-themes	Patriarchy and women's subordination Stereotypes Home-work conflict
<b>Theme 3</b>	<b>Institutional Factors</b>
Sub-themes	Glass ceiling Coaching for leadership Mentorship Networking Lack of support Male gender preferences
<b>Theme 4</b>	<b>Personal and Psychological Challenges</b>
Sub-themes	Self-confidence and self-esteem Poor self-image Family responsibility
<b>Theme 5</b>	<b>Education and Training</b>
Sub-themes	Qualifications Work Experience
<b>Theme 6</b>	<b>Support Structures</b>
Sub-themes	Political Support Family Support Supervisory and Managerial Support
<b>Theme 7</b>	<b>Leadership</b>
<b>Theme 8</b>	<b>Governance</b>

Sub-themes	Political governance School Governing Body Governance Labour Union Governance
<b>Theme 9</b>	<b>Recruitment</b>
<b>Theme 10</b>	<b>Unethical Practices</b>

**5.4 Discrimination**

One of the issues that emerged poignantly from both secondary literature and the primary research was the issue of discrimination. Participants generally acknowledged that one of the pervasive challenges facing women seeking to ascend to leadership positions within schools in South Africa, generally, was discrimination. One participant mentioned that *“In schools, women are discriminated for leadership positions because people still believe that male principals can do a better job than women”* (Participant 23). It was also reported that women leaders were generally less respected by their colleagues than their male counterparts (Participant 12; Participant 24). Where women leaders were respected, they would have had to work so hard to achieve respect. In some cases, they would have used extraordinary force. One participant stated that:

*But if you as a women leader manager has proven your worth and you've shown that you have no mercy, you take no nonsense, you do what you were asked you to do, and there's no grey area, then it becomes equal playing field. But until the woman has not proven herself for 'male' leadership, it's not easier than what it is for men* (Participant 6).

It was also noted that some male leaders did not believe they could be viewed as equals to their women counterparts. Women participants believed that male leaders also generally believed they easily outperformed women leaders. Another woman leader participant remarked:

*And I mean, and let's be quite honest, I mean, I'm sure you might have seen it with yourself as well that when you walk into an organisation, as a women and*

*these male counterparts that either report to you on the same level as you, or even above you, do they take you as seriously as what they would have taken the male counterparts? That's why you need to prove that you can do what they want or what you are appointed to do (Participant 4).*

More than half of the participants, both men and women, also believed that the gender of a manager in schools greatly determined the quality of work performed by the staff. It was stated that “... *where staff works harder where they are led by a woman, the woman would have proven herself first, and yet, for male leaders, the subordination comes spontaneously*” (Participant 12). This view was also shared by another participant, a principal, whose wife was a deputy principal in a different school. This perception is contested in the feminist theory, particularly since the emergence of the first feminist wave, which sought to dislodge social and cultural inequalities women suffered. The perception is also heavily contested in the third wave of feminism which commenced around the 1990s and continues. This wave focuses on the mobilisation of women to fight for their right to participate not only in politics and public spaces, as espoused in the first and second waves, but also in the right to participate and equal treatment in workplaces (Wanner & Wadham, 2015). The third wave of feminism maintains that men and women should be viewed as equals in everything. One participant mentioned that the way a male and a women leader are accepted at work is very different, and that is based on gender and nothing else. This is despite the ability of such women leaders. The participant reported that:

*...my wife, who is now a deputy principal, the way they treated me versus the way she was being treated when we both started, is way different. But she is actually better in that job than the way I was, not fortunate because of the sex she had to be treated unfairly (Participant 2).*

Participants also revealed that it was generally easier for men to ascend to leadership positions in schools than their women colleagues. One participant stressed this idea when he stated:

*I think in the current situation, for a male person, it's easier to be a manager because they are automatically seen as the stronger of the two sexes. So, the people are more easily in the position to take instructions from a male person. Unfortunately, that is how it is (Participant 6).*

Overall, participants confirmed what was established in reviewed literature that discrimination based on gender remains a significant problem within workplaces (Oosthuizen, 2018; Nkenkana, 2018). Participants linked discrimination within schools in the case study to several factors. However, two key factors which dominated the discussion were colonialism and apartheid, discussed below.

#### **5.4.1 Colonialism**

Margaret and Reddy (2017) define colonialism as a practice of domination that involves the subjugation of one group of people by another. It is an action to establish political control over the indigenous people of an area and to appropriate a place or domain for one's own use. South Africa was officially colonised in 1652 when Jan Van Riebeeck settled in the country (Olivier & Olievier, 2017). Colonialism introduced socio-economic and political ways of life that deliberately discriminated against women. While the participants' views were mixed concerning how much of the contemporary discrimination against women should be attributed to colonialism, the majority of participants, particularly the women, generally believed that the seeds of discrimination were sown during colonialism. One participant mentioned that although pre-colonial Africa was patriarchal, *"it could have been largely colonialism which introduced and even bolstered gender inequality in contemporary Africa because there was no outright discrimination in Africa, and women could also rule"* (Participant 17). This view was also shared by another participant who stated that:

*The abuse or oppression of women in Africa is more pronounced due largely to the history of Euro-Western colonialism, which climaxed in economic reliance and calamities. In addition, the political, societal, and economic structural alterations introduced by colonial regimes, and later enforced by*

*transnational lending and development agencies, have additionally broadened the gender gap in former colonies. Unrecognised as equal companions either in the family or in society, women have been deprived of equal access to education, employment, healthcare, job training, ownership, and political power. This explains their neglect even in schools today (Participant 21).*

Another participant also supported the idea of the problematic role played by colonialism in the discrimination of women in the following words:

*The form which gender inequality assumes in Africa mirrors indigenous, pre-colonial, and European influences. European colonialism in Africa weakened basis of status and autonomy that women had and also reinforced elements of indigenous male leadership or dominance. At the same time, Euro-Western gender beliefs and practices that endorse male leadership or dominance and women dependence were superimposed on Africa. Today, in countries such as South Africa and many others, male leaders, at independence, have continued to bolster male dominance structures inherited from their colonial masters (Participant 34).*

Some participants had legislative examples to back up their claims about why colonialism should be blamed for women's discrimination in leadership positions. One participant first detailed the fatalistic role of the Group Areas Act and mentioned how, during that era, an unmarried woman would be fired from work when she fell pregnant. It was also reported that in some instances, such women would be forced to get married to their uncles or cousins. Furthermore, women were not allowed to get a house at a township unless they were married to a man who would register the house in his own name. One participant revealed that *“even senior positions during that time were not given to women. They were given to men. Positions like inspectors and principals, they were all for men. We were only teachers on the ground”* (Participant 48).

The above revelation was also supported by one SGB participant who detailed that: *“before 1994, as you know, women were not allowed in senior positions. I'm not quite sure if it was a law, but that's how women were on lower positions* (Participant 44).



Another participant remarked that “...many women in developing countries, especially in African workplaces, continue to suffer from underdevelopment, marginalisation, dependency, and gender inequality since independence” (Participant 41).

The problematic role of colonialism is also widely captured in the reviewed secondary literature. Holeta (2016) notes that the socially-motivated injustices instituted by colonialism in Africa continued to compromise how women engage the broader society and its political economy of resource access, ownership, and utilisation. Crafford (2015) observed that even in workplaces, women continued to be considered inferior because of the colonial legacy in Africa. It is argued that while the status of women in pre-colonial Africa varied greatly, the impact of colonialism mainly was to reverse or further weaken their position in society (Habib, 2013; Kulik & Metz, 2015). Colonialism was introduced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century at a time when Victorian England and other European societies had somewhat limited views of women’s roles and abilities. Therefore, it is posited that colonial administrators in Africa were often less equitable in their regard for women than traditional societies.

Thompson and Woolard (2002) posit that the underrepresentation of women within South African places of work was worse in 1995, when the country was emerging from a century of colonial rule and decades of apartheid. The presence of women, not only in workplaces but also in leadership positions, only began to be noticed between 1995 and 2000 (Thompson & Woolard, 2002). It was, however, also found that even though the number of women began to increase in workplaces, the number of men assuming leadership positions soared significantly, thereby making the percentage of women in leadership positions insignificant. Mokoena (2018) laments that this situation has still not changed outright.

Some participants, however, did not consider colonialism to have anything to do with women’s challenges. One participant drew attention to the role of African culture, arguing that it was largely to blame for the status of women in Africa. The participant remarked:

*I don't think only in hindsight. Men and women were given equal opportunity. I don't want to blame apartheid and colonialism for the plight of women. Because*

*my view is that culture and African culture, in particular, was worse in oppressing women than the actual policies of colonialism (Participant 49).*

Participants who rejected the preoccupation with colonialism as the basis of women's subordination argued that colonialism has come and gone and, therefore, governments needed to move forward and not be stuck in a historical past. One participant complained:

*Personally, I do not take this incessant argument of colonialism which is being, time and again, used to justify failure by leaders. Every failure is blamed on colonialism. What we need is to acknowledge where we have failed our women so as to commence the process of making corrections. As long as we continue to blame colonialism for something that is grossly dangerous in our countries and workplaces, we will continue not to consider it as our duty to make things right. Colonialism is a scapegoat (Participant 39).*

The views expressed by participants challenge us to reimagine how much of women's subordination in contemporary workplaces should be attributed to Africa's encounter with Europe. While colonialism disrupted, disfigured, and shattered African social realities, it is the responsibility of Africans to wrench themselves from a colonial mentality to establish societies in which all citizens, men and women, can meaningfully contribute toward the general good of society.

With regard to South Africa specifically, participants also raised the issue of apartheid, as detailed in the following sub-section.

#### **5.4.2 Apartheid**

In addition to colonialism, South Africa also experienced one of the most notorious offspring of colonialism – Apartheid. Apartheid is a system of legislation that supports discrimination against non-White South Africans (Nudelman, 2015). In Afrikaans, apartheid means 'apartness'. Some participants viewed apartheid as "*one of the discriminatory factors that contributed to the challenges faced by women principals in South Africa*" (Participant 46). It was also reported that apartheid did not only affect women but also men. However, participants complained that just like colonialism,

apartheid blocked women from certain privileges that men enjoyed. Like colonialism, apartheid had most job opportunities reserved for men (Participant 7). Apartheid's discriminatory nature restricted the *“access of education and training facilities by Africans, blocked them from economic participation, property access, acquisition, and utilisation. Altogether, this served to bolster the inferior status of women as Black men did their best to cling to the little worth they were left with”* (Participants 27).

Apartheid, by its nature, meant restricted space. According to one participant:

*Due to the limited space available, in terms of socio-economic and political needs, black people ended up fighting one another for the meagre space available. Survival of the fittest. As a result, women were edged out, marginalised and excluded. They could not acquire education on the same basis with men. If they enrolled in schools, they dropped out before one knew they had enrolled. Thus, even at independence, there were no women trained enough to challenge men in terms of leadership* (Participant 14).

One (District Official) participant believed that apartheid was a negative contributory factor, particularly in the recruitment of women. According to this participant:

*...discrimination in employment occurs when one person is treated less favourably than another because of some characteristics. That is relevant for his or her capacity to do a job, such as their status in certain private companies. Even in South Africa, we are still having the status of a person which contributes to the race and the disability of a person. Now, based on the apartheid ideology, a woman is not an ideal leader* (Participant 50).

Another participant mentioned that South Africa was one of the countries that have been battling the evils of colonialism and apartheid and that *“the apartheid regime in this country introduced various pieces of legislation which were meant to oppress black people and to dispossess them of any property or means of survival. Women were the worst affected”* (Participant 27).

Also,

*The rise of the apartheid regime to power saw the introduction of racially-biased laws that were meant to alienate Blacks from development and to also monitor their movements. The institution of racial laws enabled Whites to subjugate Blacks and to promote the superiority of Whites...it was also meant to plunge black people into poverty as it converted them into a cheap pool of labour for white businesses. Men usually responded by migration. With the migration of men to find paid employment in white people's businesses, the responsibility of food provision within households fell on women. It became normal for women to live in rural areas. Women had now to engage in farming activities to survive (Participant 17).*

The reviewed secondary literature also showed that South Africa inherited structures, both public and private, that had serious problems that required to be transformed (Habib, 2013; Holeta, 2016; Nudelman, 2015). According to Jones (2013), the legacy of apartheid created structures and organisations that lacked justice, proficiency, equality, and fairness. At independence in 1994, the government needed to change the culture of institutions so as to foster democratic principles. According to Van Niekerk (2015), however, the process of reform transformation has been compounded and clouded by enormous challenges. The aim of the post-apartheid administration was to democratise institutions to realise equality.

It was also noted that the apartheid system was structured so that wealth remained in the hands of Whites while Blacks acquired only enough wages to spend on basics. With women excluded mainly from economic activities, such as employment in industries and the mining sector, boy children were often prioritised when it came to education (Participant 17). This view was supported by another woman participant who revealed that:

*Since women are generally regarded as passers-by in the family, the prioritisation of the boy child in the family is regarded as an investment. While the girl child will leave the home to develop a foreign home, the boy child will*

*ensure that his family thrives. So, parents mainly focused on boys. I remember when I would have to stay at home to take care of my grandfather when he was sick, to help him when he needed someone to bring him water or something. My younger brother could have done that best, but my mother would not allow it since my brother was also the future father of the household. He had to prepare. So, you see how it unfolded? (Participant 26).*

The above quotation is confirmed in the reviewed literature. According to the OECD (2021), poverty in households also plays a key role in girls' absenteeism in schools, and their subordination. Thus, apartheid worked together with certain societal circumscribed conventions to discriminate against women. Das (2021) found that boys are naturally exempted from this challenge; as a result, they record high school attendance rates than girls. Ndhlovu and Tembo (2020) observed that girls were more likely to leave school to help take care of siblings, the elderly, and the sick. In adulthood, these girls fail to obtain formal employment due to their limited education and training. This consequently results in the feminisation of poverty (Choudhry et al., 2019). The lack of proper and adequate education and training by girls soon translates into their disempowerment in adulthood as they will be unable to compete with men in various activities that can result in empowerment. It is also posited in the literature that South Africans have always been aware of the gender inequality and the oppression that continued to hold them down in the country. As a result, women in the country have made some efforts to eliminate some injustices deliberately developed by colonialism, apartheid, culture, and traditional beliefs (Holeta, 2016).

Another key theme that emerged alongside colonialism and apartheid was culture and its sub-themes of patriarchy and stereotypes discussed below.

## **5.5 Culture and Discrimination Against Women**

According to Darong and Menngo (2021), culture is a way of life. It deals with aspects such as beliefs, concepts, habits, behaviour, principles, and everything that people learn to do. Culture is more about the practices of people over a period of time that are passed down from generation to generation. In most cultures, leadership roles are primarily

assigned to men, while women are meant to support them (Mehmood, 2019). Culture and traditions were considered to be part of the problem by participants. In most African cultures, it is the responsibility of men to take care of women (Fritz & Knippenberg, 2017). Women are barred from making decisions without the permission of men (Carli & Eagly, 2016). Within the household unit, male children tend to occupy a better rank than even grown-up women within the household and can even make decisions when the father is away or when he requires them to do so. These cultural proclivities also extend to most workplaces where men are made to continue dominating.

Participants in this study also mentioned the problematic role of culture within Gauteng schools. One SGB participant firstly drew attention to how some South African cultures, especially in rural areas, only consider men for traditional leadership roles such as Chieftainships, village heads, and Indunas and lead to *lekgotla* (tribal court). This arrangement also finds itself in places of work. The participant stated

*Because culture is a way of life, it easily snicks into workplaces. It makes people to take certain things for granted. No one tends to care to challenge it because once you fall out of line you become its renegade – a cultural renegade. The people cannot also cease to view you as a human being anymore. They label you as having no Ubuntu. Once you do not have Ubuntu, then you have no right to equality with others. In this case, culture most goes unchallenged (Participant 44).*

According to another participant, it is the unwillingness to challenge culture in fear of being labelled as having no *Ubuntu* that has left many men and women powerless to advocate for structural changes that can empower women in society (Participant 34). Another participant also mentioned that:

*Culture conditions people to accept certain things and making certain things to appear normal. Look, it is almost normal that a male leader will perform best. As a result, even when you see a vacancy being advertised, you also think twice as a woman before you can apply. This is because you know that a male is usually preferred ahead of you (Participant 37).*

What emerged from the data is that culture has certain patriarchal and stereotypical aspects that discriminate against women. The following sub-sections, unpack how participants linked patriarchy and stereotypes to the subordination of women within schools in the Gauteng Province.

### **5.5.1 Patriarchy and Women's Subordination**

According to one participant, "*Patriarchy goes hand in hand with culture*" (Participant 40). Another participant mentioned that:

*...because of patriarchy, some women fail to apply for leadership positions. Not because they do not want to, but because they first have to consult with the husband at home. And because leadership roles come with a lot of responsibility, most men deny their wives, citing a whole lot of reasons. Contrary, when men see an opportunity, they simply apply and move on. They need more money to take care of their family* (Participant 38).

A third participant revealed that a husband could also "*decide whether the wife should be employed or not*" (Participant 17). Participants also mentioned the issue of inadequate education and training are one of the challenges face women and continue to compromise their positions within workplaces. Participants mentioned that this challenge was caused by patriarchy which "*deliberately sanctions the education of boy children more than girl children*" (Participant 49). Participants viewed the lack of adequate education and training as responsible for the "*low levels of literacy for women in order for them to compete with men for leadership positions*" within the case study schools (Participant 32). This view is supported by the reviewed literature, which posits that inadequate education and training have affected the ability of women to access and compete for job opportunities across sectors (Buvinic et al., 2020). According to Campos et al. (2018), due to lack of education and limited training, most women also do not know whether there exist conduits through which they can challenge the oppressive nature of patriarchy.

Participants mentioned that women colleagues with high education, such as Master's degrees easily sailed to leadership positions. One participant mentioned that "*because of patriarchy, women struggle to access positions of leadership. Where they do, you will find that they are highly qualified*" (Participant 50). Another participant stated that, "*you will find that women who are in leadership have worked extra hard when compared to their male counterparts. In most cases, they have a number of certificates and university qualifications*" (Participant 51).

Reviewed secondary literature also showed that women with high levels of literacy have high chances of ascending to leadership positions than those without or with low literacy levels (Choudhry et al., 2019; Croke et al., 2017). However, one participant in this study mentioned that within primary schools in the Gauteng Province, "*women with high levels of literacy, such as honours, Master's, and doctoral degrees were very few. Most have diplomas while a few have first degrees*" (Participant 51).

Also, patriarchy had disempowered women to such an extent that they cannot support each other when it comes to challenging patriarchal tendencies in workplaces: "*...women have been so conditioned that they cannot stand up as one man to challenge patriarchy. That is how worse it has become*" (Participant 43). This view is also supported by reviewed literature which shows that women who seek to challenge patriarchy do not have enough support from other women to oppose the status quo (Nkenkana, 2018) strongly. It is also revealed that the women who stand up against patriarchy face the risk of being viewed in a negative light even by other women (Mbilinyi, 2016; Nehere, 2016). One participant mentioned that "*the problem is that most of the women who seek to transform this situation seek to do so violently. Worse so, most of them are not even in marriages*" (Participant 42). Another participant also mentioned that "*some of the women are in same-sex situation thereby complicating their chances of being taken seriously. Culture throws them out, and society excludes them from the privilege of Ubuntu*" (Participant 45). Thus, other women blame them for seeking to disrupt their society (Nienaber & Moraka, 2016). As a result, "*women remain without a strong base from which they can lobby for release from patriarchal tendencies, and thus continue to be oppressed*" (Participant 51).



Participants also confirmed what had been observed in the reviewed literature that the oppression of women and their denial of leadership positions within workplaces is further sustained by the lack of solid laws to encourage the promotion of women in workplaces (Nkenkana, 2018). It was also found that most countries only introduce rules instead of laws with regards to women's empowerment in workplaces. As a result, the situation of women remains the same across countries (Nienaber & Moraka, 2016).

The other aspect that emerged from cultural tendencies and beliefs was stereotypes, as detailed next.

### **5.5.2 Stereotypes and Women's Discrimination**

Stereotypes are beliefs that are shared culturally and influence expectations about how women and men are and how they ought to behave, for example (Mosese & Mearns, 2016; Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). Gender stereotypes can be descriptive or prescriptive or both. Descriptive stereotypes dictate that women are communal and warm while men are often stereotyped with agentic features such as being poised and self-confident (Dlanjwa, 2018). Incidentally, agentic features are viewed as vital traits for leadership (Tekwa & Adesina, 2018). Some participants detailed how stereotypes played out within the case study schools. One participant mentioned that

*Leadership roles require people who are tough. You know what, dealing with teachers is very difficult. They consider themselves to be all educated and therefore, smart and know what to do. In a meeting, for example, they all want to be heard. They want to say something because they think they have to contribute. You need to be tough to control them (Participant 3).*

Another participant also revealed how challenging a leadership role can be:

*The job of a principal is not easy. There is a lot that comes in here. People think it's the easiest job where you just sit down, tell others what to do while you are having a cup of tea. This is tough. Sometimes I wish I had continued*

*as a teacher. I would be having less stress, and sometimes I believe men can do it better than me* (Participant 4).

Some participants also indicated issues of time constraints as some of the factors that make the leadership of women being considered less effective when compared to their male counterparts. A participant mentioned that *“women work both at home and at school. By the time they get to school, they are already tired. When the tiredness shows, then they are viewed as lazy, and thus, disrespected by colleagues”* (Participant 16). This shows that agentic features are viewed as an indication of ability by these participants. However, research has revealed that women who behave in an agentic manner can also be backlashed for violating prescriptive stereotypes of being communal (Gipson et al., 2017). Thus, women leaders are forced first to consider how to display the agentic features deemed essential for leadership without violating gender stereotypes.

Stereotypes were reported to be prevalent and often result in biased judgments in selecting potential leaders. Participants mentioned that the Gauteng Province Department of Education, until only recently, openly preferred leaders who displayed masculine qualities, thereby deliberately side-lining women. It was posited that *“while the department’s stance has changed in recent years, the change has not resulted in any significant consideration of women as competitive leaders. Women remain largely invisible in schools, not only in the Gauteng province but across the country as a whole”* (Participant 20). Principal participants (Participants 1 and 3) also reveal that very few women are in a leadership position in the Gauteng province, particularly at the level of principal. In the reviewed literature, until only recently, it was also revealed that the role of a leader is often more aligned with masculine traits and behaviours (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016; Nkenkana, 2018). Scholars such as Gipson et al. (2017:36) have argued that recent literature broadly demonstrates that *“when we think—leader, we also think—male”*. This presents a particular challenge for women candidates who do not fit the masculine analysis of leadership. Because the traditional perception of what leadership looks like is based on masculine-oriented concepts, women are less likely to measure up to this ideal. This mismatch creates a *“lack-of-fit”*. *“The incongruity between women gender and the*

*leadership roles is viewed as having led to bias against women in the GDE'* (Participant 37).

Participants also mentioned that in the GDE and across South Africa as a whole, women teachers were perceived as colleagues whose services should be limited to classroom activities. One of the women principals revealed how her colleagues were surprised that she could drive a bus because they thought she did not have Professional Driving Permit (PDP). This participant mentioned that:

*First, I will just say patriarchy you know, as a woman it's not easy. When I joined the SMT there were two women HODs. I was in a technical school out of eight male SMT members, right. So, there were a lot of obstacles, obviously you are judged because of your race, you are also judged because you are a woman. I still remember when we took our teams to play games in different schools. There were always men that drove their teams and all. So, I decided to drive my own team. I did not accept that my team should be driven by anyone but me. Then they argued that someone who must drive the learners in the bus must have a PDB because they concluded that as a woman, I did not have one. Then I said "I already have the PDP". There was a stereotype that I would not have PDP. Only men can drive the buses, the school buses, but that's why I used to drive the buses around, you know, to take my girls to go and play in different schools. I never allowed anyone to pull me around* (Participant 4).

It was also revealed that in environments where stereotypes were highly prevalent, a women colleague seeking to pursue a leadership career needed first to persuade the SGB and then the subordinates to support her. Stereotypical attributes associated with women, according to one participant, "*tended to be not according to the attributes which are required for senior leadership positions, not only in the department but also in many other sectors*" (Participant 49). According to the reviewed literature, this mismatch can fuel the perception that women are less qualified for top leadership positions and lead to discrimination against women seeking senior leadership positions (Vial et al., 2016).

### 5.5.3 Home-work Conflict

One challenge that women often experience when seeking to ascend to leadership positions is home-work conflict. This challenge was mentioned by participants and was confirmed by the reviewed literature. Participants mentioned that *“while men also face this problem in one way or the other, it was more pronounced to women since they are also considered mostly as the primary caretakers of the home. Thus, the burden of familial duties falls disproportionately on them”* (Participant 16). The researcher requested women participants to disclose what was considered their role within the household. The majority of these women listed cooking, cleaning, washing and taking care of their children as some of their specific roles. Asked to explain how they considered roles within the household as one of the challenges to career development, participants had mixed views. Some participants did not consider it a hiccup in their career growth, while others viewed it as a significant challenge. One participant mentioned, *“I would say career-wise it is not. It does not affect my career professionally. I am able to do my day-to-day duties at home and I try my level best to do what I'm supposed to do at school* (Participant 4).

Some participants believed that household roles needed to be dealt with to enable them to ascend to leadership positions. These participants posited that it was a challenge for women who sought to progress career-wise while also performing all the household chores. Some participants linked household chores to issues of a culture where roles are assigned based on gender. One of the male participants stated how they were raised to know that women were the ones responsible for the home chores in the following words: *“We grew up knowing that women must cook, women should clean, and women should look after the kids, all of that till today”* (Participant 6). Male participants also confirmed that exemption from household chores enabled them to excel in their careers. One participant mentioned: *“No, I would not say that because always, at home, there are always women who clean and everything. So, I would not say it disturbs my career path at all”* (Participant 10). However, when men were probed to answer how the situation should be made better for the women, they acknowledged the unfairness and advised that *“we need to give women a chance to lead, especially in higher positions, companies and different sectors, and have faith in them. And again, teachers to teach more on*

*gender roles or gender equality polarization and how the next generation will behave”* (Participant 51).

Women participants (teachers, including principals) reported that they were faced with situations whereby they have to deal with home and work matters simultaneously and have very little time to advance their careers through studying. This is caused mainly by their partners who are reluctant to assist. One participant explained how difficult it was for her to balance the two commitments in the following words:

*But when it comes to my development, in terms of when I look at myself as to study, it's a challenge. It's a challenge, because when I get to work, we have to do work. I cannot be studying at work. And when I get home, I feel that's where I have to carry on with my studies. But because of what I am expected to do at home as a woman it is not easy. It is not easy. Even if I try to come home on time, eat on time, after that, you can see that even the children depend on me as a mother. Every time they want something, they have to say, “Mommy, can you help with this?”, “Can you assist me with that?” My children are still young. They are all in primary school. So, my husband says that he is a high school teacher, he doesn't know anything about phonics (Participant 4).*

Thus, the home-work conflict emerged as one of the fundamental challenges women faced when seeking to ascend to a leadership position within the case study area. However, while women considered household chores as a contributory factor to their lack of ascendancy, men, on the other hand, seemed to be benefiting from their exemption from most household chores.

## **5.6 Institutional Factors**

In the opinion of Jali et al. (2021), institutional climate in the context of education can be viewed as a product of cultural assumptions and norms about what is deemed ‘appropriate’ or ‘inappropriate’ behaviours and verbal exchanges within a specific learning or work environment and a *chilly climate* is defined as informal exclusion, devaluation, and marginalization from workplace networks based on gender. According to one

participant, *“The term institutional climate could be used to refer to the impressions, views and associated behaviours held by members of the institution about their institution and about the symbols that represent their shared patterns of behaviour”* (Participant 50). It also refers to *“the combination of challenges and support available to individuals in the education environment”* (Participant 51). Maki (2015) points out that previous research has focused on the influence of the environment on women in the workplace and specifically on women in higher education. Because the focus has long been placed on higher education, it is essential also to observe how institutional climate influences women in the context of schools. The next section focuses on the inevitable adversities women experience in the higher education environment.

### **5.6.1 Glass Ceiling**

Babic and Hansez (2021) define glass ceiling as a barrier that is faced by most women and minorities whenever they are trying to progress to higher roles that are dominated by men. These challenges are regarded as invisible because they are not acknowledged or written in policies and yet are practiced in institutions. In this study it was found that an additional barrier for women seeking to ascend to leadership positions in the participant school is ‘the glass ceiling’ (Nixdorff & Rosen, 2010). According to one key informant, the *“glass ceiling characterises a concealed form of discrimination against women which prevents them from moving into leadership positions to which they aspire”* (Participant 50). Women participants mentioned that *“this glass ceiling thing is largely responsible, more than anything else, for the invisibility of women in leadership positions within our schools* (Participant 27). One participant also revealed that although *“there are more women than male teachers in South African schools, the leaders of these schools are mostly male, both at local and national levels”* (Participant 14). One of the key informants linked the ‘glass ceiling’ problem to colonial policies and the inability of the independent government to overhaul their entire colonial system to implement a new one based on rationality. One participant mentioned that:

*The challenges which women face in terms of seeking to ascend to leadership all emerge from the country’s colonial past. Colonial regimes recruited men in*

*their industries and economic activities. Women remained in the countryside where they took care of the family. The exclusion of women from the economy sealed their exclusion in daily life. The post-colonial government seems to have sanctified this situation (Participant 49).*

Some participants identified the challenges women faced as including “*long hours of work as well as the existence of networks that are dominated by men*” (Participant 29).

### **5.6.2 Coaching for Leadership**

Participants mentioned that unlike in other sectors where executive coaching is standard, in the education sector, particularly in schools, there is no coaching for leadership roles. One participant mentioned that “*unlike in other sectors, the education sector, especially within the context of schools in South Africa, there is no coaching to prepare people to ascend to leadership positions*” (Participant 39). This is viewed as one of the key challenges because leaders within schools are primarily men, due to colonial and apartheid policies described above. Men, therefore, “*continue to protect their leadership territory jealously such that women remain invisible in leadership roles*” (Participant 22). The participant also mentioned that even most of the heads of departments are also men. This, therefore, indicates that women are far away from leadership positions. It was also revealed that where women held leadership positions, they were mostly in primary schools not in secondary schools. One participant mentioned that men considered primary learners “*kids which only women teachers and leaders can take care of. Thus, once in a while you see that women leaders are also visible in primary schools. However, still, men continue to dominate at the levels of principals with women coming in as deputies, as an appendage and as a horse to carry the load*” (Participant 37).

Participants revealed that if the concept of coaching is introduced in schools, it could also result in women’s empowerment through promotion to leadership positions. Women participants viewed women leadership in schools as important and as an alternative to the development of basic education which is facing various challenges in South Africa. Women leadership was viewed as having the potential to transform the basic education in South Africa “*which is reported to be failing and which is viewed as questionable and*

*sub-standard when compared to other countries in the region*” (Participant 49). In the context of basic education, transformation could be viewed as *“a process of profound, thoughtful and deep-seated revolution that orientates the entire department in a new direction and mobilises it to a completely different level of efficiency”* (Participant 48). The views of participants concerning transformation are consistent with the views of experts such as Sofat et al. (2015), who view it as a type of enacted change that is planned and is targeted at bringing about noteworthy changes in the way an institution is managed. Unlike coercive change, which is not planned and occurs through the natural course of events, transformation is intentionally planned to adjust, alter, amend or revise organisational structures and relationships. In the context of the department of education, transformation could be understood as *“a process for generating and sustaining a work environment in which everyone, including women colleagues, can be developed to their potential and be allowed to contribute fully to the objectives of the department”* (Participant 52). Participants called for the creation of a work environment which is free of unfair discrimination against women, provides opportunities for coaching and is reflective of the demographic realities of all the employees of the department.

According to one key informant, *“The absence of women in leadership paves the way for the continued absence of women leaders in the department as the nature of education received can continue to even disempower women as there are no role models for them”* (Participant 51). This situation can be resolved if coaching of women prospective women leaders is introduced to prepare them for the assumption of leadership. In the reviewed literature, it was also noted that micro-politics (coaching, networking, and other informal interactions) in the education department tended to ignore women and thus, constrained their potential to ascend to leadership positions (Holeta, 2016). As a result, *“many qualified women do not even consider competing for leadership positions”* (Participant 41). This adds to the fact that women are under-represented in enrolment, employment, and decision-making in the education department (Nudelman, 2015). With this curtailed level of representation, it is problematic for women to reach leadership positions within schools.



The reviewed literature, however, revealed that even where coaching exists in South Africa, one challenge that remains for women when undergoing coaching is the absence of recognition needed in balancing work and personal lives as mothers, wives, for example. (Schuster, 2018). While the problem of failing to balance work and personal lives is not confined to women alone, the problem affects women more than it affects men (Shvindina, 2016). Thus, in most cases, even where opportunities for coaching exist, women are forced to prioritise their families at the expense of their careers and their ambitions to be successful leaders. Thus, even if the department would *“introduce coaching in earnest, it would be important to be aware and to respect the need for the promotion and encouragement of women leaders through the designing of coaching plans that take into account the various personal needs of women”* (Participant 50). However, one issue that emerged clearly in the study was that the department offered no coaching opportunities, thereby complicating the possibilities of women who aspired to ascend to leadership positions in schools.

### **5.6.3 Mentorship**

In the reviewed secondary literature, mentorship relates to the rapport of two people in which one serves as a mentor and provides expert support to a mentee, considered as one who is not experienced in certain important issues (Petrie, 2014). Maki (2015) posits that many influential relationships affect women’s career experiences and their progress into leadership positions. Mentoring is one such relationship (or activity) that has been heavily studied and discussed in the literature on women’s leadership. Furthermore, it is posited that mentoring can be an important component for women pursuing leadership positions in education for a number of reasons. Mentoring relationships make a unique and independent contribution to a protégé’s career success, above and beyond that accounted for by the protégé’s existing skills, talents, and abilities. Thus, mentoring influences positive career-related outcomes regardless of an individual’s characteristics (Bangani & VyasDoorgapersad, 2020).

As with coaching, participants revealed the lack of a mentorship facility in the Department of Education. One participant mentioned that:

*There are no clear-cut processes on how to ascend to leadership positions in the department. This makes it hard both for women and men who aspire to lead. Experience seems to play a major role in this regard. As a result, the elderly occupy most of these leadership positions. This becomes a challenge considering the emerging innovative trends in this globalised community. The young leaders would be doing better because they quickly adjust to these things. However, due to opportunities such as mentoring, the department continues to lose as the tired elderly continue to sit in offices while the strong young blood is confined to the classroom to teach (Participant 49).*

Mentorship would enable the inexperienced young employees to get training from their senior colleagues, and the senior colleagues would get training on new technologies from their young colleagues. This reciprocity would eventually lead to a remarkable transformation of the department, much to the benefit of *“South Africa as a country, and not only the Gauteng Department of Education”* (Participant 31). Furthermore, where women are involved, the transformation will not only be structural but also intrinsic. Participants mentioned *“would empower women aspiring to ascend to a leadership position through empowering them with the skills and knowledge needed in specific roles”* (Participant 38).

However, in the reviewed literature, mentorship has been seen as not as useful especially where women are involved. R Concerning the use of mentorship to develop women leaders, women are often mentored by men who have different interests and commitments from those of women (Pounder, 2014). This observation was confirmed by participants in this study, who pointed out that this situation could be a problem *“since gender interests often clash, and may undermine the role and effectiveness of the mentorship relationship”* (Participant 22). In view of such challenges, transformation experts such as Hopkins and O’Neil (2015) suggest that women leaders should be provided with two mentors of both genders to ensure maximum benefit. Organisations are also advised to implement some formal programmes for mentoring aspiring leaders (Jovanovica & Ciricb, 2016; Kele & Pietersen, 2015).

There were, however, some participants who considered mentorship as not beneficial, particularly for women. One participant mentioned that *“I have noticed that men prefer to work with other men. I have seen it with trainee teachers who come to schools for practice. Men prefer to mentor them than mentor women”* (Participant 6). Another mentioned that *“where a man quickly jumps to offering mentorship support to a woman, then you must know something other than support is underway”* (Participant 17). This quotation shows that some women are abused during the mentorship process. This was confirmed by another participant who revealed that:

*One principal worked closely with another woman... The woman was his deputy. The principal was being transferred to another school. So, he offered to mentor his deputy to take over. He promised to write a brilliant recommendation for her. She considered it as her opportunity to raise and did not guard certain areas. They became so close. She now regrets what happened although she got the promotion* (Participant 31).

This quotation suggests that where men seem to indicate they care for women's empowerment; the result is the further exploitation of women. This view is supported by some scholars who posit that mentorship offers very few positive outcomes and may even affect organisational sustainability (Mahope, 2014).

According to Bogler et al. (2013), women point to a lack of mentors and women mentors in general and the scarcity of mentoring as a challenge in their careers. Women not only perceive an imbalance in the quantity of mentoring they receive relative to men, but also a fundamental difference in quality (Carter, 2013). For example, Dlanjwa (2018) reports that women serving as leaders in education point to the absence of women mentors as well as the presence of an exclusionary network as challenges to their advancement.

#### **5.6.4 Networking**

Another issue that emerged from the data was related to networking. Women participants mentioned that networks were significant in their development because association offers prospects in terms of *“relations, work assignments and are also vital in creating personal*

*links that can lead to personal improvement and credibility*" (Participant 12). Another participant stated that: *"networking activities are crucial mechanisms for the development of an individual's career. It could also help women teachers who aspire to attain leadership positions in our schools"* (Participant 39). Participants believed that it was during networking *"that experiences are shared on how others managed to work their way up to leadership positions"* (Participant 19).

Both women and male participants acknowledged that women were largely invisible in a number of networks. Men dominated most networks, and *"women hardly accessed such networks"* (Participant 45). One participant mentioned that

*Men always do their best to block women from mingling within them in any network. They want to discuss masculine issues undisturbed by women. This all comes back to issues of culture and so forth. Even if women could benefit from these networks, they cannot access them. Our schools are dominated by male leaders. If women could network with these leaders, they could benefit* (Participant 34).

It was, however, revealed that young women teachers often negotiated their acceptance into networks. One women participant mentioned that *"we have to force to get into networks where ideas and opportunities are shared. It is not easy for us but it's easy for them"* (Participant 18). While the younger colleagues often found themselves participating in networks, their women colleagues remained excluded, and one participant commented that *"whether it is because of looks that women are accepted into certain networks, you cannot tell"* (Participant 29). This shows that available networks within the department are dominated by men who control them to exclude their women counterparts, thereby complicating the prospects of ascending to leadership positions.

