

**THE ROLE OF FEMALE PRINCIPALS AS TRANSFORMATIONAL
LEADERS TO IMPROVE SCHOOLS IN THE UMGUNGUNDLOVU
DISTRICT, KWAZULU-NATAL**

by

ZAHEER ALLI

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in

EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

in the

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: Dr PK TRIEGAARDT

APRIL 2020

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned hereby declare that:

**The role of female principals as transformational leaders to improve schools in
the uMgungundlovu District, KwaZulu-Natal**

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Title of research:

The role of female principals as transformational leaders to improve schools in the Ungungundlovu District, KwaZulu-Natal

Qualification: M. Ed in Education Management

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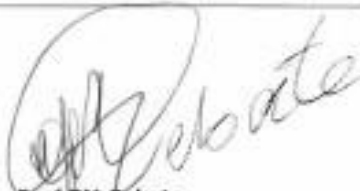
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Kind regards,

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

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LEADERS TO IMPROVE SCHOOLS IN THE UMGUNGUNDLOVU
DISTRICT, KWAZULU-NATAL**

by

ZAHEER ALLI

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All changes were indicated by track changes and comments for the author to verify, correct and finalise.



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ABSTRACT

South African history clearly illuminates the idea that women are regarded as unequal when compared to their male counterparts. Hence, women in general have been marginalized, especially when it comes to advancing in the workplace. Women are often defined in relation to motherhood, caring for others and for providing the necessities for sustenance. Society today has not moved very far from this idea. This is the reason why women often suffer a disadvantage when it comes to being appointed in leadership positions in South African education, even though the legislation makes provision for gender balance in South African education. This study examined the role of female principals as transformational leaders to improve schools in the uMgungundlovu District, KwaZulu-Natal. A qualitative investigation at three schools in the uMgungundlovu District was conducted. Nine participants were selected and data was collected by means of in-depth interviews and document analysis was done as a method of data collection. The findings of the study revealed that female leaders are taking a stand in education and are successfully implementing strategies to improve their schools. The study recommends that future female leaders are empowered at the beginning of their careers and they should learn skills that empower them so there are no excuses for being side lined when it comes to leadership positions.

KHOTSO

Nalane ea Afrika Boroa e hlakisa mohopolo oa hore basali ba ncoe ba sa lekane ha ba bapisoa le balekane ba bona ba banna. Kahoo, basali ka kakaretso ba bile e behelletsoe ka thoko, haholo-holo ha ho tluoa khatelo-peleng ea mosebetsi. Basali hangata e hlalositsoeng kamanong le bo-mme, ho tsotella ba bang le ho fana ka lithoko tsa Lintho tsa ho iphelisa. Mokhatlo kajeno ha o falle hole le mohopolo ona. Lena ke lona lebaka basali hangata ba le mathata ha ho tluoa ho khethoa boeta-pele maemo mo thutong ya Aforika Borwa, leha molao o fana ka sebaka sa tekano ea bong lithutong tsa Afrika Boroa Thutong ena ho ile ha hlalohoa karolo ea basali lihlooho tsa boetapele ba phetoho ho ntlafatsa likolo setereke sa Umgungundlovu, KwaZulu-Natal. Patlisiso e nang le bokhoni likolong tse tharo Seterekeng sa Umgungundlovu e ne e tsamaisoa. Lintlha li ile tsa bokelloa ka lipuisano tse tebileng le sampole ea barupelua ba robong le tlhahlobo ea litokomane e entsoe e le mokhoa oa ho bokella data. The liphumano tsa boithuto li senotse hore baetapele ba basali ba nka karolo lithutong mme ba sebelisa ka katleho maano a ho ntlafatsa likolo tsa bona. Boithuto bo khothalletsa hore baetapele ba basali ba kamoso ba matlafatsoa qalong ea mesebetsi ea bona le bona ba lokela ho ithuta malebela a ba matlafatsang kahoo ha ho na mabaka a hore ba beheletsoe ka thoko ha e tla maemong a boetapele.

I-ABSTRACT

Umlando waseNingizimu Afrika ukhanyisa kahle umbono wokuthi abesifazane babhekwa njengabalingani uma kuqhathaniswa nabalingani babo besilisa. Ngakho-ke, abesifazane bebonke bebelokhu ebekelwe eceleni, ikakhulukazi uma kukhulunywa ngentuthuko emsebenzini. Abesifazane bavame kuchazwa maqondana nokuba ngumama, ukunakekela abanye nokuhlinzeka ngezidingo zeukondla. Umphakathi namhlanje awusususanga kude kakhulu kulo mbono. Lesi isizathu sokuthi kungani abesifazane bavame ukuhlupheka lapho kukhulunywa ngokuqokwa ebuholini izikhundla emfundweni yaseNingizimu Afrika, yize umthetho ubeka umthetho ukulingana ngokobulili emfundweni yaseNingizimu Afrika. Lolu cwaningo luhlolisise iqhaza lowesifazane othishanhloko njengabaholi bezinguquko ukwenza ngcono izikole esifundeni saseMgungundlovu, KwaZulu-Natali. Uphenyo olufanele ezikoleni ezintathu ezifunda eMgungundlovu District yaqhutshwa. Idatha iqoqwe ngokusebenzisa izingxoxo ezijulile ngesampula ye ababambiqhaza abayisishiyagalolunye kanye nokuhlaziywa kwedokhumenti kwenziwa njengendlela yokuqoqa idatha. The Imiphumela yocwaningo iveze ukuthi abaholi besifazane bayabamba iqhaza kwezemfundo ukusebenzisa amasu ngempumelelo ukwenza ngcono izikole zabo. Ucwaino luyancoma ukuthi abaholi besifazane besikhathi esizayo banikezwa amandla ekuqaleni kwemisebenzi yabo futhi bona kumele afunde amakhono awanikayo amandla ngakho-ke akunazaba zokufakwa kolayini lapho iza ezikhundleni zobuholi.