However, some participants did not consider networks as important for promoting women to leadership positions. Participants mentioned that if people were qualified and experienced, they would be promoted. One participant mentioned that:

*It does not matter whether one belongs to a network or association. If you have the right qualifications and experience, you have a good chance. People also need to apply. The department will not just approach you and ask you if you are available to lead. There is a need to show enthusiasm, to show that you want the position. Not to say, well, if I get it, I will take it, but if I do not, well, that is it. You have to show that you want it. Also, work hard for it. That is how life works. Nothing comes on a flowery bed of ease. Network or no network, one should just work (Participant 48).*

Another participant also mentioned that available networks in the department “*had nothing to do with preparing people for leadership roles. These are just social gatherings, and therefore, should not be considered seriously*” (Participant 7). These views on the importance of networking are also confirmed in the reviewed literature, which indicates that not all networks are imperative for the development of an individual (Shvindina, 2016). It has been observed that the networks in which men are involved are mainly those in which practical activities related to the job are emphasised, while those networks in which women are involved are, more often than not, biased towards the building of relationships for offering emotional support (Smith, 2013). One participant mentioned that “*if the department wants to promote the empowerment of women, it has to improve the visibility of women within leadership ranks. This should be done by focusing on promoting the kind of networks that will ensure that the intended results are achieved*” (Participant 44).

### **5.6.5 Lack of Support**

The concept of support entails the provision of assistance to a person or something. In a school situation, support is required by women leaders from different people when seeking positions of leadership or when already in these positions. Women participants mentioned that one of the main challenges of women leadership was the lack of support from different stakeholders, including the Department of Education, Unions, Associations, SGB, parents, learners, as well as their own families. A participant who happened to be a representative of the principals’ association revealed how the association concentrated

on developing and empowering deputy principals and principals, though not necessarily women ones:

*The thing is, our support is all-inclusive. We do not provide support based on gender. Thus, we do support women just like men. Like when it is Women's Day, we celebrate them and send messages to our women.... But remember, everyone who is a woman in the association is a principal or a deputy principal, both men and women. So, it is specifically geared towards supporting everyone basically and not women as such (Participant 50).*

All the women principals in this study also confirmed that they had been newly appointed as principals by the department and received no substantial support as women leaders. Some participants, however, acknowledged the support offered by religious organisations, such as Christian churches, which encouraged them to pursue leadership roles in their workplaces.

Some participants also blamed themselves for failing to ascend to leadership positions. A women participant mentioned that:

*Most of the time, it is something extra trivial. It is our non-public pursuits that set us as outcasts. Or even how we wear a short flowered beautiful costume may traditionally be considered as if we are flirting or now not sufficient as a consequence that symbolises that one is not yet prepared to count on a managerial function or to be allowed entry to the 'boys club', so they say (Participant 17).*

One of the male participants argued that women were responsible at some point because they do not always take advantage of the opportunities before them. He indicated that a number of women had accepted certain societal circumscribed conventions holding them to subordinate roles; therefore, they tend not to step up for leadership roles that they deserve. This particular participant also pointed out that:

*The other obstacle for women is that they are too fundamental of themselves. Women are naturally not risk takers, while on the other hand, men have a*

*tendency to catch each probability and opportunity introduced to them. Women need a lot of earlier preparation before they could trap the opportunity (Participant 29).*

Personal factors were reported as a challenge to the ascendancy of women to leadership positions in the case study schools.

The lack of support which is deliberately targeted at women, was also shared by one key participant who mentioned that:

*Basically, from the District, I have never come across any workshop that is for women only. It is only at church. Okay, when we go for a woman's fellowship, maybe we celebrate Women's Day. And with individual leaders, which I cannot say it was the Department's initiative, there is this lady, she's got passion for women leaders. I happen to be her friend on Facebook. She decided to invite us as women to have an interaction with her concerning leadership (Participant 5).*

Some participants also revealed that they consulted professionals for support. One participant mentioned that at one point, she had to seek the services of professionals on her own. The participant mentioned:

*In the widespread lack of support targeted at women, women leaders, therefore, need to speak to psychologists and counsellors for assistance rather than keep quiet. I have been doing that myself, and it really helped me learn how to juggle my life, how to juggle my professional career, and my personal life because I never received any support. I had to find intervention myself. There was a need for me to do it because there was no balance. I felt that speaking to someone and telling them, how to juggle this would help me in my position as well. Because if you do not seek that yourself, no one will say they are going to help you to be a women leader by showing you how to balance your life. You need to go seek it yourself (Participant 7).*

Given the above it can be asserted that there is no targeted support extended to women in the GDE. While women participants regarded this as problematic and disempowering, male participants believed that support was being provided, not necessarily to women leaders, but to all leaders without gender bias. However, this conception is also problematic considering the historically disadvantaged position of women, as detailed in the reviewed literature. Reviewed literature showed that inadequate education and training due to colonialism and apartheid in South Africa is one of the challenges that women face and which continues to compromise their aspirations for leadership positions (Turkmen, 2018). Reviewed literature recognises patriarchy promoted by colonialism as problematic as it promotes male dominance (Nienaber & Moraka, 2016). Patriarchy deliberately endorses the education of boy children more than girl children (Al-Ashri, 2016), and for this reason, there remain low levels of literacy for women across Africa (Bemba, 2018; Turkmen, 2018). This situation has affected the ability of women to access and compete for job opportunities across sectors (Buvinic et al., 2020). This has translated into workplace oppression (Berry et al., 2018). In addition, due to a lack of education and limited training, most women do not know whether there exist conduits through which they can challenge the oppressive nature of patriarchy blocking them from ascending to leadership positions.

### **5.6.6 Male Gender Preferences**

Participants also revealed that the department still practised male gender preferences in leadership positions. The male preference over women was deep-seated in schools, with participants reiterating that “*there is still a strong belief that women are not ‘strong’ enough to manage schools, especially secondary schools*” (Participant 47). Two key informant participants confirmed these views in their responses below:

*I think that teaching in primary school is better done by women than men. So, at the primary level, my take is that it is better to have more women running the school because of patience most of the time and their capacity to deal with the young ones. Women relate very well with kids* (Participant 45).



This view was shared by another participant who also believed that schools, especially secondary schools, were better when managed by a man. He mentioned that:

*I think a school is under good leadership when a man is in control. This is the case, especially for secondary schools. This is because, for instance, like we have got these teenagers that are giving problems, and most of them are boys. And I really think that these boys need somebody of a father figure or a disciplinarian who could be a man who can, you know, threaten them or discipline them in a manner that can make them understand reality. You know, sometimes when a man speaks, it is different from how a woman speaks? Women, they would like to talk with love, and they want to feel the emotions, that they're trying to speak with emotions, but with us, we can go ahead with the tone and the tone, you will feel it. So, according to the cases that I have been exposed to, I think that the principal, as a man, is handling them correctly (Participant 44).*

The above quotations indicate that because SGBs are responsible for recommending the appointment of managers in South African schools and they believe that men make better leaders than women, women stand little chance of ascending to leadership positions. The views do not seem to support what the South Africa government itself about the empowerment of women. The government believes that it is making enough efforts to make sure that women are considered equals in workplaces whereas participants in this study believe the government needs to do more. The above quotations display that although women are not discriminated against outright as school leaders, they are viewed as incapable of performing specific tasks. Therefore, men should be prioritised instead. It was also established that although South Africa is a party to numerous global treaties and has also adopted its own frameworks on gender equality, it has not made commendable progress in advancing gender equality (Nkenkana, 2018; Oosthuizen, 2018; Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2018a). Statistics South Africa shows that in 2016, only 39,2 per cent of women in South Africa held seats in provincial parliaments, while in 2017, the figure somewhat moved to 42 per cent (Habib & Habib, 2020). Women in managerial positions were 31.1 per cent in 2014, 30.8 per cent in 2015, 32.1 per cent in 2016, and 32,1 per

cent in 2017. The realisation of gender equality, therefore, remains a fundamental challenge not only in schools but across all government institutions and structures. Further evidence of continued gender inequality in leadership positions is demonstrated in Table 2 below.

The table shows the number of teachers, Departmental Heads, Deputy Principals and Principals appointed by the GDE since 2019. In 2023, it also aims to appoint different races and gender in order to achieve the required representation as set out by the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

**Table 2: Occupation levels of teachers and managers**

Occupational Level	Race and gender	Baseline 12/2019	2020/21	2021/22	2023/23	Goal
Principals	Women	736	763	789	816	1001
Deputy Principals	African male	935	971	1007	1044	1297
	Indian Male	50	51	51	52	54
Departmental Heads	African male	2171	2371	2571	2771	4171
	Coloured male	100	102	104	106	120
	Indian male	69	80	90	101	175
	White male	493	512	531	549	681
Teachers	African male	9157	10395	11634	12872	21540
	Coloured male	332	361	389	418	618
	Indian Male	138	215	291	368	903
	White male	1507	1708	1909	2111	3519

Source: RSPIGASBE of 2020

According to Table 2, GDE has managed to hire an adequate number of women in senior positions in schools as principals. The table outlines the GDE's plan to achieve the 50 per cent women leadership goal by 2030 as per SDGs. The columns with the years represent

the number of required employees that need to be employed to reach the goal as presented in the last column. For example, by the end of 2019, the GDE aimed to ensure that there are 736 women principals from the identified shortage of 1001 that should be attained by 2030. This is a negative relationship between the two categories; more women teachers but fewer women principals. Thus, while the GDE is making efforts to recruit more women teachers when it comes to leadership, this commitment does not continue.

## **5.7 Personal and Psychological Challenges**

Personal and psychological challenges were also found to be important restrictions to the ascendancy of women to leadership. In the reviewed literature, it was found that some women did not pursue leadership positions due to the supposed stress associated with leadership. Women who want to avoid stress simply avoid leadership positions (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020). It was also found that women's experiences have indicated that gender role expectations affect personal and professional relationships and have consequences for career advancement and family responsibilities (Bandiera, 2019). This section discusses some of the significant personal factors raised by participants in the study.

### **5.7.1 Self-confidence and Self-esteem**

Self-confidence and self-esteem generally refer to how people feel about themselves, reflecting and affecting their ongoing transactions with their environment and the people they encounter (de Bruyn & Mestry, 2020). It is an important construct of psychology because it is a central component of one's daily experiences (Hillesland, 2019). Confidence is imperative in leadership because performance is based on it. Confidence drives performance, for where there is no confidence, there is no hope, faith, assertiveness, or the will to do anything. According to Fritzt and Knippenberg (2017:1018), confidence implies that "as a man [*or woman*] thinks, feels, and believes, so is the condition of his mind, body, and circumstances." As such, overall performance can therefore be utilised as a proper yardstick to measure women's self-belief and non-

reluctance to accept the opportunity for leadership positions, as an alternative to completely denying them on their gender basis. Society can be successful in demystifying these restrictive common traditional perceptions that are still used against women through confidence- driven performances. Thus, society can only be in a position to deflate biases, stereotypes and prejudices that regard women as much less confident to engage in leadership positions.

Commonly, overall performance resulted in society gratifying people who are able to achieve more respect than people who are unable to do so. On the contrary, society has disrespected those who only talk without performing because they are viewed as barking puppies that do not bite. The unfortunate issue for women in society is that they have been perceived to be like these dogs. Thus, they are perceived to be less confident and, as a result, get relegated to subordinate positions when a managerial position is vacant. In other words, self-belief or confidence is the ability of an individual to obtain desired goals. In simple terms, self-confidence implies that in a situation where the will exists, the way is definite. Women, as individuals who have been perceived to be less confident, happen to be the ones who are not treated positively regarding promotions to managerial positions.

As pointed out, confidence to perform, is not attributable to gender but is based on some skills that can be acquired through learning. Thus, confidence is derived from the skill and knowledge a person commands due to the education they have received. In this respect, performance can be used as a reasonable yardstick to gauge a person's confidence in dealing with a specific task. In other words, experience and learning play a major role in acquiring confidence as a disposition. As a learned disposition, confidence is based on testable abilities that are learned. Hence, the saying that practice makes perfect. In other words, both men and women have equal potential to acquire the necessary confidence needed to perform what is required by leadership positions.

Because confidence, like habit, is acquired, it means that women can acquire it should they be exposed to the relevant experiences. This notion is opposed to the dominant perception that views women as having less confidence while men are assumed to

possess any necessary competence until they demonstrate otherwise. Women are, on the contrary, needed to establish the fact of their competency before this can be recognised (McLoughlin & O'Brien, 2019). Assumptions of this nature, instead of ending innocently, have unfortunately developed into powerful voices that in certain societies have the ability to debar women from positions of leadership. By implication, assumptions become like silent voices that possess the power to dictate social relationships. In this respect, the following assumptions are perceived to form challenges against the advancement of women to leadership positions: women's work is easy work, women fear competition, women lack vision.

These assumptions, untested as they are, form the cornerstone upon which the perceptions that view women as less confident are based. To restore faith and confidence in women, Jacqui (2019) recommends that women should be exposed to more meaningful tasks and be placed in positions that demand accountability. Confidence, it should be understood, is not the thing believed in, but it is instead the belief in one's own mind, which has the power, if unhindered, to bring about the desired result. Putting confidence aside for a moment, it is interesting to note that on the contrary McLoughlin and O'Brien (2019) reveal that a Worker Information Global Network Survey recently found the six highest influences on the employees' commitment to their workplace to be: satisfaction with day-to-day activities; care and concern for employees; work and job resources; production of the organisation; fairness at work; and trust in employees. These six influences have nothing to do with one's gender orientation. It is therefore, supposed to be viewed as a warning to society that new ways of looking at employees have emerged to replace traditional stereotypes, biases and prejudices

Traditional perceptions about women should be discarded if society intends to utilise all its human resources maximally. No country can hope to compete favourably in the present world climate when it still has no regard for women. On this issue, Shava et al. (2019:36) warn us not to repeat the mistakes of the past by reminding us that traditionally, "women, it was generally argued, were being treated as chattels, bought and sold like other market commodities." This is the kind of treatment that can make a person lose their confidence and self-respect because it makes them feel like an unwanted member of

society. Thus, for society to be able to do away with the lack of confidence in women, such influences and beliefs should be eliminated.

It simply means that women must be assisted to think and see things differently than they do presently. For in helping them, the possibility is always there that they might be turned around and be able to perceive life differently. Society should accept the notion that learning is a life-long project; hence, it is never too late to learn; everyone should be viewed as having the potential to learn. This thesis points out that equal opportunities for both genders are one of the best solutions to the problem of promotion. The next barrier is that poor performance.

In this study, women participants mentioned that because of a myriad challenges they face in the workplace and even at home, self-confidence and self-esteem now emerged as one of the fundamental challenges that hampered women from competing for leadership positions within schools in the Gauteng Province. One participant mentioned that:

*Frustration has driven women colleagues to a point where they have lost all the confidence to veer for leadership position in schools. Instead of pushing hard for positions, women end up just waiting for appointment by the department. They work hard, but no one notices them. That is their predicament (Participant 14).*

Another participant mentioned that the tendencies and attitudes of colleagues in the GDE were largely responsible for destroying the self-confidence and self-esteem of women colleagues who aspired to compete for leadership positions within schools. This participant stated that

*Sometimes you wonder what is it they consider to promote you to a leadership position. You will have the same qualifications, experience, and energy just as your male counterparts. However, when positions arise, you will discover that they are not in your favour. You end up thinking that maybe something is not well with me. This destroys self-esteem (Participant 21).*

One women participant, an SGB member, explained that women needed to start having confidence in themselves as most of them doubted their capabilities. The participant stated that women needed to

*...look at what they want to achieve, and then work towards that with confidence and with no doubt. Because once you've made that decision, you should stick with it. But yeah, in the end, it comes to me it comes back, I think a lot of ladies are always doubting their own abilities are lacking in that department, and they should be no reason for that (Participant 47).*

In the reviewed literature, it is stated that to address the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, leadership development programmes need to be deployed (Jovanovica & Ciricb, 2016). The goals and objectives of formal leadership development programmes should include developing participants' competence as well as their confidence and self-perceived leadership potential (Karimli et al., 2019), breaking through obvious challenges (Klaa, 2020), and identifying, training, and mentoring potential women leaders and providing them with opportunities for networking and career goal- setting (Maseko, 2013; Nhlapo & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2016).

### **5.7.2 Poor Self-image**

The word 'self' has two distinct meanings, namely the self as an entity or object and the self as a process. The researcher concentrated on the relevant meaning to the study; 'self' as an object. This has to do with the attitudes of people about themselves, the way they look and act, their effect on others, traits and abilities, and weaknesses (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). The reviewed literature indicated that the type of education a person acquires determines, to a very large extent, whether the person's self-image will be positive or negative (Özler et al., 2020). However, some participants in this study believed that education, "*whether informal, non-formal or formal is a result of the fundamental cultural traditions, stereotypes, customs, prejudices, and biases of that particular society*" (Participant 27). Another participant mentioned that through education "*a person is made to attain his or her culture, while at the same time his or her self-image is also being determined, shaped, and developed*" (Participant 51). Participants believed that "*just like*

*education which is a life-long development, the practices of shaping and developing a person's sense of identity and self-image commences at birth and only stops after death"* (Participant 48).

Another participant stated that *"a good self-image by aspiring women leaders has the potential to engender a positive attitude that is very vital to living an independent, productive, and responsible life"* (Participant 50). As a result, the role of a good education is to equip the individual with the knowledge and skills that will empower them to be able to achieve a positive self-image. Of women acquiring good knowledge, it is believed they will be able to develop a self-image that will empower them to compete for leadership positions within schools.

Some participants believed that while education was supposed to liberate women, it has instead *"taught them to accept and practise what society expects of them at the expense of what they aspire"* (Participant 30). One participant, a principal also mentioned that *"instead of liberating, education can also condition the mind to observe issues in a particular way, a way that may even be oppressive and degrading to one's dignity"* (Participant 2). Some participants believed that women's poor self-image is the result of a lack of role models and peers in leadership positions as well as the unplanned nature of their careers

### **5.7.3 Family Responsibility**

Family responsibilities are also viewed as another barrier that frustrates the progression of women to leadership (Black et al., 2013; Bonne & Johnston, 2016). In most organisations, commitment at work is measured through availability and the length of hours at work. Mothers often find the issue of working long hours a challenge. In this view, they are rarely taken as serious competitors for leadership positions (Bayu, 2019). Moreno et al. (2022) have found that most women CEOs do not have children due to the fear of the potential effect children can place on their careers. A number of women have voluntarily left jobs to attend to family responsibilities (Hopkins & O'Neil, 2015). In South Africa, women made up the bulk of junior managers in the public service, yet, as the



ranking goes higher, there are fewer women when compared to men in high-level managerial positions (Pranathi & Lathabhavan, 2021).

Some participants mentioned that commitment to family responsibilities constrained women's participation in leadership positions. Some women participants confirmed that they found it very hard to balance work and their family lives. The challenge of balancing family lives as mothers, wives, and daughters was reported by many participants as the most critical challenge. One participant reported that:

*In my experience, I have never struck a balance. It has always been about trade-offs and prioritizing. If you cannot prioritise, then it becomes overwhelming. This is worse when you are in a leadership position and when you have more responsibilities (Participant 27).*

This was also supported by another women participant who was also a school principal:

*Balancing home life and work-life – at this stage, women are made to feel guilty about taking time off to do home duties. Most women, therefore, choose to put family first. As a result, they avoid positions that will complicate the running of their families (Participant 38).*

Another participant stated that:

*Balancing home and career aspirations – I remember I wanted to apply for a role in Gauteng however, because my kids were still at school and I am the homemaker, my husband has always been travelling and working long hours – I had to let go of the role and focus on family (Participant 41).*

Participants agreed that family commitments emerged as one of the key challenges to women seeking to ascend to leadership positions in schools in the Gauteng Department of Education.

## **5.8 Education and Training**

The issue of education and training as challenges to women's ascendance to leadership positions is presented in two subsections, qualifications and work experience.

### 5.8.1 Qualifications

The reviewed literature revealed that insufficient education and training are factors that women face and which continue to compromise their positions within workplaces, particularly when they seek to ascend to leadership positions (Al-Ashri, 2016; Buvinic et al., 2020). It is also reported that there remain low levels of literacy for women worldwide, especially in rural Africa (Bemba, 2018; Turkmen, 2018). This situation has affected the ability of women to access and compete for job opportunities across sectors (Buvinic et al., 2020).

Furthermore, women with high levels of literacy have greater chances of accessing economic resources and paid employment than those without or with low literacy levels (Choudhry et al., 2019). They also have high chances of promotion to leadership positions (Croke et al., 2017). However, the percentage of women with high levels of literacy was very small compared to those without education and training (Hillesland, 2019; Karimli et al., 2019).

In this study, only a few women participants had university degrees compared to men. Most men also possessed Master's degrees, while others were also working towards doctoral degrees. One male participant stated that

*We are living in a very competitive world. While issues of transformation are in the air, it is crucial that women also study to give themselves some leverage. Most of them in the department did not go beyond a teacher qualification. This negatively impacts on their chances to compete for leadership positions (Participant 49).*

The study also found that the few women who possessed Master's degrees were already in leadership positions primarily as school principals. All the women that participated as school principals or deputy principals possessed Master's' degrees. This was confirmed by one key informant who revealed that:

*The problem with women colleagues in the department is that they mostly do not further their qualifications. It is not their fault. They simply have got a lot to*

*attend to. We must remember we are Africans and we have got a culture to protect and to be protected by. It is our culture. As a result, most women invest in seeing and promoting the welfare of their children and families. They rather use the little they have to educate children than to educate themselves. This consequently puts them at a disadvantage (Participant 42).*

Participants acknowledged that increasing qualifications could translate into increased opportunities for women ascendency into leadership positions. Reviewed literature also indicated that for women to make a meaningful contribution to society, it is important that they be capacitated with education and training (Hillesland, 2019). One participant also mentioned that *“women colleagues also needed to be capacitated with knowledge about how to better train for specific careers which they desire to pursue”* (Participant 50). This then calls for the involvement of extension support to capacitate women with new skills to improve outcomes (Nkenkana, 2018).

Participants revealed that when managerial positions are advertised in the DBE, the department only requires an undergraduate qualification. When shortlisting takes place, due to the number of applications and the requirements for each school, the shortlisting criteria include qualifications whereby applicants are scored according to their level of study. The qualifications criteria, as recommended by the GDE, might take this format:

**Table 3: Managerial Qualification Score**

<b>QUALIFICATION</b>	<b>SCORE</b>
First Teachers Diploma/Degree	1
Diploma/Degree with Advanced Certificate in Education	2
Honours Degree/Postgraduate Diploma	3
Master’s Degree	4
PhD	5

Source: Author (2022)

Table 3 shows that if a women applicant holds a PhD, she will stand a better chance of being shortlisted than someone who only possesses an undergraduate qualification. Participants also stated that qualification was crucial for promotion. They also emphasised the need to acquire managerial qualifications in addition to teacher qualifications. One participant mentioned that:

*Yeah, I would like to think so, that management courses will help because they open up your mind. It is, if let's say maybe my manager was into macro-management. And when you go to such courses, they are going to show you different types of management styles that you can apply effectively (Participant 44).*

Another participant had the following views

*Actually, I think any person, regardless of gender, if they should be a leader, they should be a leader. If a position is open for a leader that they want for a group or a team, opportunities should be equal for suitably qualified people or people that fit that particular position. I personally don't believe that being a woman is a limitation when it comes to being a leader. I do not think so. Being a leader, I think it has to do with the character of the person, the mind of the person, not gender (Participant 30).*

Thus, both the reviewed literature and the empirical investigation conducted for this study show that in addition to acquiring the relevant teaching qualifications, women who aspired to leadership positions should also work towards obtaining leadership qualifications to increase their own competitiveness.

Another issue that emerged from both the reviewed literature and the empirical investigation is work experience. This is discussed next.

### **5.8.2 Work Experience**

Experience was measured by the number of years which participants had served as employees in the GDE. Work experience also refers to academic and career connections

link academic theory and the practical application of that theory in the workplace (Rummery, 2020). Work experience plays a very crucial role in women leadership. The Occupation Specific Dispensation (ELRC Collective Agreement 1 of 2008) posits that managers need to follow this protocol, although it has not yet been implemented.

Over half of the participants in this study had more than eight years as employees in the GDE. Some had served for as much as 30 years, while the majority had served for between 10 and 20 years. What was surprising, however, was that there were more women than men who had served longer and yet there were very few of them in leadership positions. Thus, in the context of the same work experience, the underrepresentation of women at the leadership level in GDE is highly disturbing. It can only be explained by Kele and Pietersen (2015), who posit that the way women are viewed in relation to leadership in South Africa reproduces the notion that they are not effectual as leaders. The assumption, therefore, that women lack the fitting levels of educational training and work experience to enable them to be promoted to leadership levels (Gipson et al., 2017) is thus, not correct.

Support is also one of the important factors raised by participants, discussed below.

## **5.9 Support Structures**

Support is all about giving a person encouragement (Hillesland, 2019). Support is one of the most important aspects raised by participants as crucial for enabling women's ascendancy to leadership positions. This support could be political, communal, organisational or managerial or supervisory support. The reviewed literature was found that support structures mattered much in the promotion, not only of women but also of men (Hillesland). Institutional or organisational cultures that do not deliberately support women can also hinder their rise to leadership positions. In most organisations, including in the GDE, leadership structures were male-dominated, thereby leaving minimal chances for women to penetrate leadership positions. Kulik and Metz (2015) found that organisational structures can obstruct women's entry to and advancement in the workplace. According to Mahope (2014), resistances of women leaders by organisations

and some institutional discriminations, such as restricted admittance to networks, limited women mentoring and inadequate training opportunities, all contribute to women's low career progress. The challenges presented by lack of political, organisational, communal, and managerial support with regard to the ascendancy of women to leadership remain challenging, as expanded in the following sub-sections.

### **5.9.1 Political Support**

Potential political support for women leadership within the GDE could be emerging from the government itself, which is the primary protector of all citizens. Therefore, political support is when the government provides various forms of assistance to a specific group(s) of people, one person or an organisation, to enable them to achieve particular goals. Political support also has the potential to lead to gender equality. In actual fact, liberal feminism (see Chapter Two) emerged from recognising the need for political support for women. It emerges from the political philosophy of liberation, which begins with the belief that all people have the right to freedom, independence, and individualism (Dalimonte-Merckling, 2020; Tong, 2018). Participants in this study believed that *“instead of rhetoric on women empowerment and equality of genders or gender equality, political institutions and other establishments need to speed up implementation. Women need to be recognised as equals practically and not rhetorically”* (Participant 34). Participants agreed that political support, although imperative, was *“largely absent to empower women to assume leadership positions within the GDE”* (Participant 51).

Liberal feminism also espouses that in order to change women's status and opportunities within the existing political and economic structures, political support is imperative. This view was shared widely by participants who argued that *“society and how it functions does not necessarily need to be changed for women empowerment to be realised. Only political support is needed”* (Participant 42). Another participant also mentioned that *“lack of political will at the political level is the main problem. This department simply needs political will for women to be supported to ascend to positions of leadership”* (Participant 33). Another participant stated that *“the Department of Education in this country and in this province practices the political economy of affection. Favoured men and women are*

*promoted*" (Participant 29). The views of these participants are supported by Alqahtani (2020), who argues that equality between men and women can only be achieved through political and legal reforms. Alqahtani (2020) contends that the subordination of women to men is rooted in customary constraints that have been legalised and formalised. These constraints intended to create a barrier for women's entrance to success against men.

Participants agreed that efforts towards empowerment and promotion of the ascendancy of women to leadership positions were only taking place at the top, mostly in political structures. One participant mentioned that

*For example, you see, we have a women minister in education. The assumption is that because we have got her in the department, then all the women in the department stand a chance. The reality is that the women who are doing the dirty work in schools remain disempowered. They continue unsupported. They are invisible in leadership structures* (Participant 10).

Participants also considered customary practices as hampering the access to political support for women. It was mentioned by participants that even where women attended interviews for leadership positions, lingering customary practices within the Department of Education still blocked them from being offered leadership positions. This view is also shared by McLoughlin and O'Brien (2019), who posit that customary practices mainly hinder the political participation of women. Participants averred that "*it remains vital that women find representation at all levels as part of an effort to mainstream gender issues into political and economic processes*" (Participant 19).

The reviewed literature also stated that political arrangements are needed to support women's empowerment and the elimination of gender inequality to upsurge their chances of being promoted to positions of leadership within workplaces (Ranjan, 2019; Tong, 2018). The participation of women at the political level could afford them a greater opportunity to sway policy so that there are policies that are sensitive to gender (Powell et al., 2018). Participants believed that "*when women have political power, they are able to make suggestions in terms of decisions, and thus, influence how leadership positions are distributed within the department*" (Participant 17). When women are able to have

some influence at a political level, it would also spill over into workplaces and thus, increase their chances to ascend to leadership positions (Amirault, 2019).

Household and communal support also had a crucial influence in empowering women to compete for leadership positions within schools.

### **5.9.2 Family and Community Support**

The family and the community were recognised both in literature and the empirical investigation as one of the most important institutions where socialisation, which motivates individuals to compete for leadership roles, occurs. It is in the home and community where people are socialised to perform gender roles before it spills over to how men and women participate in politics, the economy, and workplaces (McLoughlin & O'Brien, 2019). It is within the household system and community where children are taught to associate certain roles with gender based on how parents or guardians present these issues to children (Nehere, 2016). Participants in this study also considered the family and the community *“as the primary institution which conditions how people aspire for certain roles, including leadership”* (Participant 50).

Male dominance is a behaviour that children learn as they connect gender and the power relations that are related to it (Ngoma & Mayimbo, 2017). One participant stated that *“the worth that is placed in boy children in the family and community contexts empowers them to realise that they are meant to lead, dominate, and to achieve more than the girl. This also continues to workplaces, including in our schools today”* (Participant 49). This view is shared by Alqahtani (2020), who posits that in some families and communities, boys are socialised to know that they should be able to make decisions, protect others, as well as to be independent and assertive. As a result, *“it is easy to notice some male educators who try to dominate even on their first day at school. They were trained to do that by families and by communities”* (Participant 34).

In contrast, “girls are taught to be submissive, please men, particularly the future husband, become mothers, be soft, sensitive, and be dependent housewives (Nehere, 2016). It is this socialisation that promotes self-sufficiency for boys and dependence for



girls (McLoughlin & O'Brien, 2019). Family and community show support by encouraging, cheerleading, nurturing, accepting, and showing affection to a child (Hutchinson, 2020).

In view of the above discussion, it is clear that it is the socialisation of women to become dependent on men which is the main cause of their subjugation by men even in workplaces. Where women have already been 'captured' like this, it is difficult for most of them to desire to seek ascendancy to a position of leadership and influence.

Colleagues were also viewed as an important source of support for women seeking to ascend to leadership positions within schools.

### **5.9.3 Supervisory and Managerial Support**

A supervisor or manager is responsible for setting an example to their subordinates. A supervisor should be able to help others develop skills and ensure that they are motivated. A supervisor or manager provides feedback on a particular task done, lets the subordinates know that they are doing well and shows them where and how they can improve (Beenen et al., 2021). A supervisor or manager shows support by encouraging subordinates to achieve their goals and showing them that anything can be achieved.

Most participants complained that many school managers provided them with no support to ascend to leadership positions., For their part, school principals also complained that they received no adequate support from their supervisors from the GDE. One participant complained that:

*Our principals, particularly the women ones who should be at the forefront of helping us, are not very useful when it comes to offering support. I wanted a recommendation for a certain position, but you should have seen how I struggled. I ended up not being shortlisted because one of the requirements was to submit a recommendation. I was angry that I even left that school. That is how I came here (Participant 22).*

Another participant said their managers were not supportive, particularly when “*they see that one is about to be promoted. They suppress you*” (Participant 14). Principals also

complained that they were not getting support from their superiors. Some key informants explained that this was mainly caused by the fact that officials who are supposed to assist principals were called Institutional Development and Support Officers (IDSOs). The title later changed to Cluster Managers. These are currently supervised by the Circuit Managers. The IDSO/Cluster Manager position is only found in the Gauteng Province. Historically, IDSOs reported directly to Deputy Directors responsible for IDS. The GDE does not administer its business in Circuit Offices but directly in the District Office. The Circuit Managers in the Gauteng Province also work from the District Offices. In other provinces, like Limpopo, principals report directly to the Circuit Managers. The requirements for IDSO/Cluster Leader position are, according to vacancy lists like GDE Vacancy Circular 08 of 2021 (Office Based):

*...a recognized three or four-year qualification, which includes professional teacher education plus eight years of experience in the educational field with credible, relevant management experience. Must be registered with SACE. Proven management and leadership skills. Hands-on experience and knowledge in teacher development and curriculum development policy and practice. Sound knowledge of National Qualification Framework, NCS, RNCS, CAPS and any other related legislative frameworks. An understanding of transformation issues and capacity building processes in education. Ability to coordinate projects and processes involving a variety of players. Ability to work independently as well as in a team. Good communication skills (written & verbal). Computer literate. Valid driver's license (Participants 49).*

The requirements stated above do not mention anything related to experience as a principal. It is also not stated if the management experience which is required is school or office-based. This implies that a Human Resource manager at the District level in the Gauteng Province can be employed as a Cluster Leader. Although this does not necessarily mean that Cluster Leaders who were never principals cannot support principals, it is evident that supporting someone in a position that one has experience in is easier than someone who does not. Due to this lack of assistance from some Cluster Leaders, some principals bypass their supervisors and seek assistance from Circuit

Managers. This, unfortunately places set protocols into disrepute and creates more work for Circuit Managers. One participant complained that:

*I have got the laziest IDSO. And you know what? That made me a better person because I know what her role is supposed to be and yet I am getting no value from her. But I love her empathy because she knows that when it comes to development, DOLOLO (South African slang word that means 'nothing', created by youth on social media, popularised by a local musician Rouge in her song 'Dololo'). She always gives you permission to do anything that you want to do. She does not put pressure on you because she does not have a clue about what is taking place. So, when you go to her to submit something, just be sure that your matters are in order with the help of other people. And when you have a challenge, you should be having a solution and just seek her permission to implement the solution (Participant 2).*

The lack of support for principals by Cluster Leaders in the Gauteng Province “*obviously causes more problems for women principals as they face more challenges than their male counterparts*” (Participant 18). Thus, supervisory or managerial support was one of the issues reported as important to enable women not only to ascend to leadership positions but also to perform better and increase their chances for future promotions.

Another recurring theme, both in the reviewed literature and the empirical data, was the issue of leadership.

### **5.10 Leadership**

As demonstrated in Chapter 3, scholars consider leadership a complex phenomenon touching on various complex organisational, personal, and social processes (McLoughlin & O'Brien, 2019). Qualities of leadership are personal traits that the leader possesses to manage the organisation effectively. They can include leading styles that a leader uses, their personalities, and their characteristics that enable them to lead successfully (Robbins, 2019). Several characteristics are listed in the literature about qualities of a great leader: someone who earns respect and respects others, with charisma,

encourages and motivates people, a mentor, a role model, and so many more (Neher, 2016). One participant described a good leader as *“a person who is able to listen, give subordinates the chance to voice their concerns. A person who is able to lead by example”* (Participant 42). According to one women participant who was also a deputy principal, a great leader with leadership qualities is

*...somebody that cannot only show respect, but also earns respect from the people that are working under them. A leader needs to lead from the top and serve from the bottom. I think that is a good sign of great leadership. As a leader, one needs to encourage people, and motivate them to want to do the work. If you do not, they also do not respect you as a leader. So, for me, the most important thing is that a leader needs to be someone that other people can look up to. And that can be a role model and a mentor to the people that work under him or her* (Participant 20).

According to Habib and Habib (2020), the principal’s leadership within the school is the driving force behind the efficiency and development of that specific school. Reviewed literature avers that to produce good results, schools need to be led by leaders with quality standards which are effective, accountable, dedicated, and responsible (Lumadi, 2017). The majority of the participants, both educators and principals, described a great leader as someone who motivates, listens, is empathetic, emotionally intelligent, accommodative, involves subordinates, leads from all sides, fair, hard-working, and most importantly, competent. One participant described a leader in the following words:

*If I am a teacher leading a group of other teachers, I have to be competent. I think it becomes very difficult with people that know that you are incompetent. That is at least one of the properties that a good leader should have. And also, as people, we generally react in different ways to confrontation. But the fact that you are a leader means that you are in a position whereby you have access to different opinions from different people. But some will bring their emotions into it. Some will speak some real sense. So, I believe the second thing is to be able to deal with different characteristics of people and be able*

*to at least get the sense of what the person is saying irrespective of the emotions that they are bringing around with it. So, I think you must be a person who is able to read emotions and be able to read people (Participant 39).*

The message in this quotation is confirmed in the reviewed literature, which shows there are different types of leaders and leadership. Every manager has their own style of leadership. Styles of leadership, as listed by Alqahtani (2020), include Autocratic, Democratic, Laissez-faire, Situational or Bureaucratic, and Transactional. Several scholars posit that managers are effective when they combine or are able to switch between and among several leadership styles, depending on the situation and circumstance (Habib & Habib, 2020; Nannerl, 2020). One participant stated that “*I would say I do not have a specific leadership style. The leadership style which I use depends on the situation*” (Participant 8). When the participant was asked to elaborate, the participant added that

*Yes, I am saying this because, for instance, if I am talking about management issues where the teachers have to submit something, for instance, at the end of the term when where they have to assess learners and submit the marks, in that case, I cannot be democratic. I have to put my foot down, yes. It must be done. But on issues where we have to decide, for instance, now in September, whereby we have to blend for Heritage Day, in this case, I have to be democratic. I cannot force everyone to come to the school in their cultural attire because some do not have it, and some feel like no, I cannot support this idea therefore take me out on this. On that one, I can be democratic. If they want to be part of it, they can be part of it, but if they do not want to be part of it, it is fine. Hence, I am saying when it has to be teaching and learning, submitting for curricula, in that I can be not really autocratic, but I have to defend (Participant 8).*

Participants understood women leadership as a woman assuming a leadership role in society, formally or informally. According to Nannerl (2020), in some cultures, some wise women are regularly consulted by individuals of the society or council members of a tribe

for advice, and these can be considered women leaders. According to one participant, women leadership is a situation whereby *“a leader is a woman. And then my belief on it is that the women leaders inspire. They are team players. They empathise with teamwork; they coach their team. They are supportive* (Participant 35). All in all, participants believed that certain types of leadership could enable women to ascend to leadership positions and perform better in leadership positions.

The issue of governance also emerged as one of the factors that directly affect women’s prospect of ascending to a leadership position with the GDE.

## **5.11 Governance**

The concept of governance denotes how the operations of particular organisations or institutions are being controlled, accounted for, and supervised (Habib, 2013). According to Hermann et al. (2021), governance is when rules and regulations are set for people to abide by to ensure a smooth operation. Governance involves giving someone some authority to oversee processes and operations in a transparent, responsible, and accountable manner. Participants identified three governance sources within the GDE. These are discussed in the following sub-sections.

### **5.11.1 Political Governance**

Political governance was used in this study to examine how political systems affected the ascendance of women to leadership positions within the GDE. The aim was to explore how national and local political structures created conditions that supported or hampered the promotion of women. At the national level, the study found that South Africa has one of the best Constitutions in the world in terms of promoting gender equality and women empowerment. As detailed in Chapter 3, women's empowerment is dealt with in several sections in the Constitution. These include Section 9 - Freedom from unfair discrimination based on gender and the right to equality; Section 15 - Freedom of religion, belief and opinion which recognises customary and religious practices stressing that they should be compliant with the Constitution; Section 25 - The right to property; Section 26 - The right to adequate housing; Section 29 - The right to basic education, this includes basic adult

education, and Section 34 - The right to access to courts. The Constitution provides the basis on which women's rights to equality may be achieved.

South Africa also introduced several legislations, including the EEA No. 55 of 1998, which is meant to ensure equality and fairness in the treatment of employees within workplaces (Bangani & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020). The EEA No. 55 of 1998 illegalised unfair discrimination and required transparent and justice systems of management for all employees regardless of gender (Nhlapo, 2019). Other legislative efforts discussed in detail in Chapter 3 include the EEA No. 55 of 1998, which is backed up by the SDA No. 97 of 1998, the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act No. 4 of 2000 (PEPUD Act), the National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, the Commission for Gender Equality, and the South African Human Rights Commission, among others. Thus, although participants complained that "*there is more talk but lack of implementation to enable women empowerment*" (Participant 40), many efforts are being made to support women at national level.

Participants, however, firmly believed that the political system was somewhat more rhetorical than practical. Although much was being said about the need for women's empowerment, women remained disempowered on the ground. One participant mentioned that:

*There is a clear lack of political will to turn tables around. Patriarchal tendencies remain deep-seated in the department, just like in any other department. We are still far. This explains why women remain few in leadership*" (Participant 49).

Participants also mentioned that the lack of political will in the department was visible in the number of women being promoted to leadership. One participant stated that:

*Besides the minister at the very top, who else is influential? Some of the women with positions are only there as placeholders. You will never hear them say anything. Men continue to dominate. The same is seen in our schools.*

*There is no one to challenge the subordination of women. There is basically no one to speak for them (Participant 52).*

The lack of political will to enforce transformation through promoting women to leadership positions within schools was thus seen as one of the reasons women fail to ascend to leadership positions. Thus, for gender equality to be realised within the GDE, it is crucial that a strong political will be motivated. There is a need to move from ideological standpoints to implementation. The Department of Labour (2018:36) also acknowledged that “although there is an increase of women participation in the country’s economy, they remain over-represented in low-income employment as the majority have jobs as unskilled elementary workers.” It was also noted that governments also struggled to achieve gender proportions within workplaces and that most of them hovered between 45 per cent and 49 per cent since 2015 and seemed not to make efforts to reach the 50 per cent target (see Chapter 3). It was revealed that some departments were still below 30 per cent in terms of their women representation (DPSA, 2017). The dominance of men in leadership positions also increased with salaries so much that the difference between men and women in terms of salaries between salary levels 13 and 16 was 15.98 per cent (DPSA, 2018).

As discussed next, the other type of governance that emerged from the empirical investigation was the School Governing Body.

### **5.11.2 School Governing Body Governance**

According to the spokesperson of the Gauteng Department of Basic Education, Steve Mabona, SGBs play a vital role in ensuring that schools function correctly. SGBs take care of the schools’ financial administration and maintenance and make staff appointments (Koza, 2018). School Governing Body members are required to ensure that they prioritise the interests of the schools before any personal interests. They are also required to assist the school staff in undertaking their professional duties. In addition, they are required to encourage parents and the community to volunteer at the school to help it to improve. They also assist in making policies, curriculums, and budgets for schools (DBE, 2021).



Participants in this study felt that the SGBs in South Africa did not do much to support women leaders in the schools. One participant mentioned that the SGBs “*were doing absolutely nothing to support women leaders*” (Participant 31). It was also found that the SGBs themselves believed that male leaders usually perform better than women leaders. Therefore, they mainly support the appointment of men in school leadership positions. One SGB participant mentioned that:

*Running a school is not an easy job. It needs someone who is zealous, able to make sound and independent decisions. A person who always requires support is not fit for such a role. You will find that you will always be required, as SGBs, to come to school and resolve issues. To avoid this, we support the appointment of persons with potential. Men are good as their presence also instils fear in learners. This helps these learners to behave* (Participant 44).

This view by an SGB member is confirmed by other participants who revealed that SGBs mostly supported the appointment of male leaders. One participant stated that:

*Even women SGBs members themselves. They support the appointment of male principals more than women. This shows how difficult it is for women to ascend to leadership. One has to gain support from these SGBs otherwise, they will not approve you for the appointment. However, because they think men always do a good job, they mostly support the appointment of men* (Participant 50).

Given the above quotations, SGBs, therefore, also pose as one of the obstacles women face when seeking ascendance to leadership positions within the schools in the case study. They do this by failing to support the appointment of a woman with the belief that women are “*soft and lenient for the job*” (Participant 51).

Other participants, however, believed that SGBs were doing their best to support the appointment of women in school leadership. One participant thought it was unfortunate that SGBs were being blamed for the limited number of women in leadership positions within the GDE. This participant stated that:

*It is unfortunate though the SGBs are also to carry the blame. In my experience, the SGBs are doing their best. I was able to be appointed myself as a result of their effort. The competition and the discrimination were tough when I applied for this position. Chances were high that I was not going to be appointed based on my gender. The SGBs stood firm and recommended that I be appointed since I had the potential (Participant 4).*

Another SGB participant revealed that the SGB board supported anyone who qualified for an appointment without any prejudice and that blaming members for an unfair recommendation of prospective leaders was not only unfortunate but also irresponsible as it would undermine the value of the board.

Labour unions were also mentioned as having an important role in promoting women into leadership positions within the GDE, as discussed below.

### **5.11.3 Labour Union Governance**

Unionism is when a set of policies are made to protect and represent employees by trade unions (Balboni et al., 2020). Unionism is used as communication between an employer and an employee. Unionism is formed by a group of people in a similar career path or group and relies on the unions to be their protectors against exploitation and unfair treatment (Mishel, 2003). In the reviewed literature, trade or labour unions play an important role for workers and employers (Dercon & Gollin, 2014; Fritzt & Knippenberg, 2017). The duty of unions is to ensure that workers are well represented and well-treated at their workplaces. Trade unions usually do this by helping reduce wage inequalities, lobbying for wage increases, better health benefits and pensions, and ensuring that employees are fairly treated (Mishel, 2003). This has been observed to motivate workers to be more productive, knowing that they have support and are treated fairly and well (Carli & Eagly, 2016).

One participant mentioned that labour unions are critical in that their presence has changed the working landscape over the years to accommodate the participation of women in leadership. This participant stated that:

*The history of this country has been marred by discrimination within workplaces. Women were only employed as cleaners and secretaries. Where women were employees as teachers in schools, for example, you would find that they would be confined to lower grades. These are grades where learners are very young, and men do not want to be bothered by these young learners. So, women teachers would be placed there. Up the grades and up the ranks were men taking charge. Labour unions have been doing their best to change this situation. Today, although still inadequate, we begin to see women being appointed to leadership positions (Participant 5).*

However, the majority of the participants believed that labour unions did not do enough to ensure the equal representation of women in leadership positions in the GDE. One participant mentioned that *“the fact that we continue to see men dominating regardless of the presence of equally qualified and experienced women shows that even unions are not doing their best”* (Participant 32). This was supported by another participant who felt that labour unions needed to be doing more to improve the situation of women teachers in schools. This participant mentioned that:

*We appreciate what they are doing. They have been running up and about on these issues of equality, not only for women, but also for men. They have mobilised for the promotion of women as part of the continued effort to promote equality. However, more can still be done. The problem begins when these unions themselves are run and dominated by men. There are no women to emphasise the plight of women. Women have certain challenges which men do not consider as challenges (Participant 27).*

Some participants thought that, unlike SGBs, labour unions were more powerful even could hold political systems to task and, therefore, had the potential to transform the world of work. One participant stated that:

*Unions wield much power, and, in many cases, we have seen them making the political system budge and attend to their own needs. They must use that same vigour to mobilise for the empowerment of women through promotion to*

*managerial levels in schools. The fact that they are not doing it shows that they are comfortable with the status quo (Participant 45).*

In view of the above, it can be concluded that participants held mixed views about the role of labour unions and how they can contribute to ensuring that the number of women in leadership is increased. While the collected data do not give a hint to explain the possible causes of these mixed views, the researcher uses generalisation to explain them (see Chapter 6).

The other aspect that was found to be problematic and hampered the smooth ascendency of women to leadership within the GDE was the recruitment process, as discussed next.

## **5.12 Recruitment**

As detailed in the reviewed literature, recruitment is the process whereby companies, organisations or institutions look for employees to fill a particular job position (Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Balboni et al., 2020). It includes the different processes of hiring an employee, which start from the creation of a post, advertising it, shortlisting, interviewing, and hiring of a candidate (Balboni et al., 2020). Recruitment policies show how an employer or a company hires an employee (Kim & Beehr, 2020). It shows or identifies the positions that are available. As explained in the previous chapters, a number of legislative policies have been adopted in South Africa to support the appointment of women in leadership positions. Circular 9 of 2020 of the Gauteng Department of Education and the EEA encourage the panel to recommend or employ women in positions where male managers are the majority. For example, Circular 9 strives to appoint more women principals to reach the goal of 1001 by 2030. However, SASA has provided more authority to the SGB to make recommendations and decisions on the recruitment of managers at the school level. According to Collective Agreement 2 of 2015, when evaluating recommendations for promoting or placing a candidate, a majority vote should come from the parent component. From the staff component side, other than the principal, the Collective Agreement does not specify the position of the staff component that should be part of the panel to recommend a manager. This implies that a general assistant (like

a cleaner, for instance) technically could also have the authority to recommend the appointment of a principal. One participant complained that:

*Lack of clarity of recruitment processes enables men to manipulate the placement of candidates. The result has been the appointment of more and more men while women continue to be side-lined. In order to enable women to compete successfully for these positions, the recruitment processes need to be fixed. Currently, the process is a mess. It is not fit for purposes and therefore, should be thrown out (Participant 3).*

According to another participant, during recruitment the board does not even consider that besides being professionals, women are also mothers and wives. This participant stated that

*Interviews are held without even trying to understand the plight of women. Surely, if an interview is held too early in the morning, how can a mother manage that? She has to run around, drop children at school, get ready, and so forth. By the time the interview starts, she is not ready. So, you can see that the entire process is designed to fail women (Participant 16).*

Other participants also revealed that in schools, women faced recruitment challenges due to lack of confidence during interviews, lack of additional qualifications, low rate of applications due to the bad reputation of the school, panel's inability to identify a suitable candidate irrespective of their gender, the panel's inability to interpret recruitment requirements, the panel's bias and prejudice, recruitment process's duration, and women's inability to adopt new technologies required for managerial positions.

Another challenge for the appointment of women leaders within the GDE has been the increasing occurrences of unethical practices, discussed below.

### 5.13 Unethical Practices

Unethical practices are when proper morals are not upheld (Maseko, 2017). Morals include many different practices or behaviours which may have negative consequences (see Chapter 3). These practices include corruption, nepotism, and favouritism. Corruption is when a person in power uses their position to perform fraudulent acts for their personal gain and interests (Bangani & VyasDoorgapersad, 2020). Corruption can occur anywhere, whether it is in a company or government, and it may ruin the reputation of that particular institution (Bogler et al., 2013). Corruption is usually done in the shadows and is rarely revealed. Participants confirmed that “*corruption is too much in the department to an extent that people bribe to get positions*” (Participant 8). It was reported that corruption affected women leaders negatively “*during recruitment stages and during the time when they are in leadership power*” (Participant 20). One participant mentioned that both men and women were corrupt. The participant revealed that:

*While women did not pay for positions in cash, they paid in kind. Most of the women leaders within schools ‘slept’ their way up. Sometimes you wonder as to what criteria were used in their placement. But when you dig deeper you will find that...they slept. On the other hand, men mostly pay in cash* (Participant 39).

Another participant mentioned that:

*Men have inborn confidence. They use it against all odds. They can bribe the entire system that does the recruitment, or they can target an influential individual in the recruitment process. They can bribe in cash or they can offer arrangements which will make the recruiters benefit* (Participant 14).

Participants reported that people were often being “*unfairly recommended for managerial positions in schools by people in the panel and even the union members which act as observers during shortlisting and interviews*” (Participant 29). It was also reported that there had been reports of SGBs and unions selling posts throughout the country. Thabo Makwaka of *Daily News* wrote an article about SADTU being accused of fixing

promotional posts in Kwa-Dukuza, Durban. The same was reported by participants to be happening in the Gauteng Province.

A Ministerial Task Team, according to the report “REPORT OF THE MINISTERIAL TASK TEAM APPOINTED BY MINISTER ANGIE MOTSHEKGA TO INVESTIGATE ALLEGATIONS INTO THE SELLING OF POSTS OF EDUCATORS BY MEMBERS OF TEACHERS UNIONS AND DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIALS IN PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS” dated 18 May 2016, was appointed by Minister Angie Motshekga to investigate allegations of the selling of posts of educators by members of Teachers’ Unions and Departmental Officials in Provincial Education Departments. In the report, allegations of posts being sold at the cost of R6 500.00 were being investigated. Unfortunately, recommendations in the report included the withdrawal of powers from the SGB during the recruitment of school managers from Departmental Heads. These recommendations clearly indicate that allegations of corruption in recruitment are rampant: *“If a woman becomes a manager, women will say ‘no, she slept with someone to get that position’. ‘They slept their way up. They don’t say these women have qualifications. And they even say, ‘this woman is a home breaker’”* (Participant 40).

Another aspect of corruption was when women leaders on their own become involved in corrupt activities. In schools, these activities included procurement and recruitment of new staff. The GDE Annual Report for 2020/2021 outlines the number of men and women charged with misconduct and attended disciplinary hearings. Some of the hearings resulted in dismissals, while some employees decided to resign. Although the document shows the majority of acts of misconduct were perpetrated by men, it is unfortunate that several women were also involved. One such tendency reported by participants was when procurement occurs, especially that of Learner Teacher and Support Material (LTSM). It was reported that some school managers often colluded with suppliers who paid them cash when the transaction was successful. It was reported that *“women leaders who are already in the mess have created the non-ending challenge due to blackmail”* (Participant 17). It was also revealed that this kind of *“corruption mostly happens when other stakeholders in power get involved in corruption at the school where the woman*

*leader is in charge, a principal, for instance. In most cases, the SGBs are the main culprits in this situation” (Participant 43).*

Tribalism, nepotism and favouritism were also mentioned as some of the unethical tendencies that hampered women from ascending to leadership positions within schools. According to Kim and Beehr (2020), tribalism is a strong in-group loyalty, involving being organised in one tribe and sharing loyalty amongst one another. Nepotism is when offers are made based on kinship links, while favouritism denotes how these offers are distributed based on favour. Participants revealed that teaching positions were being offered to relatives. One participant mentioned that in *“some schools, you will find that all the teachers are related to the principal. All the HODs have something to do with the principal. If you are not related, then even if you try your best to ascend to leadership, you must know you have a huge challenge”* (Participant 17). This view was supported by another participant who revealed that *“positions were being offered based on connections. When you do not have a connection, you do not get it. The same with leadership positions. You do not just climb up. Connections are needed”* (Participant 25).

Overall, participants revealed that unethical practices were some of the factors that limited the prospects of women ascending to leadership positions within the GDE.

## **5.14 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the results of the study gathered through secondary sources and empirical investigation. The chapter shows that women are underrepresented in South African schools, including in the metropolitan province of Gauteng. Several challenges were identified both in the literature and through empirical investigation as to why women remain underrepresented. These challenges ranged from various forms of discrimination emerging from the country’s colonial and apartheid past; cultural and patriarchal aspects within the South African community; institutional factors, such as the glass ceiling, coaching, mentorship, and networking problems within the GDE; personal and psychological factors by the women themselves; inadequate support structure enabling women to ascend to leadership positions; and unfair recruitment practices as well as unethical behaviours, such as corruption, nepotism, and favouritism within the GDE. In



order to grapple with these factors to increase women's visibility within the leadership of schools, political will is needed to transform that entire structure that inhibits women's progress.

In this view, the next chapter discusses these findings with a particular focus on the third research objective of the study: To propose transformational leadership as a potential tool in dealing with the challenges faced by women in South African schools.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **TOWARDS OVERCOMING WOMEN LEADERS' CHALLENGES THROUGH TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter offers a detailed discussion of the data to demonstrate and propose how the challenges which women leaders within the Gauteng Province schools can be dealt with through the deployment of transformational leadership. The chapter discusses demographics, participants' details and their significance to the issues under investigation. This approach is motivated by the fact that demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, and level of education, among others, have a considerable bearing on how people understand, aspire to, and deal with their leadership challenges. After discussing the demographics and their implications, the chapter presents the data thematically as detailed in the previous chapter. It discusses the historical sources of the challenges faced by women and by women leaders. This is followed by a discussion on the proposed methods by which such historical challenges can be resolved. The chapter then discusses personal challenges in inhibiting successful women's leadership, education and training, and the issue of support structures and their role in successful leadership. It also discusses the resistance by men as well as the lack of strong governance systems as some of the challenges that women leaders face in the GDE. After that, the chapter discusses the challenges that come with the recruitment process as well as the unethical behaviours that could accompany the process, thereby emerging as one of the challenges. Before providing an overall conclusion, the chapter also proposes a framework for resolving the challenges which women leaders face in the context of the GDE.

#### **6.2 Demographic Incongruities**

One aspect that emerged effortlessly in the data is that out of the six schools chosen as case studies, four had men as principals, while only two had women principals. With regard to deputy principals, three schools had women deputies while another three had

male deputies. This numeric evidence shows that there is male domination in the leadership of the participant schools. It also emerged from the data that most women teachers in these schools also possessed academic qualifications and work experience similar to that of their male counterparts. Over half of all the participant teachers had more than 10 years as employees of the GDE, whereas only a seven-year work experience is considered for principal and five years only for deputy principal leadership roles. One wonders, therefore, how these women teachers fail to rise to leadership positions considering their qualifications and work experience. This evidence supports the allegations that women are avoided in leadership roles due to the perceived leniency in an environment where toughness may be needed (Robbins, 2019).

The above allegations are not empirically-backed, instead are steeped in religious and cultural beliefs that consider women weak and fragile and, therefore, should not be trusted to assume the leadership of institutions where toughness is required (Khurshid, 2016). While also pervasive in African cultures, these beliefs were largely a product of Africa's colonial encounter with Europe (Ndhlovu, 2021). South Africa is one of the last countries to gain independence from colonial rule. These beliefs are still lingering within various communities and institutions. This is one explanation why women avoid leadership positions.

The religious beliefs introduced by colonialism teamed up with African patriarchy to worsen the condition of women in Africa, including in workplaces (Alaqahtani, 2020). This has propped male dominance even years after independence because men are already socialised to be strong and control women (Nkenkana, 2018). Colonial religions socialised men to reaffirm patriarchal practices (Khurshid, 2016). With men holding the leadership of most institutions and places of work, these practices have been sustained much to the disadvantage of women, even those qualifying for certain leadership positions. In South Africa, this is concerning because the first government after independence in 1994 was elected and built on the ticket of democratic rule and promised equality for all, including women.

South Africa adopted a number of legislative frameworks to promote equality for all citizens regardless of gender. One such framework under gross violation by the GDE is the EEA No. 55 of 1998. This legislation was adopted to ensure a representative workplace within organisations and also equality and fairness, both in the treatment of employees and equal promotion opportunities within workplaces (Bangani & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020). The EEA No. 55 of 1998 illegalised unfair discrimination and required transparent and justice systems of management for all employees regardless of gender (Nhlapo, 2019). The EEA No. 55 of 1998 was also meant to help organisations eliminate unfair discrimination in the workplace and work toward the equitable representation of employees from designated groups through Affirmative Action measures (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2017). The GDE is therefore found lacking concerning the promotion of women to leadership positions even though these women have the same academic qualifications and work experience as men. This not only frustrates the professional growth of these women, but it affects their potential to earn more since work promotion comes with a salary increment. This results in the further exploitation of women. This includes that men, who already dominate leadership positions, reserve higher-paying vacancies for one another based on their own perceived superiority over their women counterparts. Men believe they should earn more because the responsibility of household upkeep falls on them. The Marxist perspective of feminism rightly posits that women remain exploited and discriminated against because of how men in society have been socialised. The Marxist perspective also avers that men have been socialised so that they consider high paying jobs as reserved for them, and thus, they regard leadership as their responsibility (Eckert & Assmann, 2021). Structural change, which is meant to deal with the challenges women face in the GDE, therefore, needs first to address women's discrimination, even though these women have the same qualifications and work experience as men.

### **6.3 Towards Resolving Historical Challenges**

South Africa gained its independence in 1994. However, the rampant discrimination levelled against women, including in institutions of learning such as schools, continues to be blamed on colonialism and apartheid, which collapsed a long time ago. This implies

that because colonialism is part of South African history, which cannot be deleted, the discrimination against women cannot be resolved. This would be a pessimistic and unsophisticated analysis of events. As the hub of learning, intelligence, and wisdom, the education sector should be taking the lead in improving the conditions of women in South Africa. Furthermore, the GDE, by being located in the country's number one metropolitan province and by virtue of housing the capital city, is supposed to take the lead and show by example how other provinces in the country need to approach the challenges women face in the education department.

It is true that South Africa, like any other African country that was once under colonial rule, had its social structure not only disrupted and distorted but shattered. By its nature, colonialism is an action to establish political control over the indigenous people of an area and to appropriate a place or domain for one's own use. In doing this, colonialism sustained itself. The result is beleaguered communities. South Africa was officially colonised in 1652 when Jan Van Riebeeck settled in the country (Olivier & Olivier, 2017). Since then, colonialism introduced some socio-economic and political ways of life that deliberately discriminated against women. Participants in this study shared the problematic role of colonialism in the contemporary workplace, arguing that the seeds of discrimination against women and the various challenges they face in the workplace were sown during colonialism. It is also important to note that Africa itself is a largely patriarchal society and that even before colonialism, this challenge was rampant (Stamarski & Son-Hing, 2015). Colonialism, therefore, only reinforced the gender discrimination and inequalities that were already prevalent. One of the study participants stated that colonialism reinforced gender discrimination in African societies and failed to recognise women as equal companions either in the family or in society (Participant 21). Women were also deprived of equal access to education, employment, healthcare, job training, ownership, and political power. This explains the various challenges they continue to face even in schools today, including in the Gauteng Province schools (Participant 21).

The above situation is condemned by the radical perspective of feminism which requires the status of women and their access to opportunities within the existing political and economic structures to be changed. Radical feminists like Rachel Chu, Mary Astell, Mary

Wollstone and Virginia Woolf rightly argue that activities and traditions that serve as stumbling blocks to women's progress in leadership roles should be eliminated (Harmer, 2021). South African women teachers need to be allowed to ascend to leadership positions without any challenges. What is astonishing is also the lack of challenges for incompetent men in these same positions. Although liberal feminism is somehow contradictory as it acknowledges the masculine differences between men and women, it is to the point when it argues that all the unfair activities that hinder women's success in their careers should be terminated. In this study, it may also be argued that it is not only unfair, outdated, aggressive, but also retrogressive to sustain challenges to leadership for women when qualitative evidence demonstrates that they can perform better than certain men who currently hold these positions (Bangani & VyasDoorgapersad, 2020; Berry et al., 2018). The pursuit of cultural tendencies that frustrate the progress of society needs to be stopped when it disadvantages humanity.

South Africa adopted the PEPUD Act No. 4 of 2000 to deal with the plight of women in the workplace, including the education sector. The PEPUD Act promotes democracy consolidation by eradicating social and economic inequalities emerging from the country's history of colonialism and apartheid (Nhlapo, 2019). The PEPUD Act was meant to amend social and economic inequalities in the democratic era by promoting equality and social justice predicated on the country's philosophy of *Ubuntu* (RSA, 2000). It is, thus, unfortunate to see how this Act does not translate into concrete reality in the education sector, which is supposed to be is the hub of excellence and transformation. The education sector is one of the most highly regarded in every society, and thus, transformation often starts in this sector. It is unfortunate that the qualitative data collected for this study shows that nothing much has been achieved in this regard, particularly in improving the participation of women in leadership.

The fact that many women have the same academic qualifications and work experience as men, yet face gender-related challenges when seeking to ascend to leadership positions is a strong indication that the education sector, just like the entire South African society, is reluctant to transform. Redressing the social and economic inequalities conditions in the GDE should be one of the first steps towards the realisation of resolving

historical challenges faced by women. The Office on the Status of Women (2000) requires that it be understood that while efforts are made in trying to empower women, such efforts should go beyond treating men and women in the same way when dealing with the various factors that continue to place men at an advantage than women. The disregard of gender issues would lead to the continuation of gender disparities that favour men.

Working towards resolving historical challenges faced by women in the GDE also requires grappling with culturally motivated stereotypes that influence expectations about how women and men are and how they ought to behave (Mosese & Mearns, 2016; Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). Gender stereotypes can be descriptive or prescriptive or both. Descriptive stereotypes dictate that women are communal and warm while men are often stereotyped with agentic features such as being poised and self-confident (Dlanjwa, 2018). Incidentally, agentic features are viewed as vital traits for leadership (Tekwa & Adesina, 2018). The data collected for this study shows that many women had training and work experiences just like men. It was also revealed that the few women in leadership roles also easily outperformed their male counterparts. In this regard, the theory of change posits that there is, therefore, no valid reason why women should be facing challenges to ascendancy to leadership positions because they do have the capacity to lead.

If women teachers in the GDE have the same academic qualifications and work experience as men, and if only a few women currently in leadership are outperforming their male peers, this means women can lead. Thus, there should be a change in the way leaders are selected in the GDE. The theory of change shows how to bring about effective changes in society. It is an approach used for making assumptions in a change project explicit (Reinholz & Andrews, 2020). If productivity is an issue, more women should be promoted to leadership in the GDE because evidence shows that they are more productive than men. The theory of change espouses that a change leader is one who is effective as a manager. At school, an effective and productive principal should be able to manage the learners, staff as well as SMT. The data collected for this study proves that women excel in managing learners. In South Africa, just like any other African community once rocked by colonialism, experiencing a change leader is one that can move forward

and not mourn the history of colonialism. Women have been proven to have this capacity, and therefore, the SGB and the Department's leadership officials should move from their old ways of thinking that men are greater leaders than women.

The qualitative data in this study shows that women already have the knowledge and skills to improve productivity at work. What is lacking is their recognition in terms of promotion to leadership positions. The productive performance of the few women in leadership positions in the GDE is not accidental. Elsewhere, reviewed literature indicates that women play a vital role in food production, career giving roles, and many others (Akpan, 2015; Mbilinyi, 2016). The evidence gathered for this study does not support existing literature that indicates women have challenges in terms of education and training support compared to men and that is the reason they are excluded from leadership (Amirault, 2019; McLoughlin & O'Brien, 2019). This is not true in the GDE, where women have the same qualifications and work experience as men yet do not ascend to leadership. Therefore, what is needed is change leaders at the department level to identify potential women leaders. The change theory is clear on how this can be achieved. The starting point should be installing leaders and SGB members who support change. A change leader gathers data and information. Both the SGB and change leaders at the GDE should be able to gather information on the mission of the province, the stakeholders, and what parents and learners (customers) value. Such leaders should always have a plan for the way forward (Akpan, 2015). However, as revealed by key informants in this study, the challenge of the GDE is that it is dominated by men in its leadership and that men will always protect their privilege and will do whatever it takes to frustrate women rivals.

In view of the above, it is not entirely correct to ascribe the exclusion of women in leadership positions in the Gauteng Province to the country's history of colonialism. There are several cultural and change-resisting behaviours that need to be dealt with as part of a collective effort to deal with this challenge. Transformation in terms of leadership needs to start at the department level before it can come down to the school level. As argued in this chapter, what is shocking is that while qualified, experienced, and hard-working women face numerous challenges, unqualified, inexperienced, and incompetent men do



not face the same challenges. Moving towards resolving the challenges women face when seeking to ascend to leadership requires levelling the playing field so that women can also have an opportunity to compete for positions without facing colonially-based and culturally-motivated challenges.

Resolving the challenges faced by women in the GDE also requires going back to the source of the problem and not pushing forward colonialism as a scapegoat.

#### **6.4 Addressing Sources of Women's Challenges**

Before Africa had its first encounter with Europe, it had its own cultures and religions, which already discriminated against women. To address the challenges faced by women in the GDE today, it might be necessary to go back to this history to correct the present. This section focuses on three aspects, namely culture, religion, and the general stereotypes, to demonstrate how these have infiltrated and influenced what is currently occurring in the GDE leadership and leadership access.

##### **6.4.1 The Obstinate Primitive Culture**

Culture is the life-blood of every society. It is the sum of everything that the society values and believes in. Culture, however, is not a dead phenomenon. It has a life. It grows and evolves (Ndhlovu, 2021). As culture evolves, it discards certain elements which are no longer relevant. Traditions are always the deterioration of culture. This, therefore, means that there are some aspects of culture that need to be changed or discarded as societies continue with their lives.

The African continent, where South Africa and the Gauteng Province are located, is described by scholars as patriarchal (Kioko et al., 2020). By the term 'patriarchy', scholars refer to a society, system or country ruled or controlled by men (Eckert & Assmann, 2021). In feminism, 'patriarchy' is a systematic organisation of male supremacy at the expense of women's subordination (Eckert & Assmann, 2021). Participants in this study confirmed the pervasiveness of patriarchy in the GDE. Patriarchy is mostly steeped in culture, although it is also promoted by religion. For the realisation of women's empowerment

through the elimination of challenges that they face when seeking to ascend to leadership in the GDE, it is vital that regressive cultural elements be discarded for the departmental good.

Participants mentioned that in the GDE and across South Africa, cultural beliefs that continued to block women from leadership positions were still prevalent. They mentioned that women teachers were perceived as inferior to their male colleagues and recognised only as colleagues whose services should be limited to classroom activities and not be extended to leadership positions. It was also revealed that because stereotypes existed heavily in the GDE, a women colleague seeking to pursue a leadership career needed first to persuade the SGB and then the subordinates to support her. Stereotypical attributes associated with women, according to one participant, *“tended to be not according to the attributes which are required for senior leadership positions, not only in the department but also in many other sectors”* (Participant 49). According to the reviewed literature, this mismatch can fuel the perception that women are less qualified for top leadership positions and lead to discrimination against women seeking senior leadership positions (Vial et al., 2016).

Kioko et al. (2020) posit that women's empowerment is unattainable in a society where patriarchy is dominant. One can, therefore, argue that democratic roll-back continues to exist in South Africa and the GDE due to omissions of dealing with patriarchy as one of the fundamental challenges. Placing continuous focus on colonialism, while neglecting this problem will not get South Africa and its institutions anywhere. Consistent with the reviewed literature, participants believed that patriarchy needed to be dealt with as it was largely responsible for the invisibility of women in leadership positions in the GDE. Where it was found that women did not have adequate qualifications, the lack of funding to further their education was cited as the reason.

The reviewed literature on change and transformation also revealed that patriarchy is a system of power and inequality favoring men in social, economic and political areas and provides men with greater access and opportunities. As such, it is not conducive for the good of society and for the good of women (Kioko et al., 2020; Eckert & Assmann, 2021).

Naidoo (2020) lays down six areas of patriarchal oppressions faced by women: In the home, women are expected to do domestic chores; in the workplace, there is a gender wage gap between a man (favourable) and a woman (unfavourable). In government, women are under-represented in parliaments, military and legislatures; in terms of male violence, 11 rapes are carried out every hour; men and women are judged differently according to their gender; and, the patriarchal gaze is still powerful in education, religion, media, and culture.

Patriarchy places women as good second-class citizens who exist as assistants to men. This existence is criticised in Marxist feminism, which disapproves how women exist as servants for men, especially as they perform most of the unpaid work in the home and in the workplace (Choudhry et al., 2019). How women exist as assistants to men is considered a capitalist behaviour because it benefits men. Thus, the idea of the employer-employee exploitative relationship. In the GDE, it was also found that women were common as deputy principals. Three out of six of the deputy principals were women (50%). While a considerable number of women could be accommodated as assistants; they could not be accommodated as the leading principals themselves. Women are primarily hired to second to men. The status quo holds them to this position, and it becomes a challenge when they need to compete for leadership roles. The realisation of women's empowerment by promoting them to leadership positions should commence by breaking patriarchal challenges through the installation of leaders who support the country's transformative agenda at the GDE and the national level.

The problem with Marxist feminism, however, is that apart from the unequal power relationship between men and women, men are regarded as enemies (Rafay et al., 2016). Marxist feminists argue that to achieve equality and stop the discrimination and exploitation of women, men, just like capitalism, need to be conquered. This view is problematic because, currently, men hold most of the leadership positions. By holding these positions, men have gathered some experience in leadership for years. This experience is not found among women, most of whom have not been in these positions before. Thus, by creating enmity between men and women, Marxist feminism is only likely to worsen the resistance to transformation by men. What is needed in the empowerment

of women and the elimination of the challenges they currently face is the cooperation of men and women to be able to overthrow the patriarchy. This shows that unless patriarchy is recognised as one of the fundamental challenges women face, women will continue not to be regarded as equals to men. Thus, their empowerment through equal access to positions they deserve will never be realised.

#### **6.4.2 Obstinate Primitive Religious Elements**

Another aspect that must be acknowledged and addressed is the infiltration of religion in African societies, including South Africa. The problem of religion is linked to that of colonialism because, outside African traditional religions, religion became more popular with colonialism. South Africa has always been aware of the gender inequality and oppression that continues to hold the country down by denying or suppressing the participation of women in numerous sectors and roles. This recognition has been demonstrated by various efforts that women in the country have made to eliminate some injustices deliberately developed by colonialism, culture, and religious beliefs (Holeta, 2016). Participants in this study agreed that these socially-motivated challenges compromised how women engage as employees in the education sector as they continue to be considered inferior. The Women's Charter of 1954 and the Women's Charter for Effective Equality of 1994 are direct efforts of women's struggle against injustice and oppression in South Africa.

This study found that patriarchal inclinations, both in public and private spaces, capitalised on religion to sustain the male dominance in leadership positions across structures while women remain at the bottom where they serve as secretaries and carry out other such-like responsibilities. Religion captures the human soul, and many people find it hard to challenge it or question it (Habib & Habib, 2020). In this study, some women participants, from time to time, mentioned religion as their only hope to challenge their conditions in the GDE. What emerges here is that these participants had reached a point where they have resigned from actively challenging their subordination and now only place their hope on the intervention of providence. This concurs with the observation of Marx (1973), who posited that religion was the opium of the people and that it captures

the soul. Instead of openly challenging the status quo, women educators in the GDE place their hope on religion to stand up on their behalf. Socialist feminism rejects how religion is fronted in this manner to deal with women's challenges. It posits that women need to liberate themselves from economic and social exploitation. They need to be their own change agents in this regard (Amirault, 2019).

The need for women to be their own change agents is also reiterated in the radical perspective of feminism which posits that power is the essence of patriarchy and the central concept of abstract enemies that should be faced by women themselves and other feminists (Harmer, 2021). This means that women whom the GDEs themselves employ need to stand up and challenge their own exclusion from leadership positions by the department. To eliminate the challenges which they face when seeking to ascend to leadership, women need power. Power is the process of dynamic interaction. Having power means having access to influence decisions and implementation procedures. Power, just like liberation, is not given; it is attained. Women educators in the GDE who wish to ascend to leadership positions, therefore, need to be able to go beyond the constraints of religious beliefs that hold them down to actively lobby for participation in leadership positions.

Key informant participants also mentioned that for women employees in the GDE to challenge the status quo, they need to be able to approach their challenges as a collective. This view is shared by the theory of change, which posits that women not only need knowledge and skills to improve productivity at work but also a collective ability to confront their shared challenges (Akpan, 2015; Mbilinyi, 2016). This then will increase their chances to ascend to leadership positions. Participants mentioned that one individual could not acquire power for themselves, but that it is the effort of a large group of individuals that give an individual some power. In most religious circles, women are subordinates of men while men are the rulers. Therefore, religion is regarded as an additional leading cause of all the oppression, inequality and injustice that women face daily (Mehmood, 2019).

The problematic role of religion in the suppression of women is also emphasised by proponents of the radical feminist perspective (Bayu, 2019; Choudhry et al., 2019). When participant women in this study argued that men were their main problem because they acted as gatekeepers, they reaffirmed what is believed in radical feminism, which regards men as the problem of women (Kulik & Metz, 2015). However, while men can be spearheading the challenges which women in the GDE face, it is problematic for women to advance these men as the problem. Men, just like women, are a product of culture, religion, politics and society, among others. What men view as good for society is what was given to them by the same society they serve. Confronting men as the problem will only escalate resistance to change by men who, naturally, will become defensive. Thus, it is important to approach the challenges based on their sources. In this thesis and the context of religion, the researcher argues that transformation needs to begin within religious circles before it can be transferred to workplaces. When radical feminism encourages women to form lesbian relationships and other such formations that will enable them to challenge male oppression, this approach will not be accepted because, although lesbian relationships are legalised in South Africa, they are firmly rejected in communities. Participants in this study themselves did not want to associate themselves with this movement, arguing that not only was it disruptive and abominable to society, but it was also contrary to their religions. This, therefore, means that in approaching the challenges to leadership women face in the GDE, approaches that are used need to be sensitive to these aspects of religion, otherwise such approaches will face resistance from the targeted beneficiaries themselves.

The way religion was defended by participants, both teachers and key informants, shows that it is an institution that is very difficult to transform or ignore. It is possible that religion is also considered by some scholars as teaming up with patriarchy to worsen the condition of women across the world (Crafford, 2015; Egan, 2017). Certain aspects of religion are commonly deployed to oppress women and which women themselves have accepted. This happens especially when women are taught to be obedient to their husbands (Mehmood, 2019). This situation sustains male dominance even in the GDE because men are already socialised to assume authority in every aspect of life (Nkenkana, 2018).

Through religion, men are socialised to reaffirm patriarchal practices that further bar women from assuming specific roles in society (Khurshid, 2016).

These practices constrain women's efforts to fight for personal realisation as they "*do not want to act against providence and the essence of what we believe and stand for as believers*" (Participant 5)." The acceptance of oppression of women based on religion is shared by Özler et al. (2020), who compare the current standard of living and the Muslims' beliefs on male supremacy which is based on the Qur'an was written in the seventeenth century. According to Özler et al. (2020), it is not subjective to expect women to dress and act the same way that women of the seventeenth century did. Researchers like Mahmood (2019) suggest that when a text is read, consideration should be made of the context and time of the text. Vyas-Doorgapersad (2018) also explains how Muslim women are not allowed to denounce their religion while Muslim men are allowed to denounce their religion. Being home to a number of religious groups, South African women in the GDE could face a situation whereby they fail to challenge the status quo due to these religious constraints.

Thus, masculinity mobilisation may not yield any results in the GDE where women teachers defend their religions which, on the other hand, oppress them. Masculinity viewpoints seek to uphold a one-sided view on gender, and they project men as the only problem faced by women and yet do not take religion as a factor. This view has led to the creation of masculinity viewpoints as a platform to examine male dominance and women's subjugation. If applied in the context of the participants of this study, this perspective could not work because it will be resisted by women who do not want to despise their religious beliefs. Some scholars dismiss masculinity as a theory arguing that it is largely politically-inclined and, therefore, not very useful for a mature debate in the context of workplaces (Alkire et al., 2015). Some women participants in this study dismissed feminism as a theory arguing that it is for lesbians. Some scholars also posit that feminist perspectives, such as masculinity, disregard the role men play in terms of taking care of household financial responsibilities as well as supporting women (Qaisrani et al., 2016).

Feminist perspectives seem to assume that all men do not support leadership by women, which is not valid. In this study, some male teachers strongly supported the idea that women needed to be given equal opportunities in leadership. Thus, ignoring the role men play within the broader society is viewed as very ill-fated on the part of feminist theories. For instance, Amirault (2019) argues that men have actually created platforms, especially within workplaces so as to create gender and equality awareness. This argument is, however, dismissed by McLoughlin and O'Brien (2019), who argue that men who promote women's empowerment have, more often than not, faced stigmatisation and sometimes violence as they are considered cultural or religious renegades who throw manhood into disrepute. This criticism has discouraged men who would have joined in the campaigns for women's rights and gender equality. More so, women who challenge the dominance of men are often ostracised both by men and even other women who blame them for seeking to disrupt society. This helps sustain the challenges women face when they eventually seek to ascend to leadership positions.

In sum, dealing with the challenges that weaken teachers when seeking to ascend to leadership positions in the GDE requires dealing with certain aspects of religion in as much as we deal with culture and patriarchy.

#### **6.4.3 Stereotypes as a Barrier to Women's Leadership**

In order to deal with the challenges of women leadership in the GDE, it is also vital the societal circumscribed conventions that have thrown up several stereotypes be dealt with and disrupted. As shown in the previous chapters, stereotypes are beliefs shared culturally and influence expectations about how women and men are and how they ought to behave (Mosese & Mearns, 2016). What was surprising in this study was that women teachers themselves believed in some of the stereotypes that serve as challenges to them. Participants mentioned that "*leadership required people who are tough and who are man enough*" (Participant 4). Scholars such as Gipson et al. (2017:36) have argued that recent literature largely demonstrates that "when we think—leader we also think—male". This presents a particular challenge for women candidates who do not fit the masculine analysis of leadership. Because the traditional perception of what leadership



looks like is based on masculine-oriented concepts, women are less likely to measure up to this ideal. This mismatch creates a 'lack-of-fit'. The incongruity between the women gender and the leadership roles is viewed as having led to bias against women in the GDE (Participant 37). Women participants' association of leadership with masculine features women exhibits an acceptance of the associated stereotypes. According to the reviewed literature, descriptive stereotypes dictate that women are communal, soft, compassionate, and warm, while men are often stereotyped with agentic features such as being poised, tough, focused, enthusiastic, and self-confident (Dlanjwa, 2018). Incidentally, agentic features are viewed as vital traits for leadership (Tekwa & Adesina, 2018). One women participant accepted stereotypes in the following words:

*Leadership roles require people who are tough. You know what, dealing with teachers is very difficult (Participant 3).*

This shows that even women in the GDE themselves view agentic features as an indication of ability as a leader. In this view, one can argue that as long as these women believe in these stereotypes, they will never be able to challenge them. In these circumstances, radical feminism requires that women be supported and encouraged to disrupt and challenge these stereotypes that continue to act as challenges to the empowerment of women (Choudhry et al., 2019). However, as long as women teachers condone these stereotypes, they will not be able to take up the challenge. The reviewed literature also reveals that women who behave in an agentic manner can also be backlashed for violating prescriptive stereotypes of being communal (Gipson et al., 2017). Thus, even where these women disapprove of these stereotypes, they are forced first to consider how to display the agentic features deemed essential for leadership without violating gender stereotypes.

Stereotypes disempowered many women potential leaders in the participating schools. Unless cultural and religious structures are transformed, the challenges women face when seeking to ascend to leadership positions in the GDE will remain. The participant key informants confirmed that stereotypes in the department often resulted in biased judgments in selecting potential leaders. It was reported that the GDE, until only recently,

openly preferred leaders who displayed masculine qualities, thereby deliberately sidelining women. One participant mentioned that *“while the department’s stance has changed in recent years, the change has not resulted in any significant consideration of women as competent leaders. Women remain largely invisible in schools, not only in the Gauteng province but across the country as a whole”* (Participant 26). Personal observations by the researcher also reveal there are very few women in leadership positions in the Gauteng Province, particularly at the level of principal. The study also found that in schools where stereotypes existed heavily, a women teacher seeking to pursue a leadership career needed first to persuade the SGB and then the subordinates to support her. Stereotypical attributes associated with women tended to be not according to the attributes required for senior leadership positions, not only in the department but also in many other sectors. According to reviewed literature, this mismatch can fuel the perception that women are less qualified for top leadership positions and lead to discrimination against women seeking senior leadership positions (Vial et al., 2016).

The third wave of feminism which commenced around the 1990s, has been one of the movements which have continued to mobilise women to fight for their right to participate in politics, public spaces, and workplaces. The movement mainly fights for the abolition of stereotypes concerning how women are portrayed in the media and other platforms (Sebola, 2015; Wanner & Wadham, 2015). The third wave of feminism maintains that men and women should be viewed as equals in everything.

In the reviewed literature, it is posited that the oppression of women and their denial of leadership positions within organisations is sustained by the lack of strong laws to protect them directly in workplaces (Nienaber & Moraka, 2016). It is also mentioned that most countries introduced rules instead of laws regarding women's empowerment. As a result, the situation of women has remained the same across countries (Nienaber & Moraka, 2016). However, contrary to what is occurring in other countries, in South Africa many laws that seek to eliminate and promote the discrimination against women exist. South Africa has adopted both international and national frameworks in this regard. As detailed in Chapter 3, these include the CEDAW, the BPA, the MDGs, the ICESCR, the UDHR,

the ACHPR, and the ICCPR, to name only a few. Some frameworks at the national level include the Constitution, the GEAR of 1996, the ASGISA of 2004 and the RDP of 1994.

In view of the above, it can be asserted that stereotypes remain some of the critical challenges that have to be dealt with within the GDE as part of an effort to promote the empowerment of women to leadership access. While legislation and movements seeking to liberate women in this regard exist, it is essential to note that some women themselves strongly believe and support some of the stereotypes that disadvantage them. As a result, it may be an enormous challenge to mobilise them against such stereotypes.

#### **6.4.4 Home-work Conflict**

One challenge that women often experience when seeking to ascend to leadership positions is home-work conflict. This challenge was mentioned by participants and was confirmed by the researcher's personal observations as well as the reviewed literature (Alaqahtani, 2020). It is important to note that the women teachers in the GDE, just like the male teachers, are a product of the family institution. The family is one of the most important institutions where socialisation occurs. It is in the home where people are socialised to perform gender roles before it spills over to how men and women participate in politics, the economy, and religion. Tied to roles assigned to them within the home, most women struggle to harmonise their home and workplace duties. This then becomes a barrier when they want to assume leadership positions, particularly as some home duties affect women's overall performance in the workplace. When the researcher requested women participants to disclose what was considered their roles within the home, as shown in Chapter 5, the majority of these women listed cooking, cleaning, washing and taking care of their children as some of their specific roles.

When asked to explain how they considered roles within the household as one of the challenges to career development, some participants mentioned that after performing these roles at home, they are tired by the time they get to work, hence may underperform. This then negatively affected their potential chances of being selected for leadership positions in the department. Women teachers, including principals, reported that they were faced with situations where they had to deal with home and work matters

simultaneously and that they had very little time to advance their careers through studying. This, therefore, became one of the challenges to leadership ascendancy by women. While women face this barrier, men do not face it because home-based roles are also designed in their favour. The radical perspective of feminism, just like its Marxist cousin, rightly notes that the power which men enjoy in the home is not only confined to the home environment but is also now pervasive in workplaces, much to the disadvantage of women who are also in these environments (Choudhry et al., 2019). This perspective rightly observes that for discrimination against women to be eliminated, it is imperative that women themselves stop prolonging the practices that enforce discrimination against them (Tong, 2018). Some women participants in this study mentioned that they did not apply for leadership positions because leadership made them compromise their family time. This shows that these women were ready to lose any leadership opportunities, which seemed to disadvantage their family time. This then becomes a challenge because they will not apply for any vacancies and will continue to complain about discrimination in the workplace.

In arguing for the need for women's liberation, ecofeminism, also known as ecological feminism, links the existence of women to nature. It is argued that biologically, the law (Labour Relations Act) makes it natural that women are homebound due to their fertility – an employed woman may stay at home after giving birth for a minimum of three months and as much as one year while a male can only stay for a maximum of 5 days for paternity leave (Ngcobo & Chisasa, 2018). On the other hand, nature is regarded as 'mother nature' in a male-centred world, making nature and women share the same exploitation. Radical feminists, on the other hand, argue that a peaceful co-existence between men and women could result in well-established households and robust workplaces (Eckert & Assmann, 2021). It is posited that men and women need to work together in the homes and economic activities. It is believed that the peaceful and reverential coexistence will enable women to ascend to leadership positions unopposed by men. Consequently, men will be able to offer women leaders the necessary support (Nkenkana, 2018).

While the previous sections have shown how historical challenges to women's leadership can be resolved, there is also a critical need to explore how challenges steeped in the

workplace can be addressed. The next section thus explores institutional challenges which women face within the GDE and then uses theory and literature to propose how these can be dealt with.

## **6.5 Towards Resolving Institution-based Challenges for Women's Leadership**

This e study explored the challenges women leaders face in the context of schools, that is to say, in the context of the workplace. Thus, it is crucial to explore the various challenges that emerge from the GDE as an institution. According to Jali et al. (2021), the institutional climate in the context of education is a product of cultural assumptions and norms about what is deemed 'appropriate' or 'inappropriate' behaviours and verbal exchanges within a specific learning or work environment and a chilly climate is defined as informal exclusion, devaluation, and marginalisation from workplace networks based on gender. Maki (2015) points out that research has focused on the influence of the environment on women in the workplace and specifically on women in higher education. Because the focus has long been placed on higher education, it was important that this study focused on how institutional climate is responsible for some of the challenges women leaders face in schools in the GDE. The following sub-sections discuss some of the challenges found to inhibit the ascendancy of women to leadership positions in the GDE.

### **6.5.1 Institutional Glass Ceiling**

Babic and Hansez (2021) define the glass ceiling as a barrier that most women and minorities face whenever they try to progress to higher roles dominated by men. These challenges are regarded as invisible because they are not acknowledged or written in policies and yet are practiced in institutions. In this study, it was found that this 'glass-ceiling' was one of the challenges women leaders faced in schools. Participants were aware of this concept of 'glass-ceiling', and some defined it as "... *a concealed form of discrimination against women which prevents them from moving into leadership positions to which they aspire*" (Participant 50). Women participants mentioned that glass-ceiling was largely responsible, more than anything else, for the invisibility of women in leadership positions within our schools. Participants revealed that although there were

more women than male teachers in South African schools, the leaders of these schools were male, both at local and national levels, because of the glass ceiling. As discussed previously, the glass ceiling is steeped in issues of culture, colonialism, and religion that do not emerge from a vacuum. Thus, when seeking to deal with them to increase the presence of women in the leadership of Gauteng schools, the starting point should be to address the cultural, colonial, and religious realities of South Africa as a country. This means that there is a need to be prepared to learn new things and new approaches as the GDE. This is the whole debate encapsulated in the theory of change, which requires that both men and women obtain skills in order for them not only to perform their duties and responsibilities as members of families and workplaces but also skills for realising change. The theory avers that for change to be realised in society, members of society should be ready for a change to eliminate 'glass-ceiling' problems. This is the only way the challenges of women in leadership can be resolved in the GDE. The problem is the inability of the independent government to overhaul the entire colonial system to implement a new system based on rationality and gender equality.

Transforming the entire GDE as part of the collective effort to eliminate the challenges women face in schools requires the collective support of everyone across the body from the national level. The transformation of the education sector does not only require the participation of the education sector. It also requires political intervention. The reviewed literature for this study showed a substantial lack of political will to address the discrimination against women in South African workplaces (Dlanjwa, 2018; Goko, 2013; Habib & Habib, 2020). The lack of adequate political support on achieving desired levels of employment equality compliance is one of the biggest challenges of workplace transformation in South Africa (Bangani & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020). This points to the need for transformation leadership, which is zealous of transformation across the various structures of the education department. Although the GDE remains one of the critical institutions that guides South Africa to realise its gender equity goals and objectives, it requires political support to realise its objectives.

Political participation would be necessary for the transformation of women's leadership within the GDE; participants still view customary practices as the major barrier to women

leadership. It was mentioned that even where women attended interviews for leadership positions, customary practices still blocked them from being offered such positions. For women to be able to compete for these positions (considering their historical discrimination), it is imperative that gender issues be mainstreamed into political and economic processes. Political arrangements need to support women's empowerment and the elimination of gender inequality to increase their chances of being promoted to positions of leadership within the workplace (Ranjan, 2019; Tong, 2018). This view aligns with the liberal feminist perspective, which posits that equality between men and women can be changed through political and legal reforms. Feminism, in its various perspectives, is the belief in social, political, and economic equality between genders.

It is argued in this study that the 'glass-ceiling' that serves as a barrier to the ascendancy of women to leadership positions within the GDE can only be resolved if there is a strong political will. The realisation of this political will requires that women participate in political leadership. The participation of women at the political level could afford them a greater occasion to sway policy so that there are policies that specifically promote women's leadership. When women have political power, they can make suggestions in terms of decisions and, thus, influence how leadership positions are distributed within schools and other workplaces. When women are able to have some influence at a political level, it would also spill workplaces and thus, increase their chances to ascend to leadership positions.

### **6.5.2 The Diagnostic Potential of Coaching for Leadership**

The previous section presented detailed evidence that culture, colonialism, and religion have elevated men to dominance in the leadership of institutions. In the GDE schools today, these same aspects have emerged as the key challenges women face when seeking to ascend to leadership positions. Because men have been in the leadership position for so long (Nudelman, 2015), change should thus entail convincing these men to accept the transformation and then use the same men as coaches for women. It was revealed by the participants that the coaching aspect is lacking in the GDE.

Participants revealed that unlike in other sectors where executive coaching was normal, there was no coaching for leadership in the department. This was, therefore, one of the major challenges because leaders within schools are mostly men. If men are the majority of leaders and if the coaching facility is non-existent, even those women who aspire to leadership positions will not find anyone to coach them simply because such an opportunity does not exist. Where no facility forces them to coach women, men will just continue to protect their leadership territory such that women remain invisible in leadership roles. Furthermore, leadership comes with an increased salary. Thus, the more they are in leadership, the more they enjoy better salaries.

For this reason, even most of the heads of departments in the participants' schools were also men. This shows how men strategically place each other in the various leadership steps while women were confined to teaching activities. This, therefore, indicates that in the GDE, women remain far away from leadership positions. The launch of coaching could be one of the solutions to the women leadership challenges in the GDE. Participants themselves indicated coaching as one of the potential solutions. Both male and women participants mentioned that if coaching is introduced in schools, it could result in women's empowerment through acquiring leadership skills and hence will be able to compete for any leadership positions that arise. Women participants viewed women leadership in schools as important and an alternative to the development of basic education in South Africa.

The importance of coaching as a tool that can help to resolve challenges to leadership is also noted in the reviewed literature, which indicates that during the use of the multi-rater feedback, aspirant leaders could have sessions with an executive coach who is experienced and who has been in the similar leadership positions for some time. This would enable women teachers in the GDE whose colonialism, culture, and religion denied opportunities for leadership to learn from men who were promoted to leadership by the same institutions. By working under a coach, potential women leaders will be in a far better position to learn how to design plans that are imperative for the realisation of suitable channels that can be followed in the development of women leaders.



However, it was also noted in the reviewed literature that one of the challenges which were often experienced by women when undergoing coaching was the lack of recognition of the need to balance work and personal lives as mothers and wives as discussed by Schuster, 2018). Although the problem of failure to balance work and personal lives is not the problem of women alone, it affects women more than it affects their male counterparts (Shvindina, 2016). This explains why some of the women participants revealed that even if there were adequate opportunities to ascend to leadership in the GDE, they would not pursue such positions because of the requirements and expectations that come with the responsibility that would compromise their family times. Thus, this study found that women are prepared to lose leadership positions if they feel that such leadership positions will negatively affect their families.

Although it was found in this study that the GDE does not have the coaching facility for potential leaders in the context of schools, the study argues that organisations that make use of coaching as a way of developing leaders need to be aware of how to stimulate interest by women through designing coaching plans that take in account the various personal needs of women (Hopkins & O'Neil, 2015). This argument would be in line with the theory of change, which requires that change be not only confined to issues of capacity, access, and productivity but should also take into account the family or household needs of employees. The argument is also consistent with the views of transformation experts, such as Sofat et al. (2015), who argue that transformation should be well-planned and targeted to bring about noteworthy changes in the way an institution is managed. Part of the planning should be to take into account the family responsibilities of women employees to be able to attract them into leadership positions as part of the transformation agenda.

Unlike coercive change, which is not planned and occurs through the natural course of events (Schuster, 2018), transformation is intentionally planned to adjust, alter, amend, or revise organisational structures and relationships. Thus, in the context of the GDE, transformation was defined by one of the participants as *“a process for generating and sustaining a work environment in which everyone, including women colleagues, can be developed to their potential and be allowed to contribute fully to the objectives of the*

*department*" (Participant 52). As pointed out by participants in the study, in the GDE, there is a need for the creation of a work environment which is free of unfair discrimination against women provided opportunities for coaching, and is reflective of the demographic realities of all the employees of the department. Besides, all the efforts towards equality will remain nothing but mere rhetoric. As things stand, transformation needs to be effected across the leadership board to trickle down to the levels of schools.

Across the leadership board, Statistics South Africa reports that in 2016, only 39,2 per cent of women in South Africa held seats in provincial parliaments (Stats SA, 2016), while in 2017 the figure somewhat moved to 42 per cent (Habib & Habib, 2020). Women in managerial positions were 31,1 per cent in 2014, 30,8 per cent in 2015, 32,1 per cent in 2016, and 32,1 per cent in 2017. The realisation of gender equality, therefore, remains a fundamental challenge not only in schools but across all government institutions and structures. Habib and Habib (2020) found that women were stuck at the bottom of the scales of the socio-economic hierarchy and that inequality and introspection had to be dealt with in South Africa. Thus, as argued in the previous sections, transformation should start at the top before it can come down to schools. Unless this is done, women will continue to face insurmountable challenges in ascending to leadership positions in schools. Habib and Habib (2020) aver that despite the Constitutional guarantees on full and equal enjoyment of rights of all genders, as well as all the strides in women empowerment and gender equality, many women in South Africa still suffer inequality, discrimination, sexism, patriarchy and institutionalised inequality. This is more pervasive in the context of the GDE where even coaching as a method of empowering women towards leadership does not exist. The *Gender Mainstreaming Initiatives in Public Service*, a report published by the Public Service Commission quoted by Bangani and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2020: 9), posit that:

*[E]mpowerment of women is not happening in any significant or meaningful way in departments. Apart from general policies and practices that affect all staff, there are no specific programmes that recognise women as a separate interest group with specific interests and needs. This includes issues related to recruitment, training and addressing the practical needs of women.*

This study argues that the absence of women in leadership in the GDE is the cause for the continued absence of women leaders. This situation can be resolved if coaching of women prospective women leaders is introduced to prepare them for the assumption of leadership. In the reviewed literature, it was also noted that micro-politics (coaching, networking, and other informal interactions) in the education department tended to ignore women and thus, constrained their potential to ascend to leadership positions (Holeta, 2016). As a result, many qualified women did not even consider competing for leadership positions. This adds to the fact that women are under-represented in enrolment, employment and decision-making in the education department (Nudelman, 2015). With this curtailed level of representation, it is problematic for women to reach leadership positions within schools.

Reviewed literature, however, revealed that even where coaching exists in South Africa, one challenge that remains for women when undergoing coaching is the absence of recognition needed in balancing work and personal lives as mothers, wives, (Schuster, 2018). Thus, in most cases, even where opportunities for coaching exist, women are forced to prioritise their families at the expense of their careers and their ambitions to be successful leaders. Thus, even if the department would introduce coaching in earnest, it would be important to be aware of and respect the need for the promotion and encouragement of women leaders through the designing of coaching plans that take into account the various personal needs of women. However, one issue that emerged poignantly in the study was that the department offered no coaching opportunities, thereby complicating the possibilities of women who aspired to ascend to leadership positions in schools.

### **6.5.3 In Pursuit of Mentorship**

Like coaching, another way of eliminating the various challenges women face when seeking to ascend to leadership positions in the GDE would be the mentorship component. As discussed in Chapter 3, mentorship relates to the engagement of two people in which one serves as a mentor (tutor, advisor, teacher, guide, or expert) and provides expert support to a mentee (student, learner) - considered as one who is not

experienced on certain important issues (Petrie, 2014). Maki (2015) posits that many influential relationships affect women's career experiences as well as their progress into leadership positions, and mentoring is one such relationship (or activity) that has been heavily studied and discussed in the literature on women's leadership. In the previous sections, it was shown that men have always been the major beneficiaries of colonialism, culture, and religion. These institutions provided men opportunities to train and ascend to leadership with very few challenges. Today, men have much experience as leaders due to this reality. Given this, the GDE could be convinced of the importance of transformation so that these men can act as mentors to women who were denied leadership opportunities by the same colonialism, culture, and religion.

In addition, mentoring can be an important component for women pursuing leadership positions in education for a number of reasons: mentoring relationships make a unique and independent contribution to a protégé's career success, above and beyond that accounted for by the protégé's existing skills, talents, and abilities. In other words, mentoring influences positive career-related outcomes regardless of an individual's characteristics (Bangani & VyasDoorgapersad, 2020). In this study, just like coaching, participants revealed the lack of a mentorship facility in the GDE. Participants revealed the lack of clear-cut processes on ascending to leadership positions in the GDE. This made it difficult for women and even men who aspired to ascend to leadership. Those frustrated simply left the profession and pursued other careers in the private sector. It was also observed that the elderly occupy most of the leadership positions in the GDE. This becomes a challenge considering the emerging innovative trends in this globalised community requiring personnel who can actively learn and adjust. Reviewed literature reveals that younger employees are more inclined to adjust fast to changing technological trends while the elderly employees are not (Schuster, 2018). Thus, young leaders would be able to learn technological changes fast and then also teach others, including the elderly. Thus, the GDE should consider two things, namely the promotion of the senior and young personnel to leadership so that skills transfer can occur and the implementation of the mentoring facility, which participants mentioned that currently, it is not available. Although not specifically targeted at women, these developments will

eventually translate into the consideration of women in leadership positions in the department.

Mentorship would also enable the inexperienced young employees to get training from their senior colleagues, while the senior colleagues would get training on new technologies from their young colleagues. This reciprocity would eventually lead to a remarkable transformation of the department, much to the benefit of the GDE. Transformation would open the leadership gates for aspiring women leaders. More so, where women are involved, the transformation will not only be structural but also intrinsically, much to the benefit of the department as a whole.

In the reviewed literature, however, mentorship has been seen as not as useful as it should be especially where women are involved. Concerning the use of mentorship to develop women leaders, scholars complain that women are often made to be mentored by men of which men have different interests and commitments which are likely to be different from the requirements of women (Pounder, 2014). This observation was confirmed by participants in the current study, who pointed out that this situation could be a problem "*since gender interests often clash, and may undermine the role and effectiveness of the mentorship relationship*" (Participant 22). In view of such challenges, transformation experts such as Hopkins and O'Neil (2015) suggest that women leaders should be provided with two mentors of both genders to ensure maximum benefit. Organisations are also advised to implement some formal programmes for mentoring aspiring leaders (Jovanovica & Ciricb, 2016; Kele & Pietersen, 2015).

There were, however, some participants who considered mentorship as not beneficial, particularly for women. This is because men prefer to work with other men and consider the contribution of other men as serious, while they consider the contribution of women as having to be given a second thought. It was revealed that men preferred to mentor other men than mentor women (Participant 6). Another participant mentioned that where men accepted to mentor women, such women would be further exploited. This shows that some women end up being abused during the mentorship process. Where this obtains, this becomes a further barrier to leadership as women refuse to be mentored by

men. This view is supported by some scholars who posit that mentorship offers minimal positive outcomes and may even affect organisational sustainability (Mahope, 2014). Radical feminists argue that for society to be progressive, men and women need to find a way of co-existing. A peaceful co-existence of men and women could result in well-established workplaces and a robust economy (Eckert & Assmann, 2021). The peaceful and reverential coexistence of men and women will enable women to ascend to leadership positions unopposed by men. Consequently, men will be able to offer women leaders the necessary support (Nkenkana, 2018).

According to Bogler et al. (2013), women point to the lack of mentors and lack of women mentors in general and the scarcity of mentoring as a challenge in their careers. Women not only perceive an imbalance in the quantity of mentoring they receive relative to men, but t also a fundamental difference in quality (Carter, 2013). For example, Dlanjwa (2018) reports that women serving as leaders in education point to the absence of women mentors as well as the presence of an exclusionary network as challenges to their advancement. Radical feminism posits that women fail to challenge this situation because women remain without a strong base from which they can lobby for their release from patriarchal tendencies that oppress them and frustrate their aspirations to ascend to leadership.

#### **6.5.4 Utilising Networking to Overcome Women's Leadership Challenges**

Another issue that emerged from the data was related to networking. Networking is one of the key elements of feminism. Feminism is built on the premise that women must network, unify, and collectively challenge their common enemy, that is, patriarchy, religion, and culture. Feminism seeks to raise awareness and highlight the subjugation and abuse of women within the various levels of society including the workplace and the household. It is also a conscious action by members of society, particularly women (but also men), to change the situation from a bad state to a good one pertaining to women (Nienaber & Moraka, 2016). Feminism is based on the view that society places people into men and women, and subsequently dispenses roles based on sex. To deal with their common challenges, women are mobilised to network and fight together. Participants in

this current study revealed that networking was one of the ways that would enable women to deal with the various challenges that prevent them from assuming leadership positions within the GDE. Women participants mentioned that networks were significant in their development because association offered them prospects in terms of relations and work assignments. They were also vital in creating personal links that can lead to personal improvement and credibility.

The participants' views are based on the reality that networking activities are always crucial mechanisms for the development of an individual's career. Like men who help each other to ascend to leadership positions, networking with other women who are already in leadership positions would enable some women teachers who aspire to attain leadership positions in the GDE to get the necessary information they need about how to be promoted. In most cases, during networking with other people, particularly of similar interests, experiences are shared on how others managed to work their way up to leadership positions.

In this study, both women and male participants acknowledged that women were largely invisible in several networks, much to their own disadvantage. Most networks were dominated by men, and women hardly accessed such networks as men protected their networks. Men always do their best to block women from mingling within them in any networks as they believe that women are weak and talkative and that they can reveal certain 'secrets'. Men also block women from their networks based on the notion that they want to discuss masculine issues in the absence of women. This all comes back to issues of culture and stereotypes where women are viewed as weak, gossiping, tender and unable to keep secrets. Thus, even if women could benefit from these networks, they were blocked by men from accessing them. If women could gain access to these networks, they could gain details on how to negotiate their way into leadership positions.

The above argument is, however, not meant to posit that networking automatically leads to ascendancy to leadership because networks are not always about jobs. More often than not, networks are motivated by leisure. When people are in networks, particularly those which require them to gather, they mostly do not want to talk about work because

they consider it an opportunity to refresh. Thus, although participants revealed that young women teachers often negotiated their acceptance into networks, they mostly do not gain any information related to leadership. Such networks may be limited to 'get-togethers' often characterised by drinks consumption. One participant mentioned that available networks in the department "*had nothing to do with preparing people for leadership roles. These are just social gatherings, and therefore, should not be considered seriously*" (Participant 7). Eco-feminism requires that men and women co-exist for the collective good (Ngcobo & Chisasa, 2018). However, if men continue to cease discussion of important matters when they are in the presence of women, then the co-existence will be meaningless. This explains why the radical feminism perspective requires a complete departure from men and for women to be independent, to work together as women and to have their own networks, which are not controlled by men.

However, it seems difficult for women to have their own networks with which men do not interfere in. Some participants revealed how they have to *force to get into men's networks where ideas and opportunities are shared*. This shows that available networks within the GDE are dominated by men who control them to exclude their women counterparts, complicating the prospects of ascending to leadership positions. However, the fact that some women are still forced to participate in networks controlled by men shows that women themselves are divided on their need for a radical approach to improving their conditions. This situation confirms the reviewed literature, which posits that the problem with women in dealing with their dominance by men is that they are themselves divided. Thus, women who seek to disrupt the status quo do not have enough support from other women to oppose it strongly. Some scholars also found that women who stand up against patriarchal oppression are viewed negatively even by other women who suspect them of attempting to complicate their relationships with men (Mbilinyi, 2016; Nehere, 2016). This situation is worsened because some of the women who lobby for gender equality and women's rights are not in marriages, and some are in lesbian relationships, which itself is deplored both by religion and culture. This makes these women lose the support of other women who blame them for seeking to disrupt their own marriages (Nienaber & Moraka,



2016). As a result, women remain without a strong base from which they can lobby for release from patriarchal tendencies and thus continue to be oppressed.

There were, however, some participants who did not consider networks as necessary for the promotion of women to leadership positions. Participants mentioned if people were qualified and experienced, they would be promoted. This, however, was not supported by evidence in this study where men dominated as principals even though women also possessed similar academic qualifications and work experience. Thus, networking does not always lead to achieving the targeted outcomes. This argument is also confirmed in the reviewed secondary literature which indicates that not all networks are vital for the development of an individual or individuals (Shvindina, 2016). It has been observed that the networks in which men are involved are mainly those in which practical activities related to the job are emphasised while those networks in which women are involved are, more often than not, biased towards the building of relationships for offering emotional support (Smith, 2013). If the GDE wishes to promote the empowerment of women and help them overcome the challenges which they face when seeking to ascend to leadership positions, it has to improve their visibility within the leadership ranks first so that they will be able to create their own professional networks. The GDE also needs to support the implementation of networks that are deliberately targeted at women, and that will ensure that particular forms of knowledge, skills and experiences are shared. If done correctly, this could be one of the ways through which to deal with the challenges that women employees encounter when seeking to ascend to leadership positions in the GDE.

### **6.5.5 Towards Eliminating Male Gender Preferences**

Male dominance in the leadership of the GDE is considered one of the major problems by participants. Male dominance is challenged by feminists who see it as not only regressive but also damaging. Feminism runs on specific principles, all of which are anchored in issues of patriarchy and male dominance in socio-cultural, religious, economic, and political spheres. It avers that the transformation of these institutions could result in the realisation of gender equality and women empowerment in sectors of society. In this study, male gender preferences for leadership positions were reported in the GDE.

The male preference over women was deep-seated in schools, with participants reiterating that there was still a strong belief that women are not 'strong' enough to manage schools, especially secondary schools. It is possibly because of this view that where women are accepted within leadership structures within the department as school principals or deputies, they are found in primary schools. This could be based on the assumption that women as mothers are better suited to running these primary schools than senior schools. In Chapter 5, it was shown that some participants believed that the primary schools were easier to handle than senior schools. One key informant who was also a member of the SGB mentioned that:

*I think that teaching in primary school is better done by women than men. So, at the primary level, my take is that it is better to have more women running the school because of patience most of the time and their capacity to deal with the young ones. Women relate very well with kids (Participant 45).*

This view was also shared by another key informant who was also a member of the SGB who believed that schools, especially secondary schools, were better when managed by a man. This informant believed that a school was under good leadership when a man is in control. This is the case, especially in secondary schools. He argued that male leaders were able to deal with teenagers than women leaders. This is based on the belief that women are gentle, sensitive, caring, sweet, and tolerant and, therefore can only deal with very young children such as those in primary school. Considering that SGBs are responsible for recommending the appointment of managers in South African schools, with the current views of SGBs such as those described above, women stand little chance since the SGB members themselves believe that men leaders are better leaders than women.

The evidence found in this study does not correspond with South Africa's alleged efforts to make sure that women are considered equals in workplaces, including in leadership positions. The gathered evidence shows that although women are not out rightly discriminated against as school leaders, they are viewed as incapable of performing certain tasks. Therefore, men should be prioritised instead. It was also established that although South Africa is a signatory to numerous global treaties and although it has also

adopted its own frameworks on gender equality, in reality, the country has not made commendable progress in this regard in advancing gender equality in all sectors, including in the education sector (Nkenkana, 2018).

The preference for male leaders over women leaders in the study is not based on any evidence. Therefore, they can only be best linked to enduring patriarchal tendencies in the GDE. Without being based on anything, patriarchy favours men in social, economic and political areas and provides men with greater access and opportunities. Theories of feminism presented in Chapter 2 thus, seek to challenge the relevance of patriarchy. The radical perspective of feminism primarily focuses on the challenges which emerge from patriarchy and sex class. Patriarchy gives power to men and thus, enables them to influence and make decisions for society. One may also argue that the belief that women are not capable as leaders is also a view pushed forward by men who consider women a threat to their leadership.

It is, however, important to note that to consolidate their dominance, men are also being supported by women themselves. Men cannot just allocate power to themselves, but it is the effort of a large group of individuals that gives them power, and such power is given to the person that dominates. In the patriarchal society, women are subordinates of men while men are the rulers. Therefore, patriarchy is regarded as the leading cause of all the oppression, inequality and injustice that women face daily. In this study, some women believed they needed the support of men to ascend to leadership. Some even complained that the reason they were not making it into leadership positions was that men denied them into their networks. This is regardless of the calls by some feminists to challenge the status quo, fight for independence, and come up with their own networks that are not controlled or monitored by men. As long as women and society consider men more efficient, effective, and hands-on, preferences for men in leadership positions will continue despite international and national frameworks to change the situation.

The study also found that some of the challenges women faced when seeking to ascend to leadership positions in the department were simply a result of personal factors. Some

of the personal and psychological factors identified in the data are discussed in the next section.

## **6.6 Dealing with Personal and Psychological Challenges**

The study also found that the women employees in the GDE were not only being barred by socio-religious and political factors from ascending to leadership positions. Just like in the reviewed literature, it was found that personal and psychological challenges were also pervasive. In the reviewed literature, it was found that some women did not pursue leadership positions due to the supposed stress associated with leadership. It is posited that women who wished to avoid stress simply avoid leadership positions (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020). It was also found that women's experiences have indicated that gender role expectations affect personal and professional relationships and have consequences for both career advancement and family responsibilities (Bandiera, 2019). This section discusses self-confidence and self-esteem, self-image, and family responsibilities as some of the personal challenges to women's leadership in the GDE.

### **6.6.1 Lack of Self-confidence and Poor Self-esteem**

Self-confidence and self-esteem are important requirements in the leadership of a potential leader. These two aspects generally refer to the way people feel about themselves, reflecting and affecting their ongoing transactions with their environment and the people they encounter (de Bruyn & Mestry, 2020). It is an important construct of psychology because it is a central component of one's daily experiences (Hillesland, 2019). In the reviewed literature, confidence is vital in leadership because performance is based on it (Eckert & Assmann, 2021). According to Fritzt and Knippenberg (2017:1018), confidence implies that "as a man [*or woman*] thinks, feels, and believes, so is the condition of his mind, body, and circumstances." Performance can thus be used as a good yardstick to measure women's confidence and willingness to take up leadership positions rather than to deny them based on their gender. In Chapter 2, it was argued that through confidence-driven performances, society can succeed in demystifying those restrictive traditional perceptions which still apply to women, even though they are based on unfounded scientific grounds. Thus, it is only through performance that society can

debunk stereotypes, biases and prejudices that still regard women as less effective in assuming leadership positions. As a learned disposition, confidence is based on testable abilities that are learned. Hence, the saying that 'practice makes perfect'. In other words, both men and women have equal potential to acquire the necessary confidence needed to perform what is required by leadership positions.

This study found a confidence and self-esteem problem in the GDE. While the problem affected both men and women, it was more pronounced among women. Women participants acknowledged that as a result of a myriad challenges they faced in the workplace and even at home, self-confidence and self-esteem now emerged other basic challenges which hampered them from competing for leadership positions within schools in the Gauteng Province. Lack of confidence and low self-esteem can be caused by not being given an opportunity to demonstrate what one is capable of doing. With women being largely invisible in the leadership structures of the GDE and schools, frustration could have led to a lack of confidence and low self-esteem in aspiring women leaders. Frustration could have driven women employees in the GDE to a point where they have lost all the confidence to veer toward leadership positions in schools. Instead of pushing hard for positions by responding to vacancies, some women employees of the department end up just waiting for appointment by the department. One key informant mentioned that this was despite the hard work done by these women teachers (Participant 14).

Some participants, however, argued that their lack of confidence and self-esteem was not entirely personal but that the tendencies and attitudes of colleagues in the GDE were largely responsible for destroying the self-confidence and self-esteem of women colleagues who aspired to compete for leadership positions within schools. This argument could be valid, particularly considering that some women employees possessed similar qualifications and work experience as their counterparts, yet men were being promoted ahead of women. Thus, confidence as a result of perceived unfairness could result from women not running for leadership positions in the GDE.

With performance and self-esteem having been negatively affected because of perceived unfairness, women employees could have just let down the bars as their hard work is not

being recognised. This then consequently affected their performance at work. Once a performance assessment, then these women are again seen as not competitive enough. This then becomes a web of challenges to leadership because performance also counts for a person being promoted. Performance is the basis for promotion within workplaces (Eboiyehi et al., 2016). Performance has resulted in society rewarding those who excel. On the contrary, to those who talk but fail to perform, society has only contempt for them, for they are seen like barking dogs who seldom bite.

The unfortunate reality for women is that society has generally perceived them to be eloquent speakers, but because they are seen as being less confident in doing, they are thus, relegated to the periphery when it comes to leadership positions. Not surprisingly, women as people who are mainly perceived as having less confidence in themselves are the ones who do not make it when it comes to promotions to positions of leadership. Some frustrated women even leave the profession to pursue other careers in the private sector. This results in losses by the department.

There was enormous evidence that demonstrated women employees in the GDE had lost confidence and that they considered competing for leadership positions with men as unfruitful as men would always be considered ahead of them. While this is one of the fundamental challenges to women's leadership in the department, it is important that women employees are not demoralised and continue competing so that they do not get eliminated as potential leaders in the GDE. However, it is also important to expose the hypocrisy that women were being left out in the leadership in the GDE because of their lack of confidence. Confidence is not inborn. Like a habit, confidence is acquired. This, therefore, means that women can acquire it should they be exposed to the relevant experiences that allow for the development of confidence. Assumptions that women are not confident are like silent voices that possess the power to dictate social relationships. This is how women have been on the receiving side because it is assumed that they have less confidence. In this respect, the following assumptions are perceived to form challenges against the advancement of women to leadership positions: women's work is easy work; women fear competition; and women lack vision. These assumptions,

untested as they are, form the bedrock and cornerstone upon which the perceptions are based that view women as less confident.

Assuming that it is true that women lack confidence, it is, therefore, vital for the GDE to create conditions that can enable these women to gain confidence. To restore faith and confidence in women, Jacqui (2019) recommends that women be exposed to more meaningful tasks and be placed in positions that demand accountability. To do this, the GDE should increase the number of women in leadership in its schools.

Traditional perceptions about women should be discarded if the GDE intends to utilise all its human resources maximally. It will be difficult for the GDE to compete favourably in the present world climate when it still has no regard for its women employees. On this issue, Shava et al. (2019:36) warns us not to repeat the mistakes of the past by reminding us that traditionally, “women, it was generally argued, were being treated as chattels, bought and sold like other market commodities.” This is surely a kind of treatment that can make a person lose their confidence and self-respect because it makes them feel like an unwanted object. In other words, for the GDE to do away with the lack of confidence in its women employees who are aspiring to leadership positions, it has to first create conditions that allow women to participate in leadership positions. This simply means that women employees in the GDE must be assisted to think and see things differently than they do presently. For in helping them, the possibility is always there that they might be turned around and be able to perceive their condition differently. The GDE needs to accept the notion that learning is a life-long project; hence, it is never too late for women, if needs be, to learn; everyone should be viewed as having the potential to learn. This thesis argues that equal opportunities for both sexes are the only best solution to the problem of leadership promotion in the GDE. It is only then that change will be achieved, as detailed in the theory of change. This view is also shared in the reviewed literature.

In the reviewed literature, it is stated that to address the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, leadership development programmes need to be deployed (Jovanovica & Ciricb, 2016). The goals and objectives of formal leadership development programmes should include developing participants’ competence as well as their

confidence and self-perceived leadership potential (Karimli et al., 2019), breaking through obvious challenges (Klaa, 2020); and identifying, training, and mentoring potential women leaders and providing them with opportunities for networking and career goal setting (Maseko, 2013; Nhlapo & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2016). This approach is different from the various perspectives of feminism, which seem to consider men as the problem and, therefore, are being resisted by both men and women. Implementing a holistic approach to the resolution of women's lack of leadership is likely to be widely accepted. Where this occurs, transformational leaders are likely to be deployed across the various structures of the department, including in schools. The major beneficiary would be the various stakeholders, including the department itself, the parents, and most importantly, the learners.

Some scholars point to the issue of poor self-image by women as the major cause they do not even think of running for the leadership. The following sub-section provides a discussion on this notion.

### **6.6.2 On Self-image and Leadership**

Self-image can be a significant predictor of leadership potential. This assertion may not be entirely incorrect, considering how self-image has increasingly become an issue in job interviews. The word 'self' has two distinct meanings, namely; the self as an entity and the self as a process. In the context of the workplace, self-image relates to the way employees look and act, as well as their effect on others, their traits, abilities, and weaknesses. The reviewed literature indicated that education plays a vital role in shaping the self-image of an individual (Özler et al., 2020). A good self-image by aspiring women leaders can engender a positive attitude that is very vital to living an independent, productive and responsible life. As a result, the role of a good education is to equip the individual with the knowledge and skills that will empower them to achieve a positive self-image. In the GDE, it is believed that if women acquire good knowledge, they will be able to develop a self-image, which will empower them to compete for leadership positions within schools.



What emerges from the collected data is that women employees in the GDE have poor self-images and that this explains why they were not competitive in leadership. This view is incorrect, and it only serves to justify why women are being excluded in leadership and sustain patriarchal tendencies in which women are dominated by men. If self-image comes through adequate education, then women employees should also have good self-image about themselves. As stated in the previous sections, this study found that women employees in the GDE have similar academic qualifications and work experience just like their male colleagues. Thus, if male employees in the department have a good self-image due to their education and experience, then their women counterparts should have it as well. If so, what then explains their exclusion from playing leadership roles in schools?

Participants, however, explained that although many women in the GDE possessed adequate qualifications to be considered for leadership roles, societal circumscribed conventions that tied them to household 'feminine' responsibilities affected their self-images. Some women did not even respond to leadership vacancies simply because they believed they would not cope considering their family responsibilities. As a result, in the workplace, these women are given duties that are considered feminine while men take leadership roles which are viewed as masculine. In schools, they are also made to teach lower grade classes while men take up senior classes. The gender division of labour within schools then disadvantages women and makes it hard for them to challenge male dominance in the workplace.

Aspiration to leadership as well as a good self-image by women in the GDE would increase their bargaining power. The reviewed literature posits that educated women tend to have good self-images and hence more bargaining and decision-making than women with low literacy levels (Nehere, 2016; Nkenkana, 2018). Educated women also have the knowledge of where to get support, and, therefore, tend to be more empowered when compared to their rural counterparts. However, it is important to note that all the women in the GDE are educators, which means that they are trained for their professions. If we are to go by education, then one may argue that all these women have good self-images because they are educated. Therefore, they should be promoted to leadership when vacancies arise. In the theory of change, it is posited that women need knowledge and

skills to improve productivity at work, increasing their chances of ascending to leadership positions. One may argue that women in the GDE already have skills and knowledge, and therefore, they should be promoted to leadership.

The fact that women employees are not being promoted to leadership positions even though they have all the necessary qualifications, therefore, has to do with patriarchy. Kioko et al. (2020) concur with Toktas (2020) that patriarchy is a system of power and inequality favouring men in social, economic and political areas and provides men with greater access and opportunities. This is regardless of whether men have more work experience or qualifications than women. According to Matandela in Kioko et al. (2020), patriarchy is a concept of signifying power differences between men and women where women are victims while men are unnamed perpetrators. Such could be the case in the GDE.

### **6.6.3 Women's Family Responsibilities and Leadership**

Family responsibilities are also viewed as another barrier that frustrates the progression of women to leadership positions within workplaces (Black et al., 2013; Bonne & Johnston, 2016). The reviewed literature also shows that in most workplaces, commitment at work is measured through availability and the amount of time one spends at work. Mothers and wives often find the issue of working for long hours a challenge. In this view, they are rarely taken as serious competitors for leadership positions (Bayu, 2019). Moreno et al. (2022) have found that most women CEOs do not have children out of fear that the potential effect children could place on their careers. A number of women were also found to have voluntarily left jobs to attend to family responsibilities (Hopkins & O'Neil, 2015; Pranathi & Lathabhavan, 2021).

Most women participants in this study mentioned that they could not afford to sacrifice their families just because of the pursuit of a leadership position. This shows that these women had already strongly accepted these family circumscribed conventions that disadvantaged them. Women participants also acknowledged that their male colleagues had the advantage of having the opportunity to excuse themselves from performing numerous roles within the family. This shows that socialisation within the family had an

important implication for these women teachers. Radical feminism encourages women to challenge their roles within the household. It argues that the household promotes patriarchal tendencies, which prop men to leadership positions (Jali et al., 2021). Patriarchy within the household unit is regarded as the main cause of all the oppression, inequality and injustice that women face daily. Radical feminism, consequently, requires women to form some lesbian relationships and other such formations that will enable them to challenge male oppression. Radical feminism considers marriage an institution that enables men to oppress and exploit women (Wanner & Wadham, 2015). It argues that men's ability to impregnate women empowers them to render women powerless. As a form of advice, the perspective encourages women to have power over fertility rights by using technology to control whether they want to have children or not (Bayu, 2019).

Women themselves, however, were divided on the problematic role played by men. Most of the participants did not consider men as the problem. They were, therefore, not willing to challenge them because they did not see how these men blocked them from ascending to leadership roles. This situation demonstrates the argument that women themselves are divided concerning perceptions of the actual source of challenges. Feminists themselves are also divided on these views. For instance, while radical feminists view men as the problem and encourage women to challenge men, masculine feminists do not see men as the problem *per se*. Masculine feminists argue that feminist theories view men as the problem and disregard the role which men play in terms of taking care of household financial responsibilities (Qaisrani et al., 2016). Ignoring the role men take up within households and within the broader society is viewed as very ill-fated on the part of feminist theories. For example, Amirault (2019) argues that men have actually created platforms, especially within workplaces so as to create gender and equality awareness.

Considering the above, while family responsibilities are viewed as some of the challenges to women, it can be argued that feminism could perform better if it could start acknowledging the role of men instead of considering them as the problem. Masculinities provide a stage from which to inspect the causes of subordination instead of further aggravating friction between men and women. Masculinities are considered a social

construct since men are born to discriminate and dominate women, but they are socialised to it (Harmer, 2021).

Education and training also emerged as one of the issues raised by participants and the reviewed secondary sources as posing as one of the challenges that blocked women from ascending to leadership positions with the GDE. The following section focuses on this issue.

## **6.7 Education and Training**

The issue of education and training as challenges to women's ascendance to leadership positions is presented in two subsections, namely qualifications and work experience.

### **6.7.1 Qualifications and Leadership**

The reviewed literature showed that education and training are one of the factors which enable individuals to increase their chances, not only of employment opportunities but also of promotion within the workplace (Karimli et al., 2019; Turkmen, 2018). Literature reports that there remain low levels of literacy for women worldwide, especially in rural Africa (Bemba, 2018). This situation has affected the ability of women to access and compete for job opportunities across sectors (Buvinic et al., 2020). It was also found that women with high literacy levels have higher chances to access economic resources and paid employment (Choudhry et al., 2019). They also have high chances of promotion to leadership positions (Croke et al., 2017). However, it was found that the percentage of women with high levels of literacy was very small as compared to those without education and training (Hillesland, 2019).

However, in this study although only a few women participants had university degrees compared to men, most of the women teachers had teaching diplomas. The study, however, also found that most men, particularly those already in leadership positions, possessed Master's degrees while others were working towards doctoral degrees. Male participants argued that it is principally their qualifications that led them to leadership and nothing else. Furthermore, few women who possessed Master's degrees were also those

who were already in leadership positions primarily as school principals. There were, however, other women teachers who possessed Master's degrees, and had not been promoted to leadership, while some men were already in leadership positions without higher qualifications. Thus, although participants acknowledged that increasing qualifications could translate into increased opportunities for women ascendancy into leadership positions, the evidence shows the contrary. Thus, one may argue that while women face challenges to leadership, what is surprising is the lack of challenges for incompetent and unqualified men. In the previous sections, this chapter showed that the women in the GDE possessed similar qualifications and work experience as their male counterparts. Yet, when it came to leadership, men dominated. This shows another criterion, other than qualifications, which is being used so that incompetent and under-qualified men end up in leadership positions.

Therefore, it is not entirely incorrect for some scholars to argue that for women to make a meaningful contribution to society, it is important that they be capacitated with education and training (Hillesland, 2019). The evidence gathered in this study showed that women in the GDE are equally educated, although they were not being given a chance to assume leadership positions. Thus, there is no further extension support which could be helpful to them. The problem faced by these women is not about them, but about the department itself as it uses undefined standards in promoting its employees. Most people in leadership positions, especially school principals, have Master's degrees but this is not something that is defined by the department. The DBE only requires an undergraduate qualification to consider an individual for a leadership position. When shortlisting takes place, due to the number of applications and the requirements for each school, the shortlisting criteria include qualifications whereby applicants are scored according to their level of study, as shown in Table 3. The table shows that the higher the qualification one possesses, the better the chance of being shortlisted. However, in reality, women competitors seemed to continue being sidelined although they possessed higher qualifications than men. This, therefore, implies that the department is not operating within its own rules and recruitment guidelines.

One can argue that the department does not view women seriously and, therefore, somehow deliberately excludes them from its leadership structures. It is startling that South Africa is a signatory to a number of legislative frameworks. Yet, designed to address the challenges of women, it remains one of the countries with the most unequal societies. The reality in the GDE is a clear indication that women as equal citizens as regards to their capabilities remains under doubt. At independence in 1994, the first administration under democratic rule acknowledged it was inheriting one of the most unequal societies. Thus, it committed itself to transform entire structures and systems in the country. Transformation, by nature, is the formation of new paradigms through the use of conducive reforms that have the potential to lead to the desired result in terms of societal and organisational change (Iscaan et al., 2014; Nudelman, 2015). This, therefore, the GDE, and possibly the Department of Education in South Africa as a whole, is failing to transform itself to serve the people of the country effectively. Transformation is not simply a replacement of systems; instead, it is all about changing the culture and systems of organisations to support inclusive representation and voice. The government of South Africa, therefore, needs to live up to its election promises and transform by overhauling all the systems instituted by colonialism, culture, religion, and anything that continues to oppress women, including the women employees in the GDE.

Reviewed literature shows that South Africa inherited structures, both public and private, that had serious problems that required to be transformed (Habib, 2013; Holeta, 2016; Nudelman, 2015). The legacy of apartheid created structures and organisations that lacked justice, proficiency, equality, and fairness (Jones, 2013). At independence, the government, therefore, needed to change the culture of institutions to foster democratic principles. According to Van Niekerk (2015), however, the process of reform transformation has been compounded and clouded by huge challenges in South Africa. Some of these challenges include insincerity by leaders to transform institutions. Thus, the argument that women employees in the GDE are failing to be promoted due to their lack of competitive educational qualifications is not only fake and baseless, it is also retrogressive and not useful for a more mature debate on women empowerment in the department. This justifies the deployment of feminist theories by some frustrated women and men who are willing to witness transformation in their lifetime.

Some scholars have pointed to the issue of work experience as an important factor that would speed up the promotion of women to leadership positions. This aspect is discussed in the next section.

### **6.7.2 Work Experience and Leadership**

In this study, work experience was measured by the number of years which participants had served as employees in the GDE. In reviewed literature, work experience refers to academic and career connections that serve as a link between academic theory and the practical application of that theory in the workplace (Rummery, 2020). Work experience plays a very crucial role in leadership. While work experience is considered important and an asset that can lead one to leadership positions, the experience was almost irrelevant in the GDE, as found by this study. Just like the issue of education discussed above, while work experience benefited men, it seemed not to benefit women competitors. The study found that although some women had more years as employees in the department, men with a limited number of years seemed to outrun them for leadership positions. Although the minimum experience in terms of years is only seven of teaching experience, to qualify for a principal's position in the GDE, and to be effective, one also needs to have held roles of Departmental Head and Deputy Principal. The OSD (ELRC Collective Agreement 1 of 2008) tabled that managers need to follow this protocol. However, this has not been implemented because some women who qualify have not been promoted. In addition, it has also been challenging for women to be nominated even as Departmental Heads or deputy principals. Thus, when roles of principals arise, these women are found to be lacking experience because they never performed Departmental Head or Deputy Principals' roles.

This study found that over half of the participants had more than eight years as employees in the GDE. About two had served for as much as 30 years, while the majority had served for between 10 and 20 years. However, what was stunning is that more women than men had served longer and yet very few of them were in leadership positions. Thus, in the context of the same work experience, the underrepresentation of women at the level of leadership in GDE is very disturbing. and it can be explained by Kele and Pietersen (2015)

who posit that the way women are viewed in relation to leadership in South Africa reproduces the notion that they are not effectual as leaders. The assumption, therefore, that women lack the required levels of educational training and work experience to enable them to be promoted to leadership levels (Gipson et al., 2017) is thus, not correct.

What is lacking in the GDE is transformational leadership, not only in schools but in the departmental offices. It is the officials in the departmental offices that have to spearhead transformation in schools. Transformational leadership was found to be specifically more effective in the context of schools. Leithwood (1994:506) found that it “had a significant direct and indirect effect on progress with school-restructuring initiatives and teacher-perceived student outcomes.” Thus, if transformational leaders are instituted in the departmental offices, the transformation could trickle down to schools. It is only transformational leadership that can improve the situation of women employees in the GDE.

Many researchers have found that transformational leadership steadily projected the readiness of educators to offer extra effort and change teaching practices and attitudes (Stenling & Tafvelin, 2014; Tran, 2014; Vella et al., 2013). Scholars have found that transformational leadership has a positive effect on satisfaction (Jovanovica & Ciricb, 2016), motivation (Bogler et al., 2013), commitment (Jacqui, 2019), professional growth (Kele & Pietersen, 2015), organisational conditions (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014), learning culture (Jacqui, 2019), organisational culture (Thomas, 2013), and student achievement (Stenling & Tafvelin, 2014). These works of literature indicate that the patterns of transformational leadership are harmonised with the organisational culture and structure of the institution and their impact on the meaning which people link with their job and their desire and readiness to take change risks. Leaders who deploy transformational leadership style convince, inspire, and motivate subordinates to realise admirable results. One could argue that if transformational leaders are employed at the departmental level, they will be able to influence and motivate change in the department. Consequently, the change or transformation would trickle down to schools. It is only when this happens that women employees within the GDE will have a fair and unobstructed chance to compete for leadership positions successfully.



## **6.8 On Support Structures and Ascendency to Leadership**

Ascendency to leadership, whether by women or men, always requires support. This support can come from the family, community, political groupings, and the household, among others. Support entails providing encouragement to someone, backing their visions, and helping them successfully pursue whatever they are doing (Hillesland, 2019). Support is one of the most critical aspects participants in this study raised for enabling women's ascendency to leadership positions within the GDE. Support could be political, communal, organisational or managerial or supervisory support. The reviewed literature indicated that support structures mattered much in the promotion, not only of women but also of men (Hillesland, 2019). It was also found that institutional or organisational cultures that do not deliberately support women's empowerment can also hinder or frustrate their aspirations for leadership positions. Participants mentioned that in most organisations, including the GDE, leadership structures were male-dominated, thereby leaving very limited chances for women to enter leadership positions. Kulik and Metz (2015) found that organisational structures obstructed women's entry to and advancement in the workplace. Mahope (2014) found that resistance of women leaders by organisations and some institutional discriminations such as restricted admittance to networks, limited women mentoring and inadequate training opportunities all contributed to women's low career progress. The challenges presented by the lack of political, organisational, communal, and managerial support regarding the ascendency of women to leadership remain challenging as expanded in the following sub-sections.

### **6.8.1 Women's Empowerment and Political Support**

Participants in this study and the reviewed literature, acknowledge that, for the most part, the political system in South Africa has not prioritised the socio-economic and political welfare of women. The political system in this country has continued to draw on customary practices, which remain the significant challenge for women's ascendency to positions of influence in the workplace (Amirault, 2019; McLoughlin & O'Brien, 2019). Political structures need to support women empowerment efforts and the elimination of gender inequality to increase their chances of being promoted to positions of leadership within

workplaces (Ranjan, 2019; Tong, 2018). In the previous chapters, the thesis showed that in the Department of Basic Education, the percentages of women, besides the Minister and a few other directors, women remain largely invisible in leadership positions. For transformation and the elimination of challenges of women leaders in the GDE, and in South Africa as a country, it is important that the presence of women be elevated in political structures.

The participation of women in political structures could afford them a greater opportunity to sway policies that are sensitive to gender and that deliberately target women (Powell et al., 2018). When women have political power, they are able to make suggestions in terms of decisions and, thus, influence how women should be treated in the workplace. When women are able to have some influence at a political level, it would also spill over into workplaces and thus, increase their chances to ascend to leadership positions. This view is supported by liberal feminist scholars such as Rummery (2020), who argues that equality between men and women can be changed without changing the social structure but through political and legal reforms. The main argument espoused in liberal feminism is to change women's status and opportunities within the existing political and economic structures.

Political support for women leadership within the GDE needs to emerge from the government itself, which is the primary protector of all citizens, including women. Political support is when the government provides various forms of assistance to a specific group(s) of people, one person or an organisation, to enable them to achieve particular goals. It is political support that has the potential to lead to gender equality and hence, the ascendancy of women in leadership positions in South Africa, including in the GDE. Feminism, particularly its liberal aspect (see Chapter Two), emerged from the recognition of the need for political support for women if they are allowed to make meaningful participation in the broader society. Liberal feminism fundamentally emerges from the political philosophy of liberation, which begins from the belief that all people have the right to freedom, independence, individualism, and participation in political structures (Tong, 2020). This explains why participants, both men and women, considered transformation in the political leadership of the Department of Education to be vital before transformation

could be seen at the level of schools. Participants strongly reiterated that instead of the rhetoric on women empowerment and equality of genders or gender equality, political institutions and other establishments, including the GDE, needed to speed up implementation and start recognising women as equals practically and not rhetorically. It was also widely agreed that political support, although imperative, was largely absent to empower women to assume leadership positions within the GDE.

Some feminist scholars in South Africa have argued that in order to change women's status and opportunities within the existing political and economic structures, political support is imperative (Nkenkana, 2018). This view supports the fact that in the context of the GDE, it is not necessarily society and how it functions that needs to be changed for women's empowerment to be realised, but rather the political setup. Once this is changed, everything else will fall into perspective. Lack of political will at the political level is the main problem women in South Africa face, and the GDE simply needs political will for women to be supported to ascend to positions of leadership. Some participants posited that the Department of Education in the country and the Gauteng Province practised the political economy of affection which saw men being preferred for leadership positions while women were held down to teaching activities. Thus, it cannot be overemphasised that there is a need for political transformation in the department as a whole before transformation can take place in schools. This argument is supported by scholars such as Rummery (2020) who argues that equality between men and women can only be achieved through political and legal reforms. Rummery (2020) agrees with some feminist scholars that the subordination of women to men in the various sectors of society is rooted in the set of customary constraints that have been legalised and formalised. These constraints intended to create a barrier for women's entrance to success against men. The Marxist view of feminism posits that women remain exploited, oppressed, and discriminated against because men have been socialised in such a way that they regard leadership as their responsibility (Eckert & Assmann, 2021). This socialisation extends into workplaces, including schools (Szálkai, 2019). This results in the disregard of women who seek ascendancy to leadership positions, even in schools in countries like South Africa. On the other hand, women have also been socialised into submission (Egan, 2017). Thus, they somehow support their own exploitation by men.

Where women have accepted their subordinated position in this manner, according to Marxist feminism, they become servants to men, especially as they perform most of the duties in the workplace. This is considered a capitalist behaviour because since it benefits men; thus, the idea of employer-employee exploitative relationship. Marxist feminists argue that to achieve equality and to stop the discrimination and exploitation of women, the capitalist system needs to be conquered by both the oppressed and exploited, which are women and men (Rafay et al., 2016). In terms of workplaces, the cooperation of men and women could see the empowerment of women by enabling them to ascend into leadership positions, including in schools.

Participants agreed that efforts towards empowerment and promotion of the ascendancy of women to leadership positions were only taking place at the top in political structures. Yet, only a few women are promoted in such positions. Therefore, they are not adequate to sway decisions to favour women in the lower levels like schools. The Department of Basic Education assumes that because the department has a woman as the minister, then all the women in the department stand a chance. The reality is that the women who are doing the dirty work in schools remain disempowered with no chance of moving beyond the classroom due to a lack of political support.

Participants viewed customary practices as hampering the access to political support for women. Even where women attended interviews for leadership positions, lingering customary practices within the Department of Education still blocked them from being offered leadership positions as issues of how they will deal with household responsibilities keep dominating interviews instead of focusing on what women can contribute. McLoughlin and O'Brien (2019) argue that customary practices mostly hindered women's political participation.

Overall, there is a strong need for political transformation within the Department of Basic Education to allow for transformation to spill down to schools to enable women employees to be viewed as equal competitors within the schools. This argument is also supported by the reviewed literature, which states that political arrangements need to support women's empowerment and the elimination of gender inequality to upsurge the chances of women

being promoted to positions of leadership within workplaces (Ranjan, 2019; Tong, 2018). When women are able to have some influence at a political level, it would also spill over into workplaces and thus, increase their chances to ascend to leadership positions (Amirault, 2019).

The previous chapter found that household and communal support was also crucial in empowering women to compete for leadership positions within schools. The following sub-section focuses on this view.

### **6.8.2 Exploring Family and Community Implications on Women Leadership**

The other challenge for women employees that often emerges from the household and the community set environment is related to the level and quality of support by the household itself. In the reviewed literature, the family and the community were recognised as one of the most important institutions where socialisation motivates individuals to compete for leadership roles occurs. Once an individual does not grow up being socialised as having the ability to lead or participate in leadership positions, such an individual is likely to struggle later in life concerning how they compete or even accept leadership roles. The challenge is worse where such an individual is a woman because of other challenges emanating from religion, culture, and other socio-economic realities of society. In this study, some women participants mentioned various household chores they were responsible for that took much of their time, leaving them with little time to advance their studies. This situation is widely documented in the literature as the beginning of women societal oppression and exploitation. What emerges from the data is that the family and the community are, for the most part, not supportive of women since there are already some limits that the household or the community sets as the best standard for a well-behaving woman in the community.

The reviewed literature posits that the family is one of the most significant establishments where socialisation occurs that has the potential to influence the decisions of people. It is in the home and in the community where people are socialised to perform gender roles before it spills over to how men and women participate in the socio-economic and political realm of society. All three theories used in this study agree that the household and

community are key in the socialisation of people. People often continue this unsupportive socialisation even in workplaces. In the theory of change, it is submitted that in the workplace, most women are given duties that are considered feminine while men take leadership roles which are viewed as masculine. This means that the gender division of labour within the households and communities extends into workplaces. This disadvantages women and makes it hard for them to challenge male dominance in the workplace (Mbilinyi, 2016). For this reason, radical feminists argue that the entire society needs to be disrupted so that it can accept transformation, which can see women not being discriminated against in leadership positions.

In this study, however, several women participants defended household roles which they played regardless of whether such roles disadvantaged their chances to ascend to leadership. They emphasised how they valued particular household roles, arguing that they could not sacrifice not to perform these roles as it could compromise the welfare of their families. They considered leadership and increased salaries useless when they did not result in improved household welfare. It is clear that it is the socialisation of women to become caring and good mothers and wives that continues to make women dependent on men. This becomes the main cause of their subjugation by men.

### **6.8.3 Supervisory and Managerial Support**

Supervisory and managerial support within the workplace is also one of the ladders to promotion. In most cases, supervisors and managers must provide recommendations for candidates. Even where an individual seeks employment anywhere else, the previous supervisor and manager will still be requested to provide recommendations. This shows that these leaders are critical in the career development of their subordinates. Within the organisation, the supervisor or manager is responsible for setting an example to subordinates. A supervisor or manager shows support by encouraging subordinates to achieve their goals and showing them that anything can be achieved.

Support from managers in the GDE schools was found to be problematic, and it aggravated the challenges that women faced when seeking to ascend to leadership positions. Most of the participants in the GDE schools complained that many school

managers provided them with no support to ascend to leadership positions. This problem was made worse by the fact that most of the principals in the participant schools were men. These are the same men whom the reviewed literature posited as patriarchal and benefiting from the status quo. Reviewed literature states that one of the factors that have undermined the capacity of women to participate in the economy has been their subordination to men caused by patriarchal tendencies, which limited not only their education but also their chances to access employment opportunities which could see them making decisions (Mbilinyi, 2016).

In this study, the few women in leadership positions also complained that they received no adequate support from their supervisors from the GDE. Participant SGB members also complained of the department trying to sabotage their members by not giving them the necessary support. The lack of support provided in the GDE results from structural challenges in the department as mentioned above.

The lack of support for principals by Cluster Leaders in the Gauteng Province causes more problems for women principals as they face more challenges than their male counterparts. In addition, most of these higher positions are held by men, as detailed in the previous sectors. Thus, while men can easily access support, women leaders could continue to struggle due to male dominance tendencies sustained by men to protect their positions and to edge women out of leadership. Therefore, supervisorial or managerial support was one of the issues reported as important to enable women not only to ascend to leadership positions but also to perform better and increase their chances for future promotions.

In the reviewed literature, this situation, among other things, could be resolved by the installation of transformational leadership at the top, that is, in the GDE offices. The transformational leadership approach requires transformational leaders, that is, those who are charismatic, inspirational, intellectual, and individualised. Charismatic-inspirational leadership is how leaders behave and act as role models for their subordinates, how they lead by example, and how they foster close relationships through positive attitude and support to subordinates (Bogler et al., 2013). Intellectual stimulation

refers to behaviours that raise awareness of problems and encourage subordinates to examine them from new perspectives. Individualised consideration refers to the support given by the leader in providing encouragement and paying attention to individuals' specific needs. It is only transformational leadership which can enable the GDE with patriarchal tendencies that serve as challenges to women leadership. The power relations between men and women currently obtaining in the GDE continued to make it difficult for women seeking to ascend to leadership positions. Therefore, transformational leadership is required to effect change. Because women are viewed as inferior, it is not surprising that they remain underrepresented in the school leadership structures, thereby compromising their rights to equality and limiting their potential to contribute to leadership in schools.

The discussion above shows that another barrier women employees in the GDE face when seeking to ascend to leadership is the leadership itself. The next section focuses on leadership and how it can serve as the barrier to women seeking to ascend to leadership in GDE.

### **6.9 Male Leadership and Women's Aspiration to Leadership**

Male leadership is viewed by most feminist scholars as problematic, as the major problem that pervades institutions, and that serves as a direct challenge to women leadership. The poor presence of women in education management is documented throughout the world, a pointer that it is a global phenomenon (Schuster, 2018). Notably, this phenomenon has been acknowledged as a loss of a vital part of human resources (Hermann et al., 2021; Kim & Beehr, 2020; Moreno et al., 2022). As flagged in the previous sections, the same problem was found to be pervasive in the GDE, where male leadership continues to be preferred over women leadership. This is problematic because the department could be losing out on what its women employees could be contributing much to the development of the department.

Participants, both women and men viewed women leadership as an important and alternative in the development of schools, not only in the GDE but in the country at large.



As was observed in the reviewed secondary sources, women are, by and large, absent from leadership positions within GDE schools. Feminist perspectives expose the absence of women leaders in South African schools to be a result of the patriarchal and traditional values and practices in the larger society to which the department subscribes to (Holeta, 2016; Nienaber & Moraka, 2016). These patriarchal tendencies were also reported by participants to be pervasive in teaching, learning and aspirations for leadership positions. As a result, this situation served as a barrier to leadership for women as some women did not even consider competing for leadership positions knowing that most of these positions were always reserved for men. With this truncated level of representation in leadership, it is problematic for more women to reach or aspire for leadership positions in schools. Feminist scholars seek to challenge dominant views and realities about women's conditions and dismiss the belief that male leaders are always more effective than women ones (Fritz & Knippenberg, 2017). The views of these scholars are justifiable, considering that there are many incompetent and unqualified men who face very little or no challenges when seeking to ascend to leadership positions within these schools.

In the reviewed literature, several characteristics are listed as qualities of a good leader: someone who earns respect and respects others, with charisma, encourages and motivates people, a mentor, a role model, and so many more (Nehere, 2016; Robertson et al., 2021). The empirical investigation by the current study found that several women employees in the GDE possessed these characteristics, although they were not in leadership positions. Feminist theories explain the absence of women in leadership positions as a clear result of patriarchy which prefers male leaders over women ones. Patriarchy signifies power differences between men and women, where women are victims while men are unnamed perpetrators (Eckert & Assmann, 2021). Due to patriarchy, in most workplaces, most women are also given duties that are considered feminine while men take leadership roles which are viewed as masculine.

The theory of change requires that potential leaders be not selected based on gender but based on their capacity and the ability to be productive. The theory of change requires that the potential to be productive should be used to guide the selection of a potential leader (Reinholz & Andrews, 2020). In the context of women's leadership, the goal of the

theory of change is to understand the grounds and conditions that will make women's leadership effective and how and for whom the desired change will work. This theory, therefore, concurs with the feminist theory under its various perspectives, which posits that women should not be discriminated against based on gender. The theory posits that gender should not be used at all since women did not choose to be who they are. The radical perspective of feminism, just like its Marxist cousin, posits that the power men enjoy is confined to the home environment and is also now pervasive in workplaces, much to the disadvantage of men (Choudhry et al., 2019). Male dominance continues to be a challenge for aspiring women leaders because they organised an attempt to challenge it.

South Africa is a rainbow nation. This means that it is home to different people of different colours, ethnicity and culture. For the most part, the cultures in the country have sustained male dominance while women continue to be treated as second class citizens. This treatment has spread into the workplaces, including schools. As observed in Chapter 3, the dominance of men in leadership was not a problem in the GDE but also a national problem. In 2017/2018, the Department of Basic Education had a ratio of 38 per cent of women to 62 per cent of men appointed in the SMS. There is, therefore, still a huge challenge in reaching the 50 per cent target of the SMS. This means that capable women in the SMS positions will need to wait for these men to retire while they capacitate themselves for the positions. This situation continues despite the country's constitutional efforts about equality and gender equity in independence in 1994.

The persistence of discriminatory tendencies against women in the workplaces and society in general has thus, motivated feminist scholars to argue for the elimination of any form of discrimination against women. However, it is also argued that in order for discrimination against women to cease, it is indispensable that women themselves stop prolonging the practices that enforce discrimination against them (Moreno et al., 2022; Tong, 2018). Radical feminists argue that a peaceful co-existence between men and women could result in well-established and successful workplaces (Pranathi & Lathabhavan, 2021; Eckert & Assmann, 2021). As put forward by the liberal perspective of feminism, it is important that men and women work together, both in the home and the workplace to achieve the collective good of society. It is believed that the peaceful and

reverential coexistence will enable women to ascend to leadership positions unopposed by men. Consequently, men will be able to offer women leaders the necessary support (Nkenkana, 2018).

The issue of governance also emerged as one of the factors that directly affect women's prospect of ascending to leadership positions with the GDE.

## **6.9 Governance and Women Leadership**

Governance has a significant bearing on the chances women have of ascending to leadership positions within the GDE. Governance refers to how institutions like the GDE are controlled, accounted for, and supervised (Governance Institute of Australia, 2019). Ferman (2020) posits that governance is when rules and regulations are set for people to abide by to ensure a smooth operation. It involves giving someone some authority to oversee processes and operations in a transparent, responsible and accountable manner. Three governance sources within the GDE, namely political, school governing boards, and labour unions, were identified both in the literature and by participants, as mentioned in Chapter 5. These are discussed in the sub-sections that follow.

### **6.9.1 Political Governance and the Plight of Women**

Political governance is the highest system controlling both private and public affairs in a country. Political governance is crucial in the transformation of all other systems because it has the power to implement rules and laws by which society should run. In this study political governance was used to examine how political systems affect the ascendance of women to leadership positions within the GDE. The aim was to explore how national and local political structures created conditions that supported or hampered the promotion of women.

The study confirmed that at the national level, South Africa has one of the best Constitutions in the world to promote gender equality and women empowerment. In the country's Constitution, women's empowerment and equality are dealt with in numerous sections, including Section 9 - Freedom from unfair discrimination on the basis of gender

and the right to equality; Section 15 - Freedom of religion, belief and opinion, which recognises customary and religious practices stressing that they should be compliant with the Constitution; Section 25 - The right to property; Section 26 - The right to adequate housing; Section 29 - The right to basic education, this includes basic adult education, and Section 34 - The right to access to courts. The Constitution provides the basis on which women's rights to equality may be achieved. While the Constitution is the highest document that society and all its organisations should follow, it is astonishing that the GDE is not living up to the Constitution to ensure gender equality in the workplace. There is enormous evidence to demonstrate that the GDE is disregarding the Constitution. This is not only the GDE problem but also a national problem. In the GDE, this study also found that out of the six school principals that participated only two were women while four were male. This shows much gender disparity in the workplace. One would, therefore, wonder what motivates the lack of women promotion, considering that they make up the majority of the employees in the department and also considering that, as stated in the previous sections, they have similar academic qualifications and work experience as their male counterparts. This disparity endures despite the existence of one of the best Constitutions worldwide, which South Africa has developed.

In addition to the Constitution, South Africa has also introduced a number of legislative frameworks, including the EEA No. 55 of 1998, which is meant to ensure equality and fairness in the treatment of employees within workplaces (Bangani & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020). The EEA No. 55 of 1998 illegalises unfair discrimination and requires transparent and justice systems of management for all employees regardless of gender (Nhlapo, 2019). Other legislative efforts discussed in detail in Chapter 3 include the EEA No. 55 of 1998, which is backed up by the SDA No. 97 of 1998, the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act No. 4 of 2000, the National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, the Commission for Gender Equality, and the South African Human Rights Commission, among others. Thus, although some participants complained that there was much more talk but a lack of implementation to enable women empowerment, it is important to note that at the national level, there are many efforts being made to support women. Efforts are needed to ensure that legislation is implemented. It may be argued that the lack of implementation of

legislation in the GDE and also at the national level is one of the critical challenges that block the ascendancy of women employees to leadership positions in the GDE. In order to deal with this challenge, there is for the establishment of timeframes and score lines for gender equality, not only in the GDE but in various sectors of human existence.

In view of the reality of gender inequality in the GDE, participants could be justified for believing that the South African political system was rather more rhetorical than practical. Although, much was being said about the need for women's empowerment, on the ground, women remained disempowered. Participants could also be credited for arguing that only a strong political will had the potential to "*turn tables around*" (Participant 49) and eliminate the patriarchal tendencies that remained deep-seated in the department, just like in any other department.

The lack of political will in the Department of Education begins with the lack of women's appointments to political structures. For this, women lack influential personnel to push their agenda forward. The participation of women at the political level could afford them a greater occasion to sway policy so that there are policies that are sensitive to gender (Powell et al., 2018). When women have political power, they can make suggestions in terms of decisions, thus influencing how positions within workplaces are distributed. When women are able to have some influence at a political level, it would also spill over into workplaces and thus, increase their chances to ascend to leadership positions. This view is shared in all the theories used in this study. The theory of change and the transformational leadership framework espouse that for the progress of society to be achieved, both genders need to be allowed to play an active role in the socio-economic and political activities of the society. Feminism, on the other hand, posits that there is a strong need to eliminate the dominance of men so that women can also have a chance to contribute to societal development.

The other type of governance that emerged from the empirical investigation was the SGB is discussed next.

### **6.9.2 Women's Leadership and School Governing Body Governance**

In the South African Department of Basic Education, SGBs are vital in ensuring that schools function correctly. School Governing Body members oversee the schools' financial administration, and maintenance, and also make appointments of staff, including the appointment of leadership (Koza, 2018). School Governing Body members have some power to influence the gender composition in leadership positions within schools. They sit in most of the important meetings of the schools and make decisions in almost every school activity. They also sit on interview panels. SGB members are mandated to prioritise the interests of the schools. They are also required to assist the school staff in undertaking their professional duties. In addition, they are required to encourage parents and the community to volunteer at the school with the aim of helping it to improve. SGBs also assist in making policies, curricula, and budgets of schools (DBE, 2021). Because of this, SGBs are a vital governance system that can either enable or hamper the ascendancy of women into leadership positions. SGBs have access to both parents and the school staff and can influence both sides in any direction they think is suitable.

However, it has been noted that with patriarchy dominating almost all aspects of existence, SGBs have not been helpful in grappling with the plight of women seeking to ascend to leadership positions within the GDE. According to feminism, patriarchy promotes the continued rules or control by men (Hermann et al., 2021). It is a systematic organisation of male supremacy at the expense of women subordination (Eckert & Assmann, 2021). Patriarchy is a system of power and inequality that favours men in social, economic and political areas and provides men with greater access and opportunities. In most African societies, including South Africa, patriarchy remains dominant, pervasive, and widely supported. African cultures are blamed widely for sustaining patriarchy (Kioko et al., 2020). With SGBs consisting of parents, most of whom might also be strong believers in patriarchal tendencies, the SGBs could be one of the reasons women continue to be neglected when it comes to appointments to leadership positions in the GDE. According to the transformational leadership theory, this situation can only be changed when transformational leaders are appointed to powerful positions. The feminist perspectives, on the other hand, are based on the view that society places

people into male and women categories and subsequently dispenses roles based on gender. It is this categorisation that ends up in workplaces where it is used to exclude women from occupying leadership positions (Kim et al., 2020; Moreno et al., 2022). Feminism, therefore, requires that the structure systems based on cultural, religious, and any other systems be overhauled as part of an effort to achieve gender equality.

The above discussion shows that both the transformational leadership theory and the theory of feminism agree that societal circumscribed conventions need to be changed to enable the realisation of gender equality. On the other hand, the theory of change seems to place the blame on women. It cites issues of skills and productivity levels as key aspects for promotion into leadership positions. According to scholars of the theory of change, women need knowledge and skills to improve productivity at work, and hence increase their chances to ascend to leadership positions (Pranathi & Lathabhavan, 2021; Robertson et al., 2021). This view, however, is refutable by the empirical data that was gathered for this study. This study showed that women employees in the GDE had the same academic qualifications and work experience as men, yet they were not being promoted to leadership. The study did not, however, explore productivity levels of the women in comparison to men. Future research is needed to try and close this research gap.

As indicated by participants, one of the ways to transform the GDE is to transform the SGB itself. It was mentioned that SGBs in South Africa did not do much to support women leaders in the schools. It was also found that the SGBs themselves also believed that male leaders usually perform better than women leaders. Therefore, they mostly supported the appointment of men in school leadership positions. Thus, the structural transformation proposed by all the three theories used in this study, of necessity, also requires that society itself be transformed. It is from within a society that women, as employees and SGB members as part of the school governance emerge. Thus, society should first be transformed to produce people who value gender equality.

## 6.10 Women and Labour Union Governance

In South Africa, labour unions play an important and active role in transforming how workplaces operate. Since colonial times, the South African political landscape was always dominated by labour union activities (Jali et al., 2021). Unionism comprises a go-between system between an employer and an employee, and it is mostly a protector of employees against exploitation and unfair treatment by the employer (Amrani et al., 2020; Gregory & Osmonbekov, 2019; Kuriakose et al., 2019). South Africa is home to some of the most militant labour unions, which have transformed how various socio-economic sectors operate. As a result, unions are viewed as wielding much influence. In the reviewed secondary sources in South Africa, it was found that trade or labour unions play an important role both for workers and employers (Dercon & Gollin, 2014; Fritzt & Knippenberg, 2017). It was also found that the duty of unions is seen as ensuring that workers, both men and women, are well represented and well-treated at their workplaces (Nudelman, 2015). This is achieved through helping to reduce wage inequalities, lobbying for wage increases, better health benefits and pensions, and ensuring that employees are fairly treated (Holeta, 2016). This has been observed to motivate workers to be more productive, knowing that they have support and are treated fairly and well (Carli & Eagly, 2016).

In this study, labour unions were also highly regarded by participants. It was widely agreed that labour unions were vital in that their presence had changed the working landscape over the years to accommodate the participation of women. Considering the country's history of apartheid and colonialism, participants' views concerning the important role of labour unions differed. However, it is noted that in recent years, through the active role of labour unions, previously disadvantaged groups, including women, have been steadily ascending to positions that they were not allowed to take during apartheid and colonialism. However, while participants appreciated the role of unions in the GDE, they also highlighted that while women were assuming leadership roles in other sectors, such as banking, mining, agriculture, and other sectors, the same was not happening in the education sector.



During apartheid and colonialism, women were employed as teachers in schools mostly to serve lower grades. With the collapse of apartheid in 1994, women now also teach senior classes. Unlike in the other sectors, labour unions seem not to have achieved the desired results in the education sector. However, despite that unions deal directly with teachers, as detailed in the previous chapter, the unions did not seem to do enough to ensure the equal representation of women in leadership positions in the GDE. The fact that men continued to dominate at the level of principals regardless of the presence of equally qualified and experienced women shows that even unions are failing to transform the structural system that serves as challenges to women leadership. While unions talk about the need to increase the chances of women for promotion, the problem is that these unions do not do any follow up to ensure that their talk becomes a reality. With the power, unions could be lobbying to implement legislation that supports the practical recognition of women for leadership positions. Some participants thought that, unlike SGBs, labour unions were more powerful even to hold political systems to task, and, therefore, had the potential to transform the world of work.

Union leaders are, however, also products of society, just like everyone else. This means that they are also influenced by society. Coming from a society that practices patriarchal tendencies, leaders of the unions could just be talking and then do not back their talk up simply because they believe that men are just good in leadership than women. In actual fact, one women SGB participant who was also a member of a specific powerful union in the country mentioned that:

*Running a school is not an easy job. It needs someone who is zealous, able to make sound and independent decisions. A person who always requires support is not fit for such a role. You will find that you will always be required, as SGBs to come to school and resolve issues. To avoid this, we support the appointment of persons with potential. Men are good as their presence also instils fear in learners. This helps these learners to behave (Participant 44).*

If a women SGB member believes that men are more effective than women, therefore, a high chance that male members of unions also believe that women should just be

engaged in teaching roles and not in leadership. This view supports the views of radical feminist scholars such as Dlanjwa (2018), who submit that women fail to challenge their exploitation and domination by men because women remain without a strong base from which they can lobby for their release from patriarchal tendencies which oppress them and which frustrate their aspirations to ascend to leadership. If powerful women also believe that men are better leaders than women, less powerful women do not have anyone to push their equality agenda. According to Nehere (2016), this situation is further worsened because some of the women who lobby for gender equality and women's rights are not in marriages, and some are in lesbian relationships, which itself is deplored both by religion and culture. This makes these women lose the support of other women who blame them for seeking to disrupt their own marriages in the name of equality and discrimination (Nienaber & Moraka, 2016). Thus, instead of insisting on feminist perspectives that can be easily rejected even by women themselves, it is important to experiment with the appointment of transformational leaders at the very top. Once these leaders are appointed at the top, their influence is likely to trickle down to schools, thereby possibly increasing the chances of women being considered seriously for leadership roles.

The other aspect that was found to be problematic and hampered the smooth ascendancy of women to leadership within the GDE was the recruitment process itself, as discussed next.

### **6.11 Women's Challenges and the Recruitment Process**

The recruitment process is central to women eventually ascending to positions of leadership. It is the recruitment process which rubber-stamps whether one should be given a job or not. Recruitment is the process whereby organisations and institutions look for employees to fill job positions (Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Balboni et al., 2020). The recruitment process is made up of different procedures used to hire an employee. The process starts from post creation, post advertisement, shortlisting, interviews and hiring a candidate (Dlanjwa, 2018). Recruitment policies show the way in which an employer or a company hires an employee (Kim & Beehr, 2020). Recruitment policies show or identify

the available vacancies. Then, in every recruitment process, specific policies are followed. The policies can be open or hidden. Open policies are well-defined, written down for future reference, and supported by national and international legislation. Hidden policies are those that are not written down yet still practised during the recruitment process. These include the preference of men as good leaders of High Schools as revealed by participant SGB members.

In the GDE, open policies are based on national and international legislation. A number of legislative policies have been adopted in South Africa to support the recruitment processes. Some of these policies are deliberately meant to encourage the promotion of gender equality in the workplace. For instance, Circular 9 of 2020 of the Gauteng Department of Education and the EEA encourage the panel to recommend or employ women in positions whereby male managers are the majority. Circular 9 strives to appoint more women principals to reach the goal of hiring an additional 1001 by 2030. This is meant to eliminate some of the challenges that women employees face and to ensure that women stand an equal chance to be appointed to leadership positions within the GDE schools. However, SASA has provided more authority to the SGB to make recommendations and decisions on the recruitment of managers at the school level. With SGB members also having different cultural backgrounds, this arrangement can itself be a source of challenges for women because patriarchal tendencies may find their way into the recruitment process.

Concerning hidden policies, many aspiring and promising candidates have suffered from these policies. In most instances, these hidden policies end up becoming challenges to women who seek to ascend to leadership positions. Some of the hidden policies emerge from vague pieces of legislation. For example, according to Collective Agreement 2 of 2015, when evaluating recommendations for promoting or placing a candidate, a majority vote should come from the parent component. From the staff component side, other than the principal, the Collective Agreement does not specify the position of the staff component that should be part of the panel to recommend a manager. This implies that a general assistant (a cleaner, for instance, can also have the authority to recommend the appointment of a principal. Because of this, sometimes hidden policies thrive on the

weakness of legislation to inflict challenges on women who seek to pursue leadership positions. Lack of clarity of recruitment processes due to vague legislation enables hidden policies to be applied. The result has been the appointment of more and more men while women continue to be side-lined. In order to enable women to compete successfully for these positions, the recruitment processes need to be fixed so that hidden policies do not have a chance to infiltrate into the open policies. Participants also confirmed that because of these hidden policies, the recruitment process in the GDE was a mess and that it was not fit for purpose. Thus, the current state of affairs in the recruitment process also presented some challenges to how women employees in the GDE ascended into leadership positions.

There were, however, some participants who required that hidden policies be deployed but only to the advantage of women. Some women participants required that those who sit on the interview panel also consider that besides being professionals, women are also mothers and wives. Thus, their performance in the interview can be affected by this reality. Participants complained that interviews were being held without even trying to understand the plight of women and the various challenges they faced when seeking to ascend to leadership positions. They revealed that if an interview was held too early in the morning, mothers were likely to underperform, particularly when they needed to drop children at school before they could get ready. Thus, performance in the interview does also not always mirror performance in reality.

In addition, during the recruitment process, women could also face recruitment challenges due to lack of confidence during interviews, lack of additional qualifications, low rate of applications due to the bad reputation of the school, and the panel's inability to identify a suitable candidate irrespective of their gender, panel's inability to interpret recruitment requirements, panel's bias and prejudice, recruitment process's duration and women's inability to adopt new technologies required for managerial positions.

Another challenge for the appointment of women leaders within the GDE has been the increasing occurrences of unethical practices.

## 6.12 Unethical Practices as Challenges for Women

Unethical practices have been rampant in South African issues in recent years. Issues of corruption, nepotism and sexual abuse have been on the rise. While unethical conduct in political circles has received sustained scholarly and media interest, unethical conduct is also now pervasive in workplaces, including in the Department of Basic Education. This study found that corruption was too much in the GDE to the extent that people had to bribe to get certain positions. Corruption affects women leaders negatively during the recruitment stages and during the time when they are in leadership power. Unethical practices were not only affecting women but men also. However, it was primarily men who were more likely to benefit than women. Men have inborn confidence, which they use to approach authorities with a bribe. They can bribe the entire system that does the recruitment, or target an influential individual in the recruitment process. They can bribe in cash or they can offer arrangements which will make the recruiters benefit.

Some women also paid for jobs through other means. This results in incompetent and unqualified applicants being unfairly recommended for managerial positions in schools by either people in the panel or even the union members who act as observers during shortlisting and interviews. There have also been reports of SGB members and unions selling posts throughout the country. Thabo Makwaka of *Daily News* wrote an article about SADTU being accused of fixing promotional posts in Kwa-Dukuza, Durban. The same was reported by participants to be happening in the Gauteng Province.

A Ministerial Task Team was appointed by Minister Angie Motshekga to investigate allegations of the selling of posts of educators by members of Teachers' Unions and Departmental Officials in Provincial Education Departments. In the report, allegations of posts sold at the cost of R6 500.00 were found. Recommendations on the report included the withdrawal of powers from the SGB during recruitment of school managers, from Departmental Heads, and renegotiations of observer status of the unions. These recommendations clearly indicate that allegations of corruption in recruitment are rampant. The use of unethical tendencies to acquire positions has also reached a point where some women are now reluctant to take up leadership positions because their colleagues and even the broader society, will think that these women "...slept with

*someone to get that position*'. *'They slept their way up'* (Participant 40). This, therefore, becomes a barrier to women seeking to pursue leadership positions.

Another aspect of corruption that eventually affected women leadership is when women leaders by themselves get involved in corrupt activities that negatively affect their reputation and then diminish their prospects of being recommended for leadership positions. Corrupt activities by women employees included procurement and recruitment of new staff. The GDE Annual Report for 2020/2021 reveals that a number of men and women were charged with misconduct and attended disciplinary hearings. Some of the hearings resulted in dismissals, while some employees decided to resign. Although the document shows the majority of acts of misconduct to be those of men, it is unfortunate that several women were also involved. Some of such tendencies reported by participants were when procurement takes place, especially LTSM. It was reported that some school managers often colluded with suppliers who paid them cash when the transaction was successful. It was reported that women leaders who are already in the mess had created the non-ending challenge due to blackmail and thus, have little chance to ascend to retaining their leadership positions. The evidence produced by this study shows that the challenges which women face are not only caused by issues of religion and culture, as some feminist scholars would like to argue, but also by unethical practices in workplaces.

Corrupt tendencies are discouraged both by religion and various cultures, if not all cultures. Thus, if some women engage in unethical behaviours such as corruption which jeopardise their likelihood of being promoted to leadership positions, this should not be linked to patriarchy or women's subordination by men. What could resolve some of these challenges is the appointment of transformational leaders across the board. In recent years, several studies have explored the association between transformational leadership and several variables that could lead to successful leadership. They found that transformational leadership style has a positive effect on satisfaction (Jovanovica & Ciricb, 2016), motivation (Bogler et al., 2013), commitment (Jovanovica & Ciricb, 2016), professional growth (Kele & Pietersen, 2015), organisational conditions (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014), learning culture (Jacqui, 2019) organisational culture (Thomas, 2013), student achievement (Stenling & Tafvelin, 2014). These pieces of literature

indicate that the patterns of transformational leadership are harmonised with the organisational culture and structure of the institution and their impact on the meaning that people link with their job and their desire and readiness to take change risks. Leaders who deploy transformational leadership style convince, inspire, and motivate subordinates to realise admirable results.

Given the above, this study recommends a transformational leadership-based framework for dealing with the challenges of women leadership in the GDE.

### **6.13 A Proposed Framework for Resolving Challenges for Women Leaders**

Models are a way of rendering easiness and provide a path of investigating ways to solve the needs of beings. They furnish a less straightforward path to understanding the globe. This section provides answers to the second research objective, that is: To examine how can transformational leadership be used as a potential tool in dealing with the challenges faced by women in South African schools. The model seeks to highlight the importance of deploying transformational leadership not only in the study of women's women leadership but also in resolving the challenges they face. While the proposed model is not a perfect-finished whole, it at least provides the basis upon which future transformational leadership models focusing on the education sector can be based. The researcher hopes that other researchers will be inspired to develop this model for the best interest of women leaders within schools. The researcher also believes that if the model is developed further, it could serve as an effective instrument for resolving challenges amongst women leaders within South African schools.

The model below represents the effect of transformational leadership in resolving the challenges women leaders face in South African schools. Characteristics of a transformational leader are ethical behaviour, values, and enthusiasm, among others. The actions of a transformational leader include motivation, communication, and positive relationships. The actions of a transformational leader have the potential to yield positive output, such as positive relationships and shared values.

The portion of the figure below labelled “*elimination of barriers and challenges*”, represents the process required to eliminate the following types of barriers and challenges:

- Personal and psychological challenges such as lack of self-confidence, low self-esteem, poor self-image, family commitments/home-work balances and minimum qualifications.
- Institutional challenges such as the glass ceiling, lack of coaching, lack of networking opportunities, lack of support from DBE, Unions, Associations, SGB, parents and staff, lack of proper recruitment processes and unethical behaviour such as corruption, nepotism, and favouritism.
- Discriminatory challenges such as stereotypes, cultural beliefs and male gender preferences.

According to the model, transformational leadership is the key source to overcoming challenges faced by women leaders in South African schools. This is easily explained by the three parts of the internal portion of the figure; **Characteristics**, **Action** and **Output**. Transformational leadership’s main characteristics include ethical behaviour, values and enthusiasm. These three major characteristics yield positive actions by stakeholders of the school. Stakeholders with the characteristics mentioned above tend to communicate and support each other (Action). Such stakeholders are also well-coached and motivated, thus, enabling them to both acquire and exhibit such characteristics (**Action**). An organisation where there is communication, support, motivation and coaching yields a community with positive relationships and shared values (Output).





Source: Author (2022)

**Figure 7: Proposed model for resolving challenges of women leaders in South African schools**

The advantage of this model is that although not unknown amongst the stakeholders of education, most transformational leadership characteristics and actions are already taking place. The stakeholders just do not know that when they share values and enthusiasm, act ethically in their jobs while they motivate the people they work with and communicate effectively, all those are qualities of transformational leadership. A number of women teachers possess qualities, and they only need to be conscientised.

Implications for the model are that patriarchy has been perceived as the system that has already been accepted by society to be normal. Thus, making it difficult for people who are programmed to believe that women could become as best leaders as their counterparts. Although these people also have transformational leadership qualities, their

actions of motivating and communicating with other people might be minimal for women's benefit.

## **6.14 Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided a discussion of the results of the study as presented in Chapter 5. The chapter posits that women leaders in the GDE face numerous challenges when aspiring to ascend to leadership positions. While both the reviewed secondary sources as well as the various stakeholders that took part in the study had different views on the status of women leaders in the GDE, they all agreed that the department has structural challenges that make it difficult for women leaders to carry out their duties effectively and also that made it hard for other women who aspired to ascend to leadership positions to acquire these positions.

Some of the challenges women leaders face in the GDE are conceived as results of the country's history. The chapter shows that colonialism and apartheid instituted systems that deliberately disadvantaged women who were viewed as not strong enough to undertake manual labour that was required in mines, farms, and industry. While African culture also considers women not strong enough to perform hard labour, colonialism and religion came to seal this type of discrimination against women in economic activities. Due to the preference for male labour under colonialism, men were given priority in education and training. They were also assisted in studying technical jobs, while women were only accommodated to study assistant professions. This has seen men being leaders in most institutions, including South African schools. Radical feminists argue that this situation now needs to be changed to allow women to contribute to the broader South African socio-economic and political landscape.

African culture has also been observed as representing another barrier for women leaders. Culture assigns particular roles according to gender. It gives leadership roles to men while women are given servant roles. This situation has also infiltrated organisations and institutions, including the GDE, where out of the six school principals that participated in this study, only two were women while four were men. This shows the dominance of men in leadership positions. African culture was also linked to various stereotypical

tendencies against women by participants. It assigned them roles that made it difficult to neither train for nor pursue leadership roles. The home-work conflict was revealed as one of the key challenges to women in leadership positions. Unfortunately, some women had also accepted the various stereotypes brought about by culture and, therefore, found it difficult to challenge them. Thus, even though some feminist groups have been trying to mobilise women to stand up, they have not been able to get enough support. Therefore, women remain without a strong base from which they can lobby for release from patriarchal and cultural tendencies, and continue to be oppressed even in the workplace.

The chapter also discussed issues of institutional glass-ceiling and lack of coaching, mentoring, and networking opportunities in the GDE as some of the challenges women continue to face in their day-to-day work. In addition, it also discussed some of the personal situations which ended up as being challenges for women leaders or for women seeking to take leadership positions. The chapter also discussed issues of governance (political, SGB, and labour unions) and the role it plays in promoting or hampering the chances of women ascending to leadership positions of performing their leadership duties. It also revealed some of the challenges faced during the recruitment stages. In some cases, unethical conduct was also recorded as challenges for women leaders in the South African Department of Basic Education. In an effort to grapple with these challenges to support women leaders and increase women's visibility within the leadership of schools, the chapter argued that political will is needed to transform the entire structure that inhibits women's progress. The chapter also proposed a framework that might be used to resolve the challenges women leaders face in the GDE.

The next chapter summaries the thesis, makes conclusion and outlines possible recommendations.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1 Introduction

The post-apartheid administration that ascended to power on a democratic ticket in 1994, among many other things, had the intention to ensure that South Africa was a non-racial and non-sexist society in which, regardless of gender or race, citizens would enjoy equal access to all opportunities (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020; Bangani & VyasDoorgapersad, 2020; Kele & Pietersen, 2015; Nienaber & Moraka, 2016). As part of its commitment, the new government brought about policy frameworks for the emancipation of all its citizens, particularly women, as it was widely observed that they experienced exclusion, segregation, and exploitation (Bangani & VyasDoorgapersad, 2020). Adopted policy frameworks were meant to promote gender equality through affirmative action both in private and public sectors, including in the education sector. As detailed in Chapter 3, these included the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the Employment Equity Act, No 55 of 1998, the Bill of Rights, and the Commission of Gender Equality Act of 1996. These legislative frameworks were adopted alongside international frameworks and treaties in which the government became a signatory. To enforce the Constitution, the Commission of Gender Equality Act of 1996 provides for gender equity in the labour market, among other areas. Currently, gender equity grids are deployed in government departments to assess the number of employees per gender each time senior personnel are recommended for senior positions. However, despite these various efforts, women leaders or those seeking to ascend to leadership positions in South Africa continued to face a huge spectrum of challenges. The current thesis explored these challenges in the context of the education sector using the GDE.

The chapter concludes the thesis by summarising the study's findings obtained both through literature review and empirical investigation. The chapter also draws its major conclusions from these findings. This is followed by a discussion of the study's major contributions, the experiences and challenges encountered during the study, and the

implications of the study findings. Lastly, the chapter highlights future research directions, and concludes the thesis. The chapter aims to highlight whether the research objectives that were set in the first chapter were achieved or not. These objectives were (i) To explore the leadership status of women in South African schools' leadership structures; (ii) To identify the challenges which women face when seeking to ascend to leadership positions in South African schools; (iii) To propose transformational leadership as a potential tool in dealing with the challenges faced by women in South African schools; and (iv) to make recommendations on how women can be empowered to compete for leadership positions in South African schools.

The following section summarises the major findings of the study.

## **7.2 Summary of Study Findings**

The findings of this study are placed in two sub-sections. The first focuses on the data that was collected through the document analysis, while the second sub-section summarises empirical data that was collected through interviews and observations. The findings are then amalgamated in the conclusions and study implication sections.

### **7.2.1 Findings from the Literature**

The reviewed literature highlighted that women's leadership within the educational sector is a salient alternative in developing education in Africa in general (Mosese & Mearns, 2016). The literature shows that in the South African education sector, just like in other sectors, women are, by and large, absent from leadership positions in educational institutions, schools, colleges, and universities (Eboiyehi et al., 2016; Habib, 2013). It was also found that where women are in leadership positions, they face a huge spectrum of challenges which make them either regret or resign from leadership positions (Crafford, 2015; de Bruyn & Mestry, 2020; Habib & Habib, 2020). This has been attributed to a number of socio-economic, cultural, and political factors (Smith, 2019). Researchers such as Dlanjwa (2013) outlined different challenges faced by women worldwide. These include stereotypes, unconscious biases, lack of confidence, fears of failure, family and work balancing, as well as favoritism towards men. In South Africa, the reviewed literature

also shows that although numerous schools in South Africa have employed women as teachers, the majority of managers, especially in top management positions of principals and deputy principals are men (Nienaber & Moraka, 2016). This finding satisfied the first research objective, which sought to explore the leadership status of women within South African schools' leadership structures.

The second research objective sought to identify the challenges women face when seeking to ascend to leadership positions within South African schools. The reviewed literature posits that the lack of more women leaders in South African schools may result from the patriarchal and traditional values and practices adopted by the larger society (Kele & Pietersen, 2015; Naidoo, 2020). These tendencies can be seen in teaching, learning, and ambitions to ascend to leadership positions within the sector (Holeta, 2016; Jones, 2013). Patriarchy is a society or system that is ruled or controlled by men. According to Toktas (2020), patriarchy is a system of power and inequality that favours men in social, economic and political areas and provides men with greater access and opportunities. It signifies power differences between men and women, where women are victims while men are unnamed perpetrators (Robertson et al., 2021). Under patriarchal arrangements, there are specific roles and responsibilities which men and women perform based on gender. These roles are not biological, rather people are taught to go by them (Naidoo, 2020). The roles and responsibilities have evolved over the years, and society admits them as natural (Mbilinyi, 2016).

The literature also avers that the roles described above are reinforced by a number of institutions, including socio-cultural, political, and economic institutions (Ledwaba & Makgahlela, 2017). These roles and responsibilities are the sources of women's subordination to men, and they constrain women from accessing leadership positions even in schools. This view is supported by Mejuini (2013), who argues that the nature of education received in academic institutions today can even disempower women by blending the learning process with creed, beliefs, and other socialisations, thereby determining who women eventually become. In addition, the reviewed literature avers that the micro-politics (interactions and other informal relations) in schools and many other institutions seem to disregard the potential of women (Akudo & Okenwa, 2015).

Eventually, no matter how experienced they may be, most women educators tend to withdraw and reserve their aspirations for leadership positions within the sector. This further exacerbates the underrepresentation of women in enrolment, employment and decision-making in schools (Nudelman, 2015). With this truncated level of representation, the opportunity for women to attain positions of school leadership is even further reduced, just like in any other sector across the country (Mosese & Mearns, 2016; Njobvu & Xiu, 2014). For this reason, women continue to be seen on the periphery of power, where they are less likely to lobby for recognition in terms of acquiring leadership positions.

Consequently, there are not many women leaders within South African schools (Motshekga, 2013). According to reviewed literature, this makes it very difficult for women to mobilise and form groups from which they can begin to challenge the status quo regarding the leadership composition of South African schools since. Although there is no specific law that discriminates against women as leaders, women continue to be discriminated against anyhow (Nudelman, 2015). Unspoken discrimination tends to edge women out of leadership (Holeta, 2016).

According to some South African scholars, the discrimination and underrepresentation of women in South African workplaces, including schools, can be linked to the country's cultures and traditional beliefs and to its colonial and apartheid history (Ledwaba & Makgahlela, 2017; Nudelman, 2015). Mokoena (2018) posits that since 1994 when the country gained its independence, only a limited number of women have managed to experience growth in the context of the workplace. Only a few women have managed to gain entrance to supervisory and managerial roles, while a few others have assumed positions in which they perform technical roles. The rest of the women remain underrepresented, especially at management levels. According to Thompson and Woolard (2002), the underrepresentation of women within places of work was at its worst in 1995, when the country was emerging from a century of colonial rule and decades of apartheid. The presence of women, not only in workplaces but also in leadership positions, only began to be noticed between 1995 and 2000 (Thompson & Woolard, 2002). However, even though there began to be increased women's presence in workplaces, the number of men assuming leadership positions soared significantly,

making the percentage of women in leadership positions insignificant. According to Mokoena (2018), this situation has still not changed on an outright basis since even though in 2005, after the adoption of the SFGE, South African institutions witnessed an upturn of women from 30 per cent in 2005 and 40 per cent in 2014, this increase remains below the country's 50 per cent target.

Moreover, the data released by the DPSA (2017) show that various government departments had also lost interest in dealing with equality issues as they now focus on other issues which they consider as requiring urgent attention. The ascendancy of women to senior management has continued at an average of 1 per cent, with no signs of efforts to deal with the situation (DPSA, 2017). This shows that, if anything, the 50 per cent target can only be reached by 2025 if no efforts are made (DPSA, 2017). This view is supported by the CEE Annual Report 2016–2017, which reveals the dominance of men in senior management positions (66.7 per cent) (Department of Labour, 2018a). The report reveals that women's representation is at just about half their economically active population at the top management level, as shown in Figure 3) (DoL, 2018b).

The DPSA (2017) found that in terms of gender equality, most departments hovered between 45 per cent and 49 per cent since 2015 and seemed not to make efforts to reach the 50 per cent target. Some of the departments were still below 30 per cent in terms of their women representation (DPSA, 2017). The dominance of men in leadership positions also increased with salaries so much that the difference in men and women regarding salaries between salary levels 13 and 16 was 15.98 per cent (DPSA, 2018). At the Director-General level (salary level 16) difference was 47.56 per cent. In contrast with the level below senior management, the percentage of women is less than that of the men for all senior management salary levels (DPSA, 2018): 13 (42.20 per cent women versus 57.80 per cent male), 14 (40.81 per cent women versus 59.19 per cent male), 15 (37.76 per cent women versus 62.24 per cent male) and 16 (26.22 per cent women versus 73.78 per cent male).

In the context of the South African education sector, in 2016, the country's public had an estimated 294 675 (70 per cent) women teachers out of 418 613 (Stats SA, 2017). This



is evidence that a high percentage of teachers in South African schools are women. Sadly, in 2018, only 36 per cent of women were in Principals positions (de Bruyn & Mestry, 2020). De Bruyn and Mestry (2020) further mentioned that while women made up 43, 9 per cent of the educator workforce in 2018, only 21,4 per cent of them constituted the total number of executive managers in the country and only 17,1 per cent of all directors. In 2017/2018, the Department of Basic Education had a ratio of 38 per cent of women to 62 per cent of men appointed in the SMS, while the target of 50 per cent of women in the MMS was exceeded by 9 per cent. There is still a huge challenge in reaching the 50 per cent target of the SMS. It means that capable women in the SMS positions will need to wait for these men to retire while they capacitate themselves for the positions. The lack of recognition for women is occurring despite the national and international legislative frameworks discussed in Chapters 3 and 6 about empowerment and gender equity. As a result, several theories sought to explain the reasons behind women's subordination and discrimination or to try and show what needs to be done to improve the conditions of women. Some of the theories, as detailed in Chapter 2, including feminism, the theory of change, and transformational leadership. These three theories were used to guide understanding in the current study, as detailed in Chapter 6.

Feminism, under its various perspectives, is the belief in social, political and economic equality between sexes. It is a movement and a revolution that includes men and women who want equality in the world without boundaries and seeks to raise awareness and highlight women's subjugation and abuse within the various levels of society including the workplace and the household (Amrani et al., 2020). It is also a conscious action by members of society to change the situation of women from a bad state to a good one about women (Hermann et al., 2020). Feminism is based on the view that society places people into men and women and subsequently dispenses roles based on sex. This state is viewed as disadvantaging women both within the household setup and in the workplace (Harding et al., 2013; Letherby, 2013). These scholars contend that the human body is not something that is static, but it is an evolving phenomenon.

Feminism emerges from various theoretical backgrounds, and is grounded on historical and cultural authenticities and categories of consciousness, perception, and action

(Rummery, 2020). The theory has continued to evolve since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Malapit et al. (2014) opine that feminist theories explore the link between being a woman and occupying a particular class and performing certain roles, and how women negotiate how they are beheld and treated by society. There are three feminism waves of feminism detailed in literature (see Chapter 2). All of these waves focus on disrupting the oppression of women in society. The feminist theory does not view women as a homogenous lot. It posits that the way women negotiate the world always varies in terms of culture, politics, religion, sex, ethnicity, age, level of education, and marital status, and therefore they cannot be simply considered a homogenous group (Letherby, 2013). These aspects have a significant bearing on how women negotiate the world. The theory stresses that power is unequally shared between men and women (Harding et al., 2013). Men are considered the custodians of power. Due to the power they have, men are able to control most economic activities for their own benefit. This includes reserving leadership positions in schools for themselves.

Feminism thus regards power as unfair because it dominates and creates an uneven and unfair environment, including the work environment. This view is shared by Bayu (2019), who argues that men are considered powerful and brave in power relationships whilst women are considered to be passive and emotional. The power relations between men and women have also continued to make it difficult for women seeking to ascend to leadership positions worldwide. Because women are viewed as inferior, it is not surprising that they remain underrepresented in the school leadership structures in many countries, including South Africa, thereby compromising their rights to equality and limiting their potential to contribute to the leadership of schools.

Another theory is the theory of change. This theory focuses on (i) capacity, (ii) household influence, (iii) access, and (iv) productivity. The main argument supported is that a transparent distribution of power dynamics can be deployed to address inequality increasing the chance of women ascending to leadership positions within workplaces. Thus, men and women should be instead promoted to positions of leadership based on their capacity, productivity, as well as all the other aspects espoused in theory. Regarding capacity, the theory focuses on education, training and work experience. Productivity

focuses on the outcome and performance of leaders. Thus, if an employee, whether male or women, has the required academic qualifications and work experience and has the potential to be productive, then such an employee should be allowed to compete for leadership positions.

Lastly, the transformational leadership theory recommends that potential leaders with transformational characteristics be promoted to leadership positions regardless of gender. The theory focuses on studying the association between transformational leadership and several variables. It posits this type of leadership has a positive impact on: satisfaction (Jovanovica & Ciricb, 2016), motivation (Bogler et al., 2013), commitment (Jovanovica & Ciricb, 2016) professional growth (Kele & Pietersen, 2015), organisational conditions (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014), learning culture (Jacqui, 2019) organisational culture (Thomas, 2013), student achievement (Stenling & Tafvelin, 2014). The reviewed literature indicates that the patterns of transformational leadership are harmonised with the organisational culture and structure of the institution and their impact on the meaning people link with their job and their desire and readiness to take change risks. Leaders who deploy the transformational leadership style can convince, inspire, and motivate subordinates towards the realisation of admirable results.

In sum, the reviewed literature agrees that women are oppressed across the world and that their chances to ascend or maintain leadership positions are limited and faced with insurmountable challenges. Patriarchy is viewed as one of the key challenges which have caused the exploitation of women, including in workplaces. As a result, a number of theories have emerged to challenge the status quo. While feminism largely focuses on the need for radical transformational, the theory of change and transformational leadership theories emerged to show what needs to be done in order to improve the conditions of women leaders.

The next sub-section revisits the findings from the primary research.

### **7.2.2 Findings from the Primary Research**

The empirical investigation conducted for this thesis through in-depth interviews and personal observations showed that in the GDE, women are underrepresented in leadership positions, particularly at the levels of the school principal, which is the highest level at a school. Out of the six schools that were chosen as case studies, a total of four of these schools had men as principals, while only two schools had women principals. With regard to deputy principals, three schools had women deputies while another three had male deputies. This numeric evidence shows that there is male domination in the leadership of the participant schools. Just like what was found in the reviewed literature described above, this evidence satisfies the first research objective, which was to explore the leadership status of women within South African schools' leadership structures.

It was also found that although men dominated in leadership, their dominance was not based on any qualification or experience advantage. In fact, most women teachers in these schools also possessed academic qualifications as well as work experience similar to that of their male counterparts. Over half of all the participant teachers had more than 10 years as employees of the GDE, whereas only seven and five years of work experience are considered for principal and deputy principal leadership roles, respectively. One wonders, therefore, how these women teachers fail to ascend to leadership positions considering their qualifications and work experience.

The women in the GDE also faced several challenges that participants linked to the country's history of colonialism and apartheid. Women leaders and those women who sought to ascend to leadership positions faced insurmountable challenges that their male counterparts did not face. It was also reported that women leaders were generally less respected by their colleagues than their male counterparts. Where women leaders were respected, they would have worked so hard to achieve respect. In some cases, they would have used extraordinary force. Some male leaders also did not believe they could be viewed as equals to their women counterparts. Women participants believed that male leaders also generally believed they easily outperformed women leaders. More than half of the participants, both male and women, also believed that the gender of a manager in schools highly determined the quality of work performed by the staff and that where staff

worked harder when they were led by a woman, the woman would have proven herself first.

Participants argued that colonialism introduced some socio-economic and political ways of life that deliberately discriminated against women. While the participants' views were mixed with regard to how much of the contemporary discrimination against women should be attributed to colonialism, the majority of participants, particularly women, generally believed that the seeds of discrimination were sown during colonialism. One participant mentioned that although pre-colonial Africa was patriarchal, it could have been largely colonialism that introduced and even bolstered gender inequality in contemporary Africa because there was no outright discrimination in Africa, and women could also rule. Some participants had legislative examples to back up their claims on why colonialism should be blamed for the challenges women leaders faced as well as women's discrimination in leadership positions. One cited the Group Areas Act and also mentioned how during that time, an unmarried woman would be fired from work when she fell pregnant. It was also reported that in some instances, such women would be forced to either get married to their uncles or cousins. Women were not allowed to get a house at a 'location' unless they got married to a man who would register the house in their own name. Apartheid was also mentioned as having reinforced the challenges of women as well as their discrimination in workplaces, including in the GDE.

Indigenous cultures in South Africa were also found to be problematic for women leaders or those who sought leadership positions. The problematic role of culture within the GDE was also mentioned by participants who drew attention to how some South African cultures only considered men for traditional leadership roles such as Chieftainships, village heads, and Indunas and also leading the *lekgotla* (tribal court). It was argued that because culture is a way of life, it easily sneaks into workplaces, including the GDE. Some participants believed that the unwillingness to challenge culture in the fear of being labelled as having no *Ubuntu* that had left many men and women powerless to advocate for structural changes that can empower women in society. Some participants reported that culture conditioned people to accept certain things as normal. As a result, even when some women saw leadership vacancies advertised, they were reluctant to apply. What

emerges from the data is that culture has got certain patriarchal and stereotypical aspects that discriminate against women.

One participant mentioned that patriarchy goes hand-in-hand with culture. In patriarchal societies, men are household heads while women act as deputies. In this setup, women cannot make any decisions without the consent of men. Partly because of patriarchy, some women employees failed to apply for leadership positions. This was not because they did not want to, but because they had first to consult with the husband at home. Because leadership roles come with much responsibility, most men forbade their wives to take leadership positions.

The stereotypes that emerged from cultural practices were also challenges to women leaders or potential leaders. Participants detailed how stereotypes played out within the case study schools. One participant mentioned that leadership roles required people who are tough and that is, therefore, a masculine approach. Some participants also indicated issues of time constraints as some of the factors that made the leadership of women being considered less effective when compared to their male counterparts. A participant mentioned that *“women work both at home and at school. By the time they get to school, they are already tired. When the tiredness shows, then they are viewed as lazy, and thus, disrespected by colleagues”* (Participant 16). This shows that agentic features are viewed as an indication of ability by these participants.

Stereotypes were reported to be prevalent and often result in biased judgments in selecting potential leaders. Participants mentioned that the department, until only recently, openly preferred leaders who displayed masculine qualities, thereby deliberately side-lining women. It was found that while the department's stance has changed in recent years, the change has not resulted in any significant consideration of women as competitive leaders. Women remain largely invisible in schools, not only in the Gauteng Province but across the country. Personal observation by the researcher also revealed very few women in leadership positions in the Gauteng Province, particularly at the level of principal.

It was also found that in the GDE and across South Africa as a whole, women teachers were perceived as colleagues whose services were limited to classroom activities. It was also found that in environments where stereotypes existed heavily, a women colleague seeking to pursue a leadership career needed first to persuade the SGB and then the subordinates to support her. Stereotypical attributes associated with women tended to be not according to the attributes required for senior leadership positions, not only in the department but also in many other sectors. According to reviewed literature, this mismatch fuelled the perception that women are less qualified for top leadership positions and led to discrimination against women seeking senior leadership positions (Vial et al., 2016).

Another barrier that women often experience when seeking to ascend to leadership positions in the GDE is the home-work conflict. This barrier was found to be steeped in cultural pursuits. Women teachers, including principals, reported that they were faced with situations whereby they had to deal with home and work matters at the same time and that they had very little time to advance their careers through studying. This barrier was mentioned by participants and was confirmed by personal observations as well as the reviewed literature. Participants mentioned that while men also faced this problem, it was not a barrier, just a challenge for them.

For women, it was a barrier because they are also considered the primary caretakers of the home. Thus, the burden of familial duties falls disproportionately on them. The majority of women participants in the study mentioned cooking, cleaning, washing and taking care of their children as some of their specific roles and from which men were exempted. Some participants believed that household roles needed to be dealt with to enable them to ascend to leadership positions and alleviate the challenges they faced in leadership. Participants posited that it was a challenge for women who sought to progress career-wise while also performing all the household chores. Some participants linked household chores to issues of culture where roles are assigned based on gender. When men were probed to answer how the home-work conflict could be dealt with to deal with women's challenges in leadership, they acknowledged the unfairness. They advised that

women needed to be given a chance to lead, especially in higher positions in the GDE. They also advised schools to teach more about gender roles or gender equality.

The study found institutional factors that served as challenges women leaders faced in GDE. Institutional factors, according to participants, referred to the impressions, views and associated behaviours held by members of the institution about their institution and about the symbols that represent their shared patterns of behaviour. It also refers to the combination of challenges and support available to individuals in the education environment.

One of the institutional challenges was the glass ceiling. As stated in the previous chapters, Babic and Hansez (2021) define glass ceiling as a barrier that is faced by most women and minorities whenever they are trying to progress to higher roles that are dominated by men. These challenges are regarded as invisible because they are not acknowledged or written in policies and yet are practised in institutions. Women participants mentioned that the glass ceiling was largely responsible for the invisibility of women in leadership positions within our schools. The study found that although there were more women than male teachers in South African schools, the leaders of these schools were men, both at local and national levels. Participants linked the 'glass ceiling' problem to colonial policies as well as the inability of the independent government to overhaul their entire colonial system to implement a new one based on rationality.

The study also found that, unlike in other sectors where executive coaching is standard, in the education sector, particularly in schools, there was no coaching for leadership roles. This is one of the critical challenges as leaders within schools are mostly men due to colonial and apartheid policies as described above. Men, therefore, continue to protect their leadership territory jealously such that women remain invisible in leadership roles. Participants revealed that if the coaching facility were to be introduced in the GDE, it could also empower women through promotion to leadership positions. Women participants viewed women leadership in schools as important and an alternative to the development of basic education in South Africa. Women leadership was viewed as having the potential



to transform the basic education in South Africa, which is reported to be failing and viewed as questionable and sub-standard compared to other countries in the region.

The lack of mentorship was identified as another barrier in the GDE. Mentorship would enable the inexperienced young employees to get training from their senior colleagues, while the senior colleagues would get training on new technologies from their young colleagues. This reciprocity would eventually lead to a remarkable transformation of the department, much to the benefit of South Africa, and not only the Gauteng Department of Education. More so, where women are involved, the transformation will not only be structural but also intrinsically. This would eventually empower women who aspired to ascend to leadership positions by empowering them with the skills and knowledge needed in specific roles. The lack of coaching and mentorship facilities in the GDE also resulted in a lack of suitable networks in which women leaders could get leadership tips and support. This then bolstered male preferences and dominance in the leadership positions of schools.

Personal factors also emerged as some of the challenges women faced. Personal and psychological challenges were also found to be important restrictions to the ascendancy of women to leadership. In the reviewed literature, it was found that some women did not pursue leadership positions due to the supposed stress associated with leadership. Women participants mentioned that as a result of a myriad challenges they face in the workplace and even at home, self-confidence and self-esteem now emerged as one of the basic challenges which hampered women from competing for leadership positions within schools in the Gauteng Province. Self-confidence and self-esteem generally refer to the way that people feel about themselves, reflecting and affecting their ongoing transactions with their environment and the people they encounter in it. Lack of self-confidence and self-esteem was also accompanied by poor self-image. This also became a barrier as women leaders with poor self-image make decisions with far-reaching results within schools. Women aspiring to ascend to leadership positions also failed or were reluctant to compete for leadership positions due to poor self-image.

Education and training emerged in the study as two interlinked factors that could challenge women leaders in the GDE. However, contrary to what is dominant in the reviewed literature, the women in this study had similar qualifications and work experience to their male counterparts. In terms of qualifications and experience, male participants had no significant advantage over women. Thus, the issue of academic qualifications and work experience have no significant effect on the GDE because when managerial positions are advertised; the department only requires an undergraduate qualification. Only when there are numerous applications for a single position do the shortlisting criteria include qualifications whereby applicants are scored according to their level of studies (see Table 4). The table shows that if a women applicant holds a PhD, she will stand a better chance of being shortlisted than someone who only possesses an undergraduate qualification. Surprisingly, men who did not have PhDs still stood a better chance of being appointed for leadership positions.

Support structures were found to be very important in dealing with the challenges of women leaders in the GDE. One of the support structures mentioned by participants was political support. Potential political support for women leadership within the GDE could emerge from the government itself, the primary protector of all citizens. Political support would be when the government provides various forms of assistance to women leaders and aspiring leaders to help them deal with the challenges they face in the department. Participants believed that instead of rhetoric on women empowerment and equality of genders, political institutions and other establishments needed to speed up implementation so that women are recognised as equals practically and not rhetorically. Participants agreed that political support, although imperative, was absent to empower women to assume leadership positions within the GDE. Participants reported that lack of political will at the political level is the main problem for women in the GDE and elsewhere. They posited that the GDE simply needed political will for women to be supported to deal with the challenges they face and ascend to positions of leadership.

The other support structure mentioned was the family and community. Participants considered the family and the community as the primary institution conditioning people to aspire to certain roles, including leadership and how they can deal with their challenges.

Family and community show support by encouraging, cheerleading, nurturing, accepting and showing affection to community or family members. The socialisation of women to become dependent on men, which is the leading cause of women's subjugation by men even in the workplace, takes place in the home and in the community. Thus, the support of the family and community system is needed in order to deal with the challenges of women leaders.

Support by managers was also found to be key for women leaders in resolving the challenges they faced. Most participants complained that many school managers provided them with no support to ascend to leadership positions. Similarly, school principals also complained that they received no adequate support from their supervisors from the GDE. The lack of support for principals by Cluster Leaders in the Gauteng Province causes more problems for women principals as they face more challenges than their male counterparts. Thus, supervisory or managerial support was one of the issues reported as important to enable women not only to ascend to leadership positions but also to perform better and increase their chances for future promotions.

In dealing with the challenges women leaders face in the GDE, some participants required that the types of leaders be appointed, not only in schools but also at the departmental level. It was posited that to produce good results, schools needed to be led by leaders with quality standards who are effective, accountable, dedicated and responsible. The majority of the participants, both educators and principals, described a great leader as someone who motivates, listens, is empathetic, emotionally intelligent, accommodative, involves subordinates, leads from all sides, is fair, hard-working and most importantly, competent. They believed that such leaders had the potential to assist women leaders in dealing with their various challenges in the workplace. It was suggested that leadership needed to be harnessed with political support from various stakeholders who are actively engaged with schools. These include the SGB and labour unions. The SGBs and labour unions needed not only to support the appointment of women leaders in schools but also to offer the necessary support so that these women leaders can overcome their challenges as leaders. Support was also mentioned as very important during the

recruitment process because it is usually at this stage that women encounter challenges that block them from ascending to leadership positions.

Lastly, unethical behaviours were rampant. Participants mentioned that corruption was overwhelming prevalent in the department to an extent that people bribed others to get positions, whether leadership or non-leadership. It was reported that corruption negatively affected women leaders during the recruitment stages and when they were in leadership. Participants revealed that many people were being unfairly recommended for managerial positions in schools by people in the panel or even by the Unions who act as observers during shortlisting and interviews. Participants also mentioned that with the way corruption is so rampant if a women became a manager; women would accuse them of sleeping with someone to get that position. This, therefore, discouraged other women who would like to pursue leadership positions and yet who do not want to complicate their marriages.

### **7.3 Conclusions**

In view of the findings of this study, both through secondary sources and empirical investigation, the following conclusions are made.

Women are underrepresented in the leadership of the GDE schools. In the six schools that were chosen as case studies for this thesis, a total of four of these schools had male principals, while only two schools had women principals. With regard to deputy principals, three schools had women deputies while another three had male deputies. This numeric evidence shows that there is male domination in the leadership of these schools. This evidence confirms what was highlighted in the reviewed secondary sources that there is male-domination in the South African education system. In 2016, the South African education sector (public), had an estimated 294 675 (70 per cent) women teachers out of 418 613 (Statistics South Africa, 2017). This is evidence that a high percentage of teachers in South African schools were women. Sadly, in 2018, only 36 per cent of women were in Principals positions (de Bruyn & Mestry, 2020). De Bruyn and Mestry (2020) further reveal that while women made up 43,9 per cent of the educator workforce in 2018, only 21,4 per cent of them constituted to the total number of executive managers of the

country and only 17,1 per cent of all directors. Thus, in response to the first research question of the study, it can be concluded that women are underrepresented in the leadership of the GDE schools.

The challenges women leaders in the GDE face are steeped in cultural, colonial, apartheid, and religious beliefs which view women as weak, fragile, less productive, and too soft. In the reviewed literature, productive leadership is associated with masculine characteristics. According to the reviewed literature, descriptive stereotypes dictate that women are communal, soft, compassionate, and warm, while men are often stereotyped with agentic features such as being poised, tough, focused, enthusiastic, and self-confident (Dlanjwa, 2018). Incidentally, agentic features are viewed as vital traits for leadership (Tekwa & Adesina, 2018). Participants in this study, both male and women, also believed that leadership roles required people who are tough. This shows that even women in the GDE themselves view agentic features as an indication of ability as a leader.

Stereotypes which emanate from culture and religion, as indicated above, have reinforced women's underrepresentation in the leadership structures of GDE schools. Stereotypes disempowered many women potential leaders in the participant schools. Participants confirmed that stereotypes in the GDE often resulted in biased judgments in the appointment of potential leaders. It was reported that the GDE, until only recently, openly preferred leaders who displayed masculine qualities, thereby deliberately side-lining women. The study also found that in schools where stereotypes existed heavily, a women teacher seeking to pursue a leadership career needed to first persuade the SGB and then the subordinates to support her.

While home-work conflicts are stressed in the reviewed literature as some of the key challenges, in this study, personal and institutional challenges emerged as key challenges instead. Glass-ceiling, in particular, was found to be the significant challenge that was very difficult to deal with because it is invisible and is not acknowledged or written in policies and yet is practised in institutions (see Chapter 6).

Women employees in the GDE were not just being barred by socio-religion and political factors in their aspirations to ascend to leadership positions. Like in the reviewed literature, this study found that personal and psychological challenges were also pervasive. These included a lack of self-confidence and poor self-image. In the reviewed literature, it was found that some women did not pursue leadership positions due to the supposed stress associated with leadership. It is posited that women who wanted to avoid stress simply avoid leadership positions (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020). It was also found that women's experiences have indicated that gender role expectations affect personal and professional relationships and have consequences for both career advancement and family responsibilities (Bandiera, 2019).

It is not entirely correct for some scholars to argue that for women to make a meaningful contribution to society, it is important that they be capacitated with education and training (Hillesland, 2019). The evidence gathered in this study showed that women in the GDE are equally educated, although they were not given a chance to assume leadership positions. The problem which is faced by these women in the GDE is not about them, but it is about the department itself which uses undefined standards in promoting its employees.

There is a lack of strong support structures to assist women leaders to deal with the challenges they face within the GDE. It was also found that institutional or organisational cultures that do not deliberately support women's empowerment can also hinder and frustrate their raise aspiration to leadership positions. Participants mentioned that in most organisations, including in the GDE, leadership structures were male-dominated, thereby leaving very limited chances for women to penetrate to leadership positions.

The lack of political will to enforce transformation by promoting women to positions of leadership within schools is one of the reasons women fail to ascend to leadership positions in the GDE.

The unethical practices, such as corruption, nepotism, and tribalism, among others, were some of the challenges which women leaders faced in the GDE. The study found that corruption was too much in the GDE to the extent that people had to bribe to get certain

positions. Corruption affected women leaders negatively during recruitment stages and during the time when they were in leadership. Unethical practices were not only affecting women but men also. However, it was mostly men who were more likely to benefit than women.

Before discussing the implications of the results of the study, the next section outlines the contributions made by this study.

#### **7.4 The Contributions of the Study**

The study made three contributions, which are theoretical, practical, and methodological.

At the theoretical level, the study contributes to the interpretation of the three theories that were used in the thesis. These are feminism, the theory of change, and the transformational leadership theory. The other contribution of the thesis at the theoretical level is the expansion of knowledge on the debate on women's empowerment in South Africa. The interpretation of the three theories can be viewed as a theoretical contribution because, together with the proposed framework for resolving the challenges of women leaders, they can be used in the designing of land redistribution programmes. The proposed framework can be used in the study of women empowerment programmes. The framework can be adjusted and improved depending on the context because, on its own, it may be inadequate to clarify the various challenges faced by women leaders in schools. Although underdeveloped, the framework may be used as a starting point for developing models for implementing and analysing women empowerment programmes.

The practical contributions of the study emerge from both the theories and the empirical findings. The study used both empirical evidence and secondary sources to address an enduring of women empowerment in South Africa. Thus, the study contributes not only to the understanding of the challenges of women leaders in the GDE but also to the women's challenges in the workplace. The proposed framework also introduces a variety of avenues through which various categories of women's challenges can be resolved. The framework could assist in identifying structural factors that frustrate transformational changes in the GDE. The researcher believes that unless the structural challenges that

segregate other employees, such as women, and do not provide them with an equal chance to contribute to the GDE, the department may not be able to achieve the change it dreams of. If the challenges women employees face in the GDE are well-identified and addressed before and after appointing leaders, then structural transformation could be realised.

The study also makes methodological contributions. It is vital for a researcher to understand suitable methodologies to grasp a particular phenomenon. Thus, the contribution of this study to methodology is related to the theoretical contributions. The interviews with teachers in the GDE and the union representative and SGBs showed how to apply theory and research approaches in understanding women's challenges in the GDE. This is supported by some research experts who suggest that the mixture of research approaches in a study should be guided by a theoretical and conceptual orientation (Cohen et al., 2018; Skoczylas, 2019). Given the complexities of women empowerment and gender equality discourses in South Africa, it was vital that the research methodologies be clarified to enable other researchers and readers to follow up on how the data was collected and interpreted.

## **7.5 Implications of Study Findings**

In line with the last research objective of the thesis, this section discusses the key implication of the data that was collected for the study.

- ***Transformation***

Transformation in terms of leadership in the GDE needs to start at the department level itself before it can come down to the school level. Moving towards resolving women's challenges requires levelling the playing field so that women can also have an opportunity to compete for positions without facing colonially-based and culturally-motivated challenges.



- ***Glass-ceiling resolve***

The glass ceiling emerged as one of the major challenges to the ascendancy of women to leadership positions within the GDE. This, therefore, can only be resolved if there is a strong political will. The realisation of this political will requires that women participate in political leadership. The participation of women at the political level could afford them a greater occasion to sway policy so that there are policies that specifically promote women's leadership. When women have political power, they are able to make suggestions in terms of decisions and, thus, influence how leadership positions are distributed within schools and other workplaces. When women are able to have some influence at a political level, it would also spill workplaces and thus, increase their chances to ascend to leadership positions.

- ***Political Intervention***

Transforming the entire GDE as part of the collective effort to eliminate the challenges women face in schools requires the collective support of everyone across the body from the national level. The transformation of the education sector does not only require the participation of the education sector. It also requires political intervention. The lack of political will to enforce transformation through promoting women to positions of leadership within schools was one of the reasons women failed to ascend to leadership positions. Thus, for gender equality to be realised within the GDE, it is crucial that a strong political will be motivated.

- ***Practical Implementation***

There is a need to move from ideological standpoints to implementation. The participation of women at the political level could afford them a greater occasion to sway policy so that there are policies that are sensitive to gender (Powell et al., 2018). When women have political power, they are able to make suggestions in terms of decisions, thus influencing how positions within workplaces are distributed. When women are able to have some influence at a political level, it would also spill over into workplaces and thus, increase their chances to ascend to leadership positions. As part of practical implementation

efforts, the GDE also needs to support the implementation of networks that are deliberately targeted at women, and ensure that particular forms of knowledge, skills and experiences are shared. If done correctly, this could be one of the ways through which to deal with the challenges which women employees encounter when seeking to ascend to leadership positions in the GDE.

- ***Coaching and Mentorship***

The study found that the GDE does not have the coaching facility for potential leaders in the context of schools. It is recommended, therefore, that the department make use of coaching as a way of developing potential women leaders. In such coaching, coaches need to be aware of how to stimulate interest in women through designing coaching plans that take into account the various personal needs of women (Hopkins & O'Neil, 2015).

Mentorship is also important for dealing with some of the challenges women leaders face in the GDE. Mentorship can enable inexperienced young employees to get training from their senior colleagues while the senior colleagues would get training on new technologies from their young colleagues. Male employees could be enabled to learn from their women colleagues and vice versa. This reciprocity would eventually lead to a significant transformation of the department, much to the benefit of the GDE. Transformation would open the leadership gates for aspiring women leaders. More so, where women are involved, the transformation will not only be structural but also intrinsically, much to the benefit of the department as a whole.

- ***Radicalism***

In view of the discussion above, masculinity mobilisation such as those pushed forward by some strands of feminism, such as radical feminism, may not yield any results in resolving the challenges faced by women leaders in the GDE. Masculinity viewpoints seek to uphold a one-sided view on gender, and they project men as the only problem which is faced by women and yet do not take religion as a factor. This view has led to the creation of masculinity viewpoints as a platform to examine male dominance and women's subjugation. If applied in the context of the participants of this study, this

perspective could not work because it will be resisted by women who seek to uphold their religious beliefs. It is in this view that the transformational leadership theory and the change of change are suggested as providing alternative ways of dealing with this challenge.

In view of the implications of the results discussed above, the researcher believes that the last research objective of the thesis was satisfied.

## **7.6 Future Research Directions**

More research is needed on the productive levels of male versus women leaders in the GDE. This can be measured in terms of pass rates or any other variables. The result should then explain the representation status of women in leadership in the GDE. Research is also needed on why the DBE continues to make timid progress in gender representation in leadership positions while other departments are making some progress, although not very significant. It would also be interesting to explore whether women with higher qualifications still pursue leadership positions at school levels or whether they changed professions. Although many participants mentioned doctoral degrees, there was not even one participant who had a such a degree although some were pursuing their doctorate degrees. The question is whether these employees stayed or left after completing their studies. In exploring these issues, it may be essential to change the research strategy from what has been used in this study.

## **7.7 Chapter Summary**

This chapter concluded the thesis. The chapter revisited the research objectives and questions as outlined in the first chapter with the aim to observe whether these were satisfied in the thesis. The chapter concluded the research objectives and questions were all satisfied. The chapter also provided a summary of the major findings, both in the reviewed secondary sources and in the data that was gathered empirically. Thereafter, major conclusions were drawn from the data. Some of the key conclusions were that there is a huge underrepresentation of women in the leadership of the GDE, particularly at the school level. This underrepresentation thus became the basis for most of the challenges

which women leaders or those who aspired to ascend to leadership positions faced in the department. Among other things, the chapter recommends the need for political structural transformation as part of dealing with the challenges of women leaders in the GDE. The chapter also highlights some areas that would require additional research so as to close the gap that exists in available knowledge.

## REFERENCES

- Abdullah Kamal, S. S. L. B. 2019. Research paradigm and the philosophical foundations of a qualitative study. *People: international journal of Social Sciences*, 4(3), 1386–1394. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2019.43.13861394>.
- Adams-Prassl, A., Boneva, T., Golin, M., & Rauh, C. 2020. Inequality in the impact of the coronavirus shock: Evidence from real-time surveys. *Journal of Public Economics*, 189(104245), 1-33. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2020.104245>.
- Akpan, N. S. 2015. Women and Rural Development in Nigeria: Some Critical Issues for Policy Consideration. *Social Sciences*, 4(5):110–8. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11648/J.SS.20150405.11>.
- Akudo, F. & Okenwa, G. 2015. Focusing of change in educational leadership: the need for women leaders in tertiary institutions. *American journal of educational research* 3(8) PP 959-963. <http://pubs.sciepub.com/education/3/8/2/index.html>.
- Alaqahtani, T.H. 2020. The Status of Women in Leadership. *Archives of Business Research*, 8(3):294-299.
- Al-Ashri, D. 2016. Women in Africa: A Different Social Role, Center for African Studies, [http://africansc.iq/index.php?news\\_view&req=1e2ae2585b15e01b](http://africansc.iq/index.php?news_view&req=1e2ae2585b15e01b). Accessed: 27/05/2021.
- Alkire, S., Foster, J., Seth, S., Santos, M., Roche, J. and Ballon, P. 2015. *Multidimensional Poverty Measurement and Analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Amanchukwu, R. N., Stanley, J. G. and Ololube, P. N. 2015. A review of Leadership Theories, Principles and Styles and Their Relevance to Educational Management. *Management*, 5(1): 6-14.
- Amirault, J. R. 2019. *A Political Strategy for the Liberation of Women: Socialist Feminist Political Practice*. Carleton University Ottawa, Ontario. (PhD Thesis).

Amrani, M., Chaib, R., Bouzaouit, A., and Ion, V. 2020. Well-being at work: A lever for sustainable performance in workplace. *Min. Sci*, 27, 89–104.

Andi, S., Selva, M., Nielsen, R. K. 2020. *Women and Leadership in the News Media 2020: Evidence from Ten Markets*. Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

Anney, V. N. 2014. Ensuring the Quality of the Findings of Qualitative Research: Looking at Trustworthiness Criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies* 5(2): 272-281.

Babbie, E.R. 2016. *The practice of social research*. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning

Babic, A. & Hansez, I. 2021 The Glass Ceiling for Women Managers: Antecedents and Consequences for Work-Family Interface and Well-Being at Work. *Front. Psychol.* 12:618250. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.618250>

Balboni, C., Bandiera, O., Burgess, R., Ghatak, M., & Heil, A. 2020. Why do people stay poor? Technical Report, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, United Kingdom.

Bandiera, O., Buehren, N., Goldstein, M. P., Rasul, I., & Smurra, A. 2019. *The Economic Lives of Young Women in the Time of Ebola: Lessons from an Empowerment Program*. The World Bank.

Banerjee, A., Karlan, D., Osei, R. D., Trachtman, H., & Udry, C. 2018. Unpacking a multifaceted program to build sustainable income for the very poor (No. w24271). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Bangani, A. & VyasDoorgapersad, S. 2020. 'The implementation of gender equality within the South African Public Service (1994–2019)', *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review* 8(1), a353. <https://doi.org/10.4102/apsdpr.v8i1.353>.

Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. Free Press; Collier Macmillan.

Bass, B. & Riggio, R. 2006. *Transformational Leadership*. 2nd ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associate.

Bayu, E. K. 2019. A comparative analysis on the perspectives of African Feminism Vs Western Feminism: philosophical debate with their criticism and its implication for women's rights in Ethiopia context. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 11(4): 54-58

Beenen, G., Pichler, S., Livingston, B. & Riggio, R. 2021. The Good Manager: Development and Validation of the Managerial Interpersonal Skills Scale. *Front. Psychol.* 12:631390. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.631390>

Bemba, A. 2018. Women in Africa- Reading in the customs and traditions surrounding them", <http://www.A5%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9>.

Berry, J., Karlan, D., & Pradhan, M. 2018. The impact of financial education for youth in Ghana. *World Development*, 102, 71-89.

Black, S. A., Groombridge, J. J., & Jones, C. G. 2013. Using Better Management Thinking to Improve Conservation Effectiveness. *ISRN Biodiversity*, 2013, Article ID: 784701.

Blakeley, S., 2021. Where do stereotypes come from? How are stereotypes formed? Learn the stereotype definition, effects of stereotyping and different types of stereotypes. Study.com. Available at: <https://study.com/learn/lesson/what-is-a-stereotype.html> [Accessed 06 November 2021].

Blumberg, B., Cooper, D. R and Schindler, P.S. 2014. The research process and proposal. *Business Research Methods*, pp.55-105.

Bogler, R., Caspi, A., & Roccas, S. (2013). Transformational and passive leadership: an initial investigation of university instructors as leaders in a virtual learning environment. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 41(3): 372–392. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1741143212474805>.

Bonne, L. & Johnston, M. 2016. Students' beliefs about themselves as mathematics learners. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 20, 17–28.

<http://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2016.02.001>.

Bourne, J., Liu, Y., Shields, C. A., Jackson, B., Zumbo, B. D., & Beauchamp, M. R. 2013. The relationship between transformational teaching and adolescent physical activity: The mediating roles of personal and relational efficacy beliefs. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 20(2): 132–143. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1359105313500096>.

Brace, I. (Ed.) 2018. *Questionnaire Design: How to Plan, Structure and Write Survey Material*

Brinkmann, S. 2018. *The Interview*. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln. (Eds.). *The SAGE*

Bryman, A. & Burgess, A. 2014. *Research methodology: Business management contexts*. 3ed. Oxford University Press: Southern Africa.

Bryman, A. 2012. *Social Research Methods*. 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Burawoy, M. 2009. *The Extended Case Method: Four Sanctuaries', Four Decades, Four Great Transformations, and One Theoretical Tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Buvinic, M., O'Donnell, M., & Bourgault, S. 2020. "Women's Economic Empowerment in West Africa: Towards a Practical Research Agenda." CGD Working Paper 584.

Washington, DC: Center for Global Development.

<https://www.cgdev.org/publication/womens-economic-empowerment-west-africa-towards-practical-researchagenda>.

Campos, F., Frese, M., Goldstein, M., Iacovone, L., Johnson, H. C., McKenzie, D. & Mensmann, M. 2018. Is personal initiative training a substitute or complement to the existing human capital of women? Results from a randomized trial in Togo. In *AEA Papers and Proceedings* (Vol. 108, pp. 256-61).



Carli, L.L. Eagly, A.H. 2016. "Women face a labyrinth: an examination of metaphors for women leaders", *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, Vol 31 No. 8, pp 514 – 527.

Carter, C. 2013. What's feminism got to do with it? Examination of feminism in women's everyday lives. *Journal of Feminist Scholarship*, 1 (5): 1- 20.

Cassell, C. & Bishop, V. 2019. Qualitative data analysis: Exploring themes, metaphors and stories. *European Management Review*, 16(1): 195-207.

CEDAW. 2016. Women's human rights explained. Online vide. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAWeNmMqeag> Accessed: [13 May 2020].

Cerrato, J., Cifre, E. 2018. Gender Inequality in Household Chores and Work-Family Conflict. *Front. Psychol.* 9:1330. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01330 [Accessed on 31 October 2021].

Chad, P. & Jensen, O. 2018. Approaches to combining induction and deduction in one research study. Southern Cross University, p.1-9.

Chand, S. 2015. Action research model of organisation development. Your Article Library. Retrieved from: <http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/hrm/action-research-model-of-organisation-developmentexplained-with-diagram/35317>.

Choudhry, A. N., Mutalib, M. R. & Ismail, N. S. A. 2019. Theorizing Feminist Research in Rural Areas of the Punjab, Pakistan. *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 7(10): 33-40.

Chu, A. & Posner, C. 2013. The state of women in America: A 50-state analysis of how women are faring across the nation [Report]. Retrieved from the Center for American Progress website: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/report/2013/09/25/74836/the-state-of-women-in-america/succeeds-and-women-arebest-at-it>.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. 2018. *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). New Collective Agreement 2 of 2015.

Conde-Ruiz, J. I., Garcia M. and Yanez, M. 2020. "Does a "soft" board gender quotas policy work?", *Applied Economic Analysis*, Vol. 28 No. 82, pp. 46-68.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/AEA-09-2019-0029>.

Crafford, W.L. 2015. 'The relationship between directors' remuneration and financial performance: An investigation into South African JSE-listed industrial firms', dissertation, Stellenbosch University.

Creswell, J. W. 2018. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions* (4th ed.). California: Sage.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. 2018. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and Mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

Creswell, J.W. 2014. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Croke, K., Goldstein, M., & Holla, A. (2017). *Can Job Training Decrease Women's Self-Defeating Biases? Experimental Evidence from Nigeria*. The World Bank.

Dalimonte-Merckling, J. M. W., 2020. Parenting Styles and Their Effects. In: J. B. Benson, ed. *Encyclopedia of Infant and Early Childhood Development*. s.l.: Elsevier, p. 496–509.

Darong, H.C., & Menggo, S. 2021. Repositioning culture in teaching target language: local culture or target language? *Premise: Journal of English Education and Applied Linguistics*. University of Muhammadiyah Metro. Indonesia.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.24127/pj.v10i2.4106> [Accessed on 6 November 2021].

Das, N. 2021. "Training the disadvantaged youth and labour market outcomes: Evidence from Bangladesh", *Journal of Development Economics*, Vol. 149/102585, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2020.102585>.

- Day, C & Gray, A. 2017. 'Health and related indicators.' In Padarath A & Barron P. (Eds.). *South African health review 2017*. Durban: Health Systems Trust, 217–339.
- Davies, S. E. & Bennett, B. A. 2016. Gendered human rights analysis of Ebola and Zika: locating gender in global health emergencies. *International Affairs*, 92: 1041–60.
- Dean, B. A. 2018. The interpretivist and the learner. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 12, 1-8.
- De Bruyn, N. & Mestry, R. 2020. Voices of resilience: Women school principals, leadership skills, and decision-making techniques. *South African Journal of Education*, 40(3): 1-9.
- De Vos, A., Strydom, H., Fouche, C., & Delpont, C. 2011. *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Service Professions*. (4th Ed.) Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Dee-Price, B. J. M., Hallahan, L., Nelson Bryen, D. & Watson, J. M. 2020. Every voice counts: exploring communication accessible research methods. *Disability and Society*, 36(2), 240-264. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2020.1715924>.
- Department of Labour. 2018a. Commission for employment equity 17th annual report 2016–2017, Department of Labour: Pretoria.
- Department of Labour. 2018b. Commission for employment equity 18th annual report 2017–2018. Department of Labour: Pretoria.
- Dercon, S. & Gollin, D. 2014. *Agriculture in African Development: A Review of Theories and Strategies*, CSAE Working Paper, WPS/2014, 22.
- Dhar, D., Jain, T. & Jayachandran, S. 2022. "Reshaping Adolescents' Gender Attitudes: Evidence from a School-Based Experiment in India." *American Economic Review*, 112 (3): 899-927. DOI: 10.1257/aer.20201112.

Dietz, C., Zacher, H., Scheel, T., Otto, K. & Rigotti, T. 2020. Leaders as role models: Effects of leader presenteeism on employee presenteeism and sick leave. *Work Stress*, 34 (3), 300–322, DOI: [10.1080/02678373.2020.1728420](https://doi.org/10.1080/02678373.2020.1728420)

Dalimonte-Merckling, J. M. W., 2020. Parenting Styles and Their Effects. In: J. B. Benson, ed. *Encyclopedia of Infant and Early Childhood Development*. sl.: Elsevier, p. 496–509.

Dlanjwa, M. Z. 2018. Gender Equality and the Advancement of Women into Senior Management Positions: Assessing the Perceptions of the Diversity and Gender Initiatives Section of the City of Cape Town. Stellenbosch University (Masters Dissertation).

du Toit, Elda, & Lekoloane, K. 2018. Corporate social responsibility and financial performance: Evidence from the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, South Africa. *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences*, 21(1), 11. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4102/sajems.v21i1.1799>.

Duvendack, M. & Mader, P. 2020. “Impact of financial inclusion in low and middle-income countries: A systematic review of reviews”, *Journal of Economic Surveys*, Vol. 34(3): 594-629, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/joes.12367>.

Eboiyehi, C., Fayomi, I. & Eboiyehi, F. 2016. From exclusion to discrimination: Gender inequality in the senior management of Nigerian universities. *Issues in educational research*, 26(2): 182- 205.

Eckert, S. & Assmann, K. 2021. ‘The “ProQuote” Initiative: Women Journalists in Germany Push to Revolutionize Newsroom Leadership’. *Feminist Media Studies*, 1–18.

Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) 2008. Framework for the establishment of an occupation specific dispensation (OSD) for educators in public education. Collective Agreement Number 1, April 2008.

<https://elrc.org.za/wpcontent/uploads/2020/10/CollectiveAgreementNo1of2008.pdf>

Egan, S. 2017. The Bolsheviks and the Sexual Revolution. *Irish Marxist Review* 6: 36-41.

Elo, S., Kaariainen, M., Kanste, O., Polkki, T., Utriainen, K. and Kyngas, H. 2014. Qualitative Content Analysis: A focus on Trustworthiness. *SAGE Open.*, 4(1), 1-10. Doi:10.1177/2158244014522633.

Enas A.A., Islam A.I. & Tahani R.K.B. 2021. Understanding Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods: A Theoretical Perspective for Young Researchers. *International Journal of Research*, 8(2): 71-87.

Equality and Human Rights Commission. 2016. CEDAW – women’s human rights explained. Online vide. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAWeNmMqeag>.

Farooq, M. B. & de Villiers, C. 2017. Telephonic qualitative research interviews: when to consider them and how to do them. *Meditari Accountancy Research*, 25(2), 291–316. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MEDAR-10-2016-0083>.

Federation of South African Women. 1954. The Women’s Charter. [Online]. Available: <http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/womens-charter>. (Accessed 15/06/2021).

Feess E., Feld, J. and Noy, S. 2021. People Judge Discrimination Against Women More Harshly Than Discrimination Against Men – Does Statistical Fairness Discrimination Explain Why? *Front. Psychol.* 12:675776. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2021.675776 [Accessed on 10 November 2021].

Fielder, F. E. 1971. Validation and extension of the contingency model of leadership effectiveness: A review of empirical findings. *Psychological Bulletin*, 76(2): 128–148.

Fineman, M. A. 2013. Feminism, Masculinities and multiple identities. *Nevada Law Journal* 3(2): 619-639.

Flick, U. 2018. *An introduction to qualitative research* (6th Ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

- Foster B., Jackson G., Cross W., Jackson, B. and Hardiman R. 1988. Workforce diversity and business. *Training and Development Journal*, 42:38-41.
- Fritz, C. and Knippenberg, D. 2017. Gender & Leadership aspiration: The impact of organizational identification. *Leadership & Organisation Development Journal*, 38(8), 1018-1037.
- Furtner, M. Baldegger, U. 2012. "Full Range Leadership". Self-Leadership und Führung (in German). Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden: 131–188.
- Gaus, N. 2017. "Selecting research approaches and research designs: a reflective essay". *Qualitative Research Journal*, 17(2), 99–112. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-07-2016-0041>.
- Gardiner, J. 2005. Men, masculinities, and feminist theory. In M. S. Kimmel J. Hearn, & R. W. Connell *Handbook of studies on men & masculinities* (pp. 35-50). SAGE <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452233833.n3>
- Gauteng Department of Education. 2020. GDE Recruitment and Selection Policy for Implementation Guidelines for the Appointment of School Based Educators and Chief/Education Therapists
- Gauteng Department of Education. 2021. Annual report 2020/2021.
- Gipson, A. N., Pfaff, D. L., Mendelsohn, D. B., Catenacci, L. T. & Burke, W. W. 2017. Women and Leadership: Selection, Development, Leadership Style, and Performance. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, Vol. 53(1) 32 –65.
- Goko, C. 2013. New gender equality bill aims to change the landscape for SA women. <http://www.bdlive.co.za/business/2013/08/19/newgender-equality-b'ill's-aim-to-change-landscape-for-sa-women>. (Accessed 16/06/2021).
- Graves, L. M., & Luciano, M. M. 2013. Self-determination at work: Understanding the role of leader-member exchange. *Motivation and Emotion*, 37(3): 518–536. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s11031-012-9336-z>.

Gravetter, F. J. & Forzao, B. 2016. Research methods for behavioural sciences. (5th Ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth: Cengage Learning.

Gregory, B. & Osmonbekov, T. 2019. Leader–member exchange and employee health: An exploration of explanatory mechanisms. *Leadersh. Organ. Dev. J*, 40, 699–711.

Habib, A. 2013. Reflections of a university bureaucrat interested in advancing a progressive social agenda. In *The aims of higher education*. Council on Higher Education (South Africa), Ed. Pretoria: Council on Higher Education. 63–74.

Habib, S.A. & Habib, I. 2020. Discrimination against wife in the perspective of CEDAW and Islam Mubadalah. *South African Journal of Higher Education* 20(2):253-268.

Harafesheh, I. 2018. Principles Detailed in the Quran, which Regulate the Lives of Muslim Women. *American Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. 4(4): 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.21694/2378-7031.18007>

Harmer, E. 2021. 'Telling Tales: Gender and Political Journalism', in J. Morrison, J. Birks, M. Berry (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Political Journalism*. (1st edition). London: Routledge.

Harding, N., Ford, J. & Fotaki, M. 2013. 'Is the "F"-word still dirty? A past, present and future of/for feminist and gender studies in organization', *Organization* 20(1), 51–65. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1350508412460993>.

Harper, C. 2020. "Gender, power and progress: How norms change", Report, Advancing Learning and Innovation on Gender Norms (ALIGN)/Overseas Development Institute, London, <http://www.alignplatform.org/gender-power-progress>.

Haselip, J., Desgain, D., & Mackenzie, G. 2014. Financing energy SMEs in Ghana and Senegal: Outcomes, barriers and prospects. *Energy Policy*, 65, 369-376.

Helpboard, H., 2018. Recruitment Policy Procedure in HRM with a Sample of Recruitment and Selection Policy for Example, s.l.: HR Helpboard.

Hermann, S., Starker, A., Geene, R. and Jordan, S. 2021. Factors in the Use of Workplace Health Promotion on Back Health. Results of the Survey “German Health Update”. *Front. Public Health*, 9, 638242.

Hillesland, M. 2019. Gender differences in risk behavior: An analysis of asset allocation decisions in Ghana. *World Development*, 117, 127-137.

Holeta, V. 2016. Decolonisation of higher education: Dismantling epistemic violence and Eurocentrism in South Africa. *Transformation in Higher Education* 1(1).

Hopkins, M. M., & O’Neil, D. A. (2015). Authentic leadership: Application to women leaders. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6. Retrieved from [http://www.frontiersin.org/Journal/Abstract.aspx?s=1704&name=organizational\\_psychology&ART\\_DOI=10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00959](http://www.frontiersin.org/Journal/Abstract.aspx?s=1704&name=organizational_psychology&ART_DOI=10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00959).

Hogue, E. and Alkire, S. 2014. Measuring progress toward empowerment: Women’s empowerment in agriculture index: Baseline report. Washington, D.C.: IFPRI.

Hoyt, C.L. & Murphy, S.E. 2016. Managing to clear the air: Stereotype threat, women, and leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(3): 387 – 399.

Inceoglu, I., Thomas, G., Chu, C., Plans, D. & Gerbasi, A. 2018. Leadership behaviour and employee well-being: An integrated review and a future research agenda. *Leadership*, 29, 179–202.

Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2016. Women in politics: World classification. Retrieved from <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>.

Iscan, O. F., Ersari, G., & Naktiyok, A. 2014. Effects of Leadership Style on Perceived Organisational Performance and Innovation: The Role of Transformational Leadership beyond the Impact of Transactional Leadership. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 19(4).

Jacqui, P. (2019). Exploring examples of women’s leadership in African contexts. *Agenda*, 33:1, 3-8, DOI: 10.1080/10130950.2019.1602977



Jali, N., Suknunan, S., & Bhana, A. 2021. Challenges impeding women into leadership roles in a student-led organization at a South African higher education institution. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 19(4): 508-518.

Jones, W. 2013. Academic Communities and their Students. In *The aims of higher education*. Council on Higher Education (South Africa), Ed. Pretoria: Council on Higher Education. 75–97.

Jovanovica, D. & Ciricb, M. 2016. Benefits of Transformational Leadership in the Context of Education. *The European proceeding of behavioural sciences*, 3:447-503.

Kabeer, N. 1999. Resources, agency, achievements: reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. *Development and Change*, 30.

Karimli, L., Bose, B., & Kagotho, N. 2019. Integrated Graduation Program and its Effect on Women and Household Economic Well-being: Findings from a Randomised Controlled Trial in Burkina Faso. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 1-18.

Karlan, D., Savonitto, B., Thuysbaert, B., & Udry, C. 2017. Impact of savings groups on the lives of the poor. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 114(12), 3079-3084.

Kathewera-Banda, M., Kamanga-Njikho, V., Malera, G., Mauluka, G., Mazinga, M. K. and Ndlovu, S. 2011. Women's access to land and household bargaining power: a comparative action research project in patrilineal and matrilineal societies of Malawi. Women's Legal Resource Centre: Blantyre.

Kele, T. & Pietersen, J. 2015. Women leaders in a South African higher education institution: Narrations of their leadership operations. *International Journal of Sustainable Development*. p.11-15.

Kernis, M.H., 2003. "Toward a Conceptualization of Optimal Self Esteem" (PDF). Academic.udayton.edu. [Accessed on 29 October 2021].

- Khurshid, A. 2016. Domesticated gender (in) equality: Women's education & gender relations among rural communities in Pakistan. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 51, 43–50.
- Kilroy, A., Kirby, P. & Bhatia-Murdach, V. 2019. Managing for feminist results: measuring Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy. Development Gateway.
- Kim, M. & Beehr, T.A. 2020. The long reach of the leader: Can empowering leadership at work result in enriched home lives? *J. Occup. Health Psychol*, 25, 203–213.
- Kioko, C., Kagumire, R., Matandela, M. 2020. The Role of Patriarchy in the Roll-back of Democracy. <https://ke.boell.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Final%20copy-%20Challenging%20Patriarchy%20.pdf>
- Klaa, C. 2020. Role of African Women in Development and Economic Life: Reality and Challenges. *International Journal of Inspiration & Resilience Economy*, 4(1): 1-9
- Kortjens, I., Moser, A. 2017. Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice*, 24:1, 120-124.
- Koza, N., 2018. The DBE gives a breakdown of the role of the SGB. [Sound Recording] (702 News).
- Krippendorff, K. 2019. *Content analysis: an introduction to its methodology*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (401.4 KRIP).
- Kross, J. & Giust, A. 2019. Elements of research questions in relation to qualitative inquiry. *The Qualitative Report*, 24(1): 24-30.
- Kuckartz, U. 2019. Qualitative content analysis: From Kracauer's beginnings to today's challenges. *Forum: Qualitative social research*, 20(3): 1-19.
- Kulik, C., & Metz, I. 2015. Women at the top: Will more women in senior roles impact organizational outcomes? Oxford handbooks online. Retrieved from

<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935406.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935406-e-7>.

Kuriakose, V., Sreejesh, S., Wilson, P.R., & Anusree, M.R. 2019. The differential association of workplace conflicts on employee well-being: The moderating role of perceived social support at work. *Int. J. Confl. Manag*, 30, 680–705.

Leavy, P. 2017. *Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts-based, and community-based participatory research approaches*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Ledwaba, L & Makgahlela, L. 2017. The Value of Information Resources in Sustaining SMME Projects in Limpopo Province. The 2nd Annual International Conference on Public Administration and Development Alternatives 26 - 28 July 2017, Gaborone, Botswana.

Leedy, P. D & Ormrod, J. E. 2015. *Practical research: Planning and Design*. 11<sup>th</sup> ed. Pearson Education Limited: United Kingdom.

Leithwood, K. 1994. Leadership for school restructuring. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 30(4), 498-518.

Letherby, G. 2013. 'Theorised subjectivity', in G. Letherby, J. Scott & M. Williams (eds.), *Objectivity and subjectivity in social research*, pp. 79–101, Sage, London.

Liao, Z. Yam, K.C., Johnson, R.E., Liu, W. & Song, Z. 2018. Cleansing my abuse: A reparative response model of perpetrating abusive supervisor behaviour. *J. Appl. Psychol*, 103, 1039–1056

Linneberg, M.S. and Korsgaard, S. 2019. Coding qualitative data: a synthesis guiding the novice. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 19(3): 259-270.

Louw, A. M. 2015a. I am not a number! I am a free man! The employment equity act, 1998 (and other myths about the pursuit of 'equality', 'equity' and 'dignity' in post-

apartheid South Africa) Part 1. *P.E.R.*, 18(3), 668–735.

<https://doi.org/10.4314/pej.v18i3.06>.

Lumadi, R.I., 2017. Ensuring educational leadership in the creation and leadership of schools. *KOERS — Bulletin for Christian Scholarship*, 82(3). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.19108/KOERS.82.3.2328> [Accessed on 23 October 2021].

Mahope, S. S. 2014. Becoming a new kind of professional: A black woman academic caught in a transition. *South African Journal of Higher Education* 28(6): 1986–1998.

Majova, B. N. 2016. Women empowerment in the South African agri-business: Impact, policy and implementation in Gauteng Province. Johannesburg: Milpark Business School MBA Dissertation.

Maki, L. M. 2015. A Grounded Theory of Women's Leadership Experiences in Higher Education: Navigating from the Director Level [Doctoral dissertation, Minnesota State University, Mankato]. Cornerstone: A Collection of Scholarly and Creative Works for Minnesota State University, Mankato. <https://cornerstone.lib.mnsu.edu/etds/397/>

Makombe, I. A. M. 2006. Women entrepreneurship development and empowerment in Tanzania: the case of SIDO/UNIDO-supported women micro entrepreneurs in the food processing sector. University of South Africa (unpublished PhD Thesis).

Malapit, H., Sproule, K., Kovarik, C., Meinzen-Dick, R., Quisumbing, A., Ramzan, F., Hogue, E. & Alkire, S. 2014. Measuring progress toward empowerment: Women's empowerment in agriculture index: Baseline report. Washington, D.C.: IFPRI.

Malhotra, A., Schuler, S.R. and Boender, C. 2002. Measuring women's empowerment as a variable in international development. Final version of a paper commissioned by the Gender and Development Group of the World Bank.

Malhotra, A. & Elnakib S. 2021. "20 years of the evidence base on what works to prevent child marriage: A systematic review", *Journal of Adolescent Health*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.11.017>.

Mancour, H., Heath, G. & Brannan, M. 2015. Exploring the Role of HR Practitioners in Pursuit of Organisational Effectiveness in Higher Education Institutions. *Journal of Change Management*, 15(3), 210-230.

March, C., Smyth, I. & Mukhopadhyay, M. 1999. A Guide to Gender Analysis Frameworks, Oxfam, Oxford, pp68-77.

Margaret, K., Reddy, K. 2017. "Colonialism", The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy. Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/colonialism> [Accessed on 16 October 2021].

Marshall, C. & Rossman, C.B. 2011. *Designing Qualitative Research*. 5th ed. Los Angeles. Sage.

Marvasti, A.B. 2019. Qualitative content analysis: A novice's perspective. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 20(3): 1-14.

Marx, K. 1973. *Grundrisse*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Maseko, C. M. 2017. Literature on the theory and practice on unethical practices in the construction of projects: A case of an emerging economy. *Risk Governance and Control: Financial Markets & Institutions/ Volume 7, Issue 4, Fall 2017, Continued - 2, 20 October, pp. 214-222*.

Maseko, T.I. 2013. A Comparative Study of Challenges Faced by Women in Leadership: A Case of Foskop and the Department of Labour in Mhlathuze Municipality. Unpublished Masters' thesis. University of Zululand. [Online]. Available: <http://uzspace.uzulu.ac.za/.../CHALLENGES+FACED+BY+WOMEN+LEADERSHIP.pdf> ? (Accessed 17/06/2021).

Mason, M. 2010. Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 11(3).

- Mattick, K., Johnston, J. & de la Croix, A. 2018. How to write a good research question. *The clinical teacher*, 15(2): 104-108.
- Maxton, P. J. & Bushe, G. R. (2018) 'Individual Cognitive Effort and Cognitive Transition During Organization Development', *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 54(4), pp. 424–456. doi: [10.1177/0021886318795391](https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886318795391).
- Mbilinyi, M. 2016. Debating Land and Agrarian Issues from a Gender Perspective. *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy* 5(2and3): 164–186.
- McAleese, I., Creed, A. & Zutshi, A. 2013. A response to critique of the refreeze step in Lewin's model of organisational change from the viewpoint of organisational behaviour. *International journal of the Academy of Organisational Behavior Management*, 4, 104-123.
- McGlynn, C. & Erika, E. 2017. Image-Based Sexual Abuse. *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 37: 534.
- McKim, C. A. 2017. The Value of Mixed Methods Research: A Mixed Methods Study. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 11(2): 202–222.
- McLoughlin, K. & O'Brien, A. 2019. Feminist Interventions in Law Reform: Criminalising Image-Based Sexual Abuse in New South Wales. *Laws*, 8(35): 1-18.
- Mehmood, Q. 2019. Employees' perceptions of their managers' authentic leadership: considering managers' political skill & gender. Covid-19 impact on global scientific community. Research-Gate. Insight Report. Berlin. Germany.
- Mejuini, O. 2013. Women and power: Education, religion and identity. Dakar: Council for the development of social science research in Africa (CODESRIA) ISBN:9782-86978-573-1. <http://www.codesria.org/spip.php?article>. Accessed 24 may, 2016. Miami University. 2013. What is leadership and what makes a good leader. Miami University. 501 East High street, Oxford.

Merriam, S.B. & Grenier, R.S. (2019). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. 2nd edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass (eBook collection A1996972).

Mhlanga, D and Ndhlovu, E. (2020). Socio-economic Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Smallholder Livelihoods in Zimbabwe. *Preprints 2020*, 2020040219 (doi:10.20944/preprints202004.0219.v1).

Mishel, M. W. A. L. 2003. *How unions help all workers*. Washington, DC: Economic policy institute.

Mokoena, D. 2018. 'Capitalist Crisis and Gender Inequality: Quest for Inclusive Development', in V. Gumede, (ed.), *Towards Inclusive Development in Africa: Transforming Global Relations*. Pretoria: AISA & CODESRIA Press, pp 84–102

Moreno, A., Díez, F. & Ferreira, L. 2022. Business Leadership from a Gender Perspective and Its Impact on the Work Environment and Employee's Well-Being in Companies in the Basque Country. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health*, 19, 30. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19010030>.

Mosese, M. & Mearns, M. 2016. Leveraging management information in improving call centre productivity. *South African Journal of information management; Vol 18, No 1*. Doi:10.4102/sajim.v18i1.690.

Motshekga, A. 2013. Only 36% of School Principals Are Women. *New24*, August 23, 2013. <https://www.news24.com/News24/Motshekga-Only-36-of-school-principals-are-women-20150429>

Moyo, S. 2016. Family farming in sub-Saharan Africa: Its contribution to agriculture, food security and rural development. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme. Working paper number 150.

Mwambene, L. 2010. Marriage under African customary law in the face of the Bill of Rights and international human rights standards in Malawi. *African Human Rights Law Journal*, 1(10): 78 - 104.

- Naidoo, K. 2020. Women in Leadership Development Context Constructing a Leadership Identity. Master's Dissertation. University of South Africa.
- Naidu, E. 2018. Universities body to probe gender imbalance at the top. <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post-mobile.php?story=20180725103923330>
- Nannerl O.K., 2020. Women, Power & Leadership. *Daedalus* 2020; 149 (1): 236–250. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1162/daed\\_a\\_01785](https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_01785) [Accessed on 26 October 2021]
- Ndhlovu, E. 2017. An analysis of household livelihoods under the fast track land reform programme in Chiredzi, Zimbabwe (MA dissertation) University of South Africa.
- Ndhlovu, E. (2021). Socio-Economic Characterisation of Resettled Smallholder Farmers in Rural Zimbabwe. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 1-16.
- Ndhlovu, E. and Tembo, A. 2020. Gendered Socio-economic Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Rural Zimbabwe. *BizEcons Quarterly*, 12, 21-40.
- Nehere, K. P. 2016. The Feminist Views: A Review. *Feminist Research*, 1(1), 3–20.
- Nelson, T. and Constantinidis, C. 2017. Sex and Gender in Family Business Succession Research: A Review and Forward Agenda from a Social Construction Perspective. *Family Business Review*, 30(3):219-241.
- Ngcobo, L. & Chisasa, J. (2018). Success factors and gender participation of stokvels in South Africa. *Acta Universitatis Danubius Economica*, 14(5).
- Ngoma, C., & Mayimbo, S. 2017. The Negative Impact of Poverty on the Health of Women and Children. *Annals of Medical and Health Sciences Research*, 7, 442–446.
- Nhlapo, T.M.S. & Vyas-Doorgapersad, S. 2016. 'Human resource provisioning strategy for gender equality within the Department of Correctional Services: The case of Groenpunt Management Area', *Administratio Publica* 24(3), 166–182.



Nhlapo, T.M.S. 2019. 'Human resource development strategy for gender equality within the Department of Correctional Services', Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Johannesburg, Auckland Park.

Nienaber, H. & Moraka, N.V. 2016, 'Feminism in management research: A route to justly optimise talent', in 'Critical Management Studies in the South African context', *Acta Commercii, suppl. 1*, 16(2): a417.

Nixdorff, J.L. & Rosen, T.H. (2010) "The Glass Ceiling Women Face: An Examination and Proposals for Development of Future Women Entrepreneurs," *New England Journal of Entrepreneurship* 13: 31-87

Njobvu, T. & Xiu, Y. 2014. Creating spaces for filling the gender gap in university leadership and management: the case for Zambian women professors. *International journal of education and research* 2 (12) PP 249- 264.

Nkenkana, A. 2018. 'No African Futures without the Liberation of Women: A decolonial feminist perspective', in Gumede V. (Ed.). *Inclusive Development in Africa: Transformation of Global Relations*. HSRC and CODESRIA.

Nowell, B. & Albrecht, K. 2019. A reviewer's guide to qualitative rigor. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 29(2): 328-363.

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. 2017. Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. 16, 1–13.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847>.

Nudelman, G. 2015. *Language in South Africa's Higher Education Transformation: A Study of Language Policies at Four Universities*. Cape Town: University of Western Cape.

O'Neil, K. 2019. How qualitative data analysis happens: Moving beyond "themes emerged". *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 20(3): 1-8.

Odumeru, J. A. & Ogbonna, I. G. 2013. Transformational vs. transactional leadership theories: Evidence in literature. *International Review of Management and Business Research*, 2(2), 355.

OECD. 2021. "Philanthropy and Gender Equality - Domestic Philanthropy for Development and Gender Equality in South Africa", OECD Development Centre, Paris.

Office on the Status of Women. 2000. National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality. South African Office of the Presidency. [Online]. Available: [unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/cpsi/unpan035001.pdf](http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/cpsi/unpan035001.pdf) [Accessed: 2015, February 2].

Olaogun, J., Adebayo, A. and Oluyemi, C. 2015. Gender imbalance in the academia in Nigeria. *European Scientific journal*, November special edition. PP 294-306.

Oliver, E. and Oliver, W.H. 2017. 'The Colonisation of South Africa: A unique case', *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 73(3), a4498. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i3.4498> [Accessed on 12 November 2021].

Oosthuizen, M. (2018), "Counting women's work in South Africa: Incorporating unpaid work into estimates of the economic lifecycle in 2010", CWW Working Paper, No. P8, Development Policy Research Unit, University of Cape Town.

Özler, B., Hallman, K., Guimond, M. F., Kelvin, E. A., Rogers, M., & Karnley, E. 2020. Girl Empower—A gender transformative mentoring and cash transfer intervention to promote adolescent wellbeing: Impact findings from a cluster-randomized controlled trial in Liberia. *SSM-Population Health*, 10, 100527.

Paulus, T. M., Jackson, K. & Davidson, J. 2017. 'Digital Tools for Qualitative Research: Disruptions and Entanglements', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 23(10), pp. 751–756. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800417731080>.

Paustian-Underdahl, S. C., Walker, L. S., & Woehr, D. J. 2014. Gender and perceptions of leadership effectiveness: A meta-analysis of contextual moderators. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 99, 1129-1145.

- Petrie, N. 2014, 'Future Trends in Leadership Development', Center for Creative Leadership white paper, available at <http://www.ccl.org/Leadership/pdf/research/futureTrends.pdf>.
- Pounder, J. 2014. Quality teaching through transformational classroom leadership. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 22(3): 273–285.
- Powell, A., Henry, N. & Flynn, A. 2018. 'Image-Based Sexual Abuse.' In *Routledge Handbook of Critical Criminology*." Edited by Walter Dekeseredy and Molly Dragiewicz. New York: Routledge, pp. 305–15.
- Pranathi, B.K.P. & Lathabhavan, R. 2021. A study on role of woman in leadership positions. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Applied Sciences and Engineering*, 4(12): 940-943.
- Prasad, B.D. 2019. Qualitative content analysis: Why is it still a path less taken? *Qualitative social research*, 20(3): 1-21.
- Price, J., Khubchandani, J. & Webb, F. J. 2018. Poverty and health disparities: What can public health professionals do? *Health Promotions Practice* <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839918755143>.
- Psacharopoulos, G. & Patrinos, H. 2018. Returns to investment in education: A decennial review of the global literature. *Education Economics*, 26(5): 445-458.
- Qaisrani, A., Liaquat, S. and Khokhar, E. N. 2016. Socio-economic and Cultural Factors of Violence against Women in Pakistan (No. 158). Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad.
- Quan-Baffour, K.P. 2006. *The role of School Governing Bodies in improving schools*. University of South Africa.
- Rafay, B., Habib, B., Tariq, U. & Asghar Ali, A. 2016. Analysis on the Social Legislation and Women Empowerment in Pakistan: Comparative study of Democratic governments

and Dictatorship periods (1947-2012).” *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 53(1): 13–26.

Ranjan, R. 2019. Understanding feminism. *International journal of English language, literature and translation studies. IJELR*, 6(4): 120-122.

Ratan, S. K. T. and Ratan, J. 2019. Formulation of research question–Stepwise approach. *Journal of Indian Association of Paediatric Surgeons*, 24(1): 15-21.

Republic of South Africa. (1996). Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 as of 1996. Government Gazette, 378.

Republic of South Africa. 1998. The white paper on affirmative action (WPAA) in the public service. Government Printers, Pretoria.

Republic of South Africa: Employment Equity Act, Act 55 of 1998, Government Printers, Cape Town.

Republic of South Africa: Labour Relations Act, Act 66 of 1995, Government Printers, Cape Town.

Republic of South Africa: Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, Act 4 2000, Government Printers, Cape Town.

Republic of South Africa: The Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Act 108 of 1996, Government Printers, Cape Town.

Richard, A. 2013. *Theory Building in Applied Disciplines*. Berret-Koehler, San Francisco.

Robbins, T. 2019. *13 Top Leadership Qualities*. San Diego. Team Tony.

Robertson, C.T., Selva, M. & Nielsen, K.R. 2021. Women and Leadership in the News Media 2021: Evidence from 12 Markets. Reuters Institute: Oxford.

Roller, M.R. 2019. A quality approach to qualitative content analysis: Similarities and differences compared to other qualitative methods. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 20(3): 1-21.

Roth, W.M. & von Unger, H. 2018. Current perspectives on research ethics in qualitative research. *Forum: Qualitative Research*, 19(3): 798-809.

Rummery, K. (2020). Gender equality and the governance of long-term care policy: new comparative models and paradigms. *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy*, 1 - 18.

Rusenga, C. 2019. The Agribusiness Model in South African Land Reform? Land Use Implications for the Land Reform Beneficiaries. *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy* 8(3): 440 – 461.

Salia, S., Hussain, J., Tingbani, I. & Kolade, O. 2018. Is women empowerment a zero sum game? Unintended consequences of microfinance for women's empowerment in Ghana. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 7(4): 47-62.

Samargandi, N., Mamun, A.I., Sohag, M. & Alandejani, K. 2019. "Women at work in Saudi Arabia: Impact of ICT diffusion and financial development." *Technology in Society*, 59, 101187.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. 2016. *Research methods for business students*. Pearson education: London.

Schuster, S. 2018. The art of thinking in systems: Improve your logic, think more critically, and use proven systems to solve your problems – Strategic planning for everyday life. (n.p.): CreateSpace Independent Publishing. [Kindle ed.]. Available Amazon.com

Sebola, M.P. & Tsheola, J.P. 2014. Economics of Agricultural Land Restitution and Redistribution in South Africa: Willing-Seller, Willing-Buyer Business Imperatives Versus Socio-political Transformation? Department of Public Administration, University of Limpopo: Sovenga.

Shava G.N., Tlou F.N., & Mpofu, G. (2019). Challenges Facing Women in School Leadership Positions: Experiences from a District in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 10(14): 30-40.

Sheoraj, R. 2015. 'Overview of South Africa's Public Service: A dialogue on capacity building, skills readiness and service delivery', Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Pretoria, Pretoria.

Sheppard, V. 2021. *Research Methods for the Social Sciences: An Introduction*. Saylor Academy.

Shvindina, H. O. 2016. The applicability of the social development and organisation development theories at the enterprise, *Economic Processes Management. International Scientific E-Journal*, 4, 124-150.

Sibanda, N. 2015. 'Challenges and prospects of the South African women empowerment and gender equality bill', Unpublished Master's thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Simola, S., Barling, J. & Turner, N. 2012. Transformational Leadership and Leaders' Mode of Care Reasoning. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 108, 229-237.

Skoczylas, M.J. 2019. Congruence in Research Question, Design, and Analysis: A Tutorial on the Measurement of Change in Clinical Speech and Language Research. *Language, speech, and hearing services in schools*, 50(2): 167-178.

Sloan, L. & Quan-Haase, A. 2017. *The Sage handbook of social media research methods*. Saylor Academy.

Smith, J. 2019. Overcoming the "tyranny of the urgent": integrating gender into disease outbreak preparedness and response. *Gender Develop*, 27: 355-69.

Sofat, K., Kiran, R. & Kaushik, S. 2015. Organisational change and organisational commitment: An empirical study of organisations in India. *Global Journal of Management and Business (A)*, 15(6), 39-49.

South African Human Rights Commission. 2017. Research brief on gender and equality in South Africa 2013–2017. SAHRC, Pretoria.

Stacks, D.W., Salwen, M.B. & Eichhorn, K.C. 2019. *An integrated approach to communication theory and research*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. (302.20721 ANIN).

Stamarski, C.S. & Son Hing, L.S. 2015. Gender inequalities in the workplace: The effects of organizational structures, processes, practices, and decision makers' sexism, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4584998/>. (Accessed 20/06/2021).

Statistics South Africa. (2017). *Whither a Demographic Dividend South Africa: The Overton Window of Political Possibilities*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.

Statistics South Africa. 2019. *Mid-year population estimates*. Statistics South Africa.

Statistics South Africa. 2020. *Demographics of South Africa*. Statistics South Africa.

Statistics South Africa. (2021). *Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) – Q2:2021*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.

Stenling, A. & Tafvelin, S. 2014. Transformational Leadership and Well-Being in Sports: The Mediating Role of Need Satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 26(2), 182–196. <http://doi.org/10.1080/10413200.2013.819392>.

Stevens, E. 2021. The 7 Most Useful Data Analysis Methods and Techniques: <https://careerfoundry.com/en/blog/data-analytics/data-analysis-techniques/> (Accessed 02/07/2021).

Sundler, A. J., Lindberg, E., Nilsson, C., & Palmér, L. (2019). *Qualitative thematic analysis*. Saylor Academy.

Szálkai, K. 2019. The Soviet Union as a 'Feminist Colonialist?' The Women's Question in Early Soviet Central Asia. *Cojourn* 4(1): 4-14.

Tekwa, N & Adesina, J. 2018. Gender, Poverty and Inequality in the Aftermath of

Zimbabwe's Land Reform: A Transformative Social Policy Perspective. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 19(5):45-62.

Terrell, S.R. 2015. *Writing a proposal for Your Dissertation: Guidelines and Examples*. New York. The Guilford Press.

Thomas, T. P. 2013. The Effect of Personal Values, Organizational Values, and Person-Organization Fit on Ethical Behaviors and Organizational Commitment Outcomes among Substance Abuse Counselors: A Preliminary Investigation. University of Iowa (PhD Thesis).

Thompson, K. & Woolard, I. 2002. Achieving employment equity in the public service: A study of changes between 1995 and 2001, viewed 13 March 2019, from [http://www.health.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image\\_tool/images/36/DPRU%20WP02-061.pdf](http://www.health.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/36/DPRU%20WP02-061.pdf).

Tong, R. 2018. *Feminist Thoughts, Student Economy Edition: A More Comprehensive Introduction*. Routledge.

Tran, N. A. 2014. The Role of Mentoring in the Success of Women Leaders of Color in Higher Education, Mentoring and Tutoring. *Partnership in Learning* 22(4): 302–315. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13611267.2014.945740>.

“Tribalism.” *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tribalism>. Accessed 15 May. 2022.

Turkmen, A. 2018. Development in Africa: Constraints and Prospects for the Future. <http://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=190298>. (Accessed: 27/05/2021).

UNCTAD. 2020. Monitoring the effects of the global pandemic on manufacturing, trade, foreign direct investment and economic growth. Coronavirus (COVID-19): News, Analysis and Resources <https://unctad.org/en/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>

UNDP. 2017. Sustainable Development Goals. UNDP.



UN. 2020. Monitoring the effects of the global pandemic on manufacturing, trade, foreign direct investment and economic growth. Coronavirus (COVID-19): News, Analysis and Resources <https://unctad.org/en/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>

Vaismoradi, M. & Snelgrove, S. 2019. "Theme in Qualitative Content Analysis and Thematic Analysis", *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 20(3): 1-14. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-20.3.3376>.

Van den Broeck, G., & Maertens, M. 2017. Does Off-Farm Wage Employment Make Women in Rural Senegal Happy? *Feminist Economics*, 23(4): 250-275. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13545701.2017.1338834>

van Knippenberg, D. & Sitkin, S. B. 2013. A Critical Assessment of Charismatic—Transformational Leadership Research: Back to the Drawing Board? *The Academy of Management Annals*, 7(1), 1–60. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19416520.2013.759433>

Van Niekerk, M. M. 2015. Transformational leadership at a higher education institution. University of South Africa (MA dissertation).

Vella, S. A., Oades, L. G. & Crowe, T. P. 2013. A Pilot Test of Transformational Leadership Training for Sports Coaches: Impact on the Developmental Experiences of Adolescent Athletes. *International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching*, 8(3), 513–530. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1260/1747-9541.8.3.513>.

Vial, A.C., Naper, J.L. & Brescoll, V.L. 2016. "A bed of thorns; women leaders and the self-reinforcing cycle of illegitimacy", *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(31): 400-414.

Vyas-Doorgapersad, S. 2017, Gender considerations in leadership: Study guide, Department of Public Management and Governance, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg.

Vyas-Doorgapersad, S. (2018a). Gender and information and communication technology (ITC) in Southern Africa to promote the sustainable development goals (SDGs). *Administratio Publica* 26(2):7–22.

Vyas-Doorgapersad, S. 2018b. 'Designing measurement instruments for sustainable development goals one, five and nine: A gendered perspective in South Africa', *African Journal of Public Affairs* 10(3), 118–133. <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-11496798ad>.

Wallace, T. and March, C. 1991. *Changing Perceptions: Writings on Gender and Development*, Oxfam (UK and Ireland), Oxford. ISBN 978-0-85598-137-2 <http://0-www-jstor-org.oasis.unisa.ac.za/stable/4028781>.

Wanner, T. & Wadham, B. 2015. "Men and Masculinities in International Development: 'Men-streaming' Gender and Development?" *Development Policy Review*. 33 (1): 15-32. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/dpr.12090>.

White, P. 2017. *Developing Research Questions*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition ed. London: Palgrave and Macmillan.

World Bank. 2021. *South Africa*. World Bank.

Zitha, M.G. 2016. *Parental involvement in secondary schools: A case study on attitudes and perceptions of educators in Johannesburg East district*. University of South Africa.

Zuma, J. (2017): 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary adoption of National Development Plan. 2017. **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE BY THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA



#### UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2021/08/11

Ref: **2021/08/11/35868384/26/AM**

Name: Ms MG Zitha

Student No.: 35868384

Dear Ms MG Zitha

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2021/08/11 to 2026/08/11

**Researcher(s):** Name: Ms MG Zitha  
E-mail address: musazitha@yahoo.com  
Telephone: 0769269344

**Supervisor(s):** Name: Prof. Rudzani Israel Lumadi  
E-mail address: limadri@unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: 012 429 2123

**Title of research:**

**The challenges of women leaders in South African schools: Overcoming barriers through transformational leadership**

**Qualification:** PhD Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2021/08/11 to 2026/08/11.

*The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2021/08/11 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2026/08/11**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

*Note:*

*The reference number **2021/08/11/35868384/26/AM** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



**Prof AT Motlabane**  
**CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC**  
motthat@unisa.ac.za



**Prof PM Sebate**  
**EXECUTIVE DEAN**  
Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za



University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
www.unisa.ac.za

**APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM**

**INTERVIEW CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT** (Please complete the document and return it to the researcher through agreed channels)

I \_\_\_\_\_ grant permission that the information I share during the interviews may be used by **Musa Grace Zitha** for research purposes. I am aware that the interviews will be recorded. To maintain confidentiality, I undertake not to divulge any information that is shared during the interviews with any person. I also acknowledge that I have read and understood the content of the consent letter and the interview questions.

Participant's full names (PLEASE PRINT): \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant's contact details to be used for interviews and communication**

Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred interview mode (please tick one or more):

Telephonically  Zoom  Teams  WhatsApp Call

I am comfortable with all of the above

Preferred day in the week of the interview and time: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's full names: (PLEASE PRINT): **MUSA GRACE ZITHA**

Researcher's signature: 

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS**

### **SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE**

1. What is your gender? .....
2. What is your job title at the school? .....
3. How long have you been at the school? .....
4. How long have you been employed by the Department of Basic Education? .....

### **SECTION B: WOMEN LEADERSHIP**

1. What do you understand by the concept “Women leadership”? What is your view about women leaders?
2. What do you think makes a great leader?
3. Does the gender of a manager affect the quality of work performed by their subordinates? Please elaborate on this based on your observations and/or experiences.
4. What do you think should be done to help women leaders utilise their full potential in schools?
5. Are there responsibilities at home that are meant for you as a man/woman? What are they?
6. How do they affect your career progress?
7. If you had your way around these responsibilities, what would it be?

### **SECTION C: WOMEN LEADERSHIP – WOMEN MANAGERS ONLY**

1. As a woman leader, what significant developmental interventions (for example, workshops, mentorships, trainings, etc.) meant for women leaders have you undergone? How did you experience these interventions?
2. How did you as a woman leader, reach your level of success? Please share obstacles and assistance that you received from different people.
3. How would you describe your leadership style?
4. Who is your mentor? Why?

5. What personal strategies are you using to accomplish your leadership responsibilities?
6. How do you balance your home and leadership life?
7. What should family members do to support women leaders?
8. How in your opinion do you think your subordinates, the Department, your family, the Unions, and the community should support you?
9. How are you supporting other women managers at your school?

## **APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SGB (PARENT COMPONENT)**

1. As an SGB member, do you think your school is in good hands under the leadership of a man/woman? Please elaborate. Would you recommend a different gender for the school? Why?
2. Do you think your gender has anything to do with your SGB position? If so, please provide reasons for your thoughts.
3. Why do you think there are fewer women principals than men in schools? Do you think this is acceptable? If not, what do you think needs to be done to change this?
4. What do you think the SGB/staff should do in schools to support women managers?
5. What kind of support do you think women leaders should receive from their seniors, parents, the District/Department, the Unions and educational Associations?
6. What challenges do you think women leaders face which men in similar positions do not face?
7. Do you think SGBs should consider the gender of applicants on leadership positions? If so, which type of gender should be considered and supported? Why?
8. Is there any advice that you would like to provide for the women leaders in schools?
9. Do you have any additional comments regarding women leadership in schools?
10. What do you understand by the term “transformational leadership”?



**APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR UNION REPRESENTATIVES,  
ASSOCIATION AND DISTRICT OFFICIALS**

1. What kind of support are you as a manager/Union/Association/District Official providing to women leaders in schools?
2. How often, per annum, does your Union/Association/District offer workshop/training specifically for women?
3. Do you think culture has a bearing on the barriers women face as leaders within schools? What can be done to change this?
4. Can South African history of colonialism and apartheid be considered as also contribution to the challenges faced by women within schools?
5. In your experience, what kind of challenges do women leaders face? How do you think they should be tackled by the Union/Association/District Officials?
6. What, in your opinion are the differences between men and women leadership styles?
7. Do you think women leaders' gender have anything to do with their leadership styles?
8. Is there a leadership style in particular that you regard beneficial to women leaders? Why?
9. What strategies/actions do you suggest women leaders should use to overcome their barriers/challenges?
10. What do you understand by the concept "transformational leadership"?
11. What, according to you are the features/characteristics of transformational leadership?