KEY TERMS

Alderfer's ERG theory

Bass's Model of Transformational Leadership Theory

Empowerment

Gender equality

Gender stereotyping

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Patriarchy

Phenomenon

Public schools

School improvement

Transformational Leadership

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DBE	-	Department of Basics Education
DOE	-	Department of Education
EEA	-	Employment Equity Act
HOD	-	Head of Department
KZN	-	KwaZulu-Natal
PL1	-	Post Level 1
REC	-	UNISA Research Ethics Committee
SASA	-	South African Schools Act
SGB	-	School Governing Body
SMT	-	School Management Team
UNISA	-	University of South Africa

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CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Until 1994, South Africans were subjected to a system of institutionalised segregation and discrimination. This started in 1948 and continued up to 1991, while the country was ruled by the Nationalist Party (Grisham, 2014). The laws imposed on people oppressed them and were especially bad for non-white South Africans. The only common denominator was that all women at the time, irrespective of race, were seen as subordinate to men. A woman's role was purely domestic. She had to raise children, feed and care for the family (Pearson, Saunders & Oganessian, 2014). It was not popular at the time for women to work, as that was the domain of men (www.southafricanhistoryonline.co.za, 2017).

After 1994, the new democratic government encouraged gender equality in South Africa. The *Employment Equity Act* (EEA) 55 of 1998 sought to achieve equity in the workplace among genders. Consequently, a national gender policy was developed and structures were established that were intended to advocate gender equality and ensure that women are represented in all levels of management (Morojele, Chikoko & Ngcobo, 2013). To date, women are still undermined in education, whether they are in management positions or in level-one positions. Women find it difficult to set rules because they lack the power and authority (Duma, 2015).

There is a tendency for men to perceive women as weak and sensitive managers who are unable to cope with the demands of education. Some also argue that women bring different values and qualities to the role of the principal than do men. As Morojele *et al.* (2013) explain, women have to balance their domestic tasks and office work. One of the views that I will bring to light in this study is the strength that women possess, not only to be good mothers, but also nurturing, yet strong leaders in the workplace, which leads to whole-school improvement and success.

Whilst women dominated the education sector, men dominated management positions for many years. Nevertheless, women are slowly being promoted to principal posts. Attitudes in South Africa reflect the idea that men are better leaders than women are. Mestry and Schmidt (2012) comment that the reason for this is as a result of society's gender stereotyping. Black women typically experience a combination of discrimination, aggression or harassment with regard to their gender when attempting to obtain leadership positions in education (Pearson *et al.*, 2014). Morojele *et al.* (2013) also mention this aspect, saying that women experience more challenges in executing their tasks than men do. Msila (2013) agrees that women are oppressed, but states that this oppression is not only caused by men. They oppress themselves because they have poor perceptions of themselves. Women have grown up in this male-dominated society their whole lives and if women want to be effective leaders they need to change their mindsets.

My mother raised ten children all by herself after my father had died. He died when I was six years old. Although she did not have a stable job, she managed to provide for all of us. My mother was my heroine. Just like I respect her, I respect all women. Women have the strength, perseverance and intelligence to make something out of nothing effortlessly. "There is no limit to what we, as women, can accomplish," – Michelle Obama (Jain, 2017). This statement is important to my study, because it shows the determination and perseverance of women. When people perceive women, they just see a woman and a mother who is sensitive and nurturing but they do not see the powerful leader inside.

I married a teacher. A very capable one, might I add. She is an excellent teacher and an amazing leader. Despite all this, together with her many years of experience, she was always side-lined when it came to promotional posts (Pearson *et al.*, 2014). She sat on interview committees but she was never selected as a candidate to become a head of department (HOD) or principal. According to Naidoo and Perumal (2014), gender imbalances are still prevalent and only a small number of females are appointed as leaders. When my wife applied for positions, men always seemed to get the posts. At her school, men do the male things like supervising various events. Female teachers,

on the other hand, arrange and organise school events, from fund raising, to planning, coordinating and arranging flowers all by themselves (Diko, 2014; Naidoo & Perumal, 2014).

I was the chairperson of the governing body of two schools for eight years. With this role comes lots of observation. During my experience, it was actually so disheartening to observe how males perceived women. Would they think the same of their mothers or wives? Mahathma Ghandi (in Marques & Dhiman, 2018:122) once said, “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” This is what I have done. Whilst I was at both schools, I encouraged male teachers to become open-minded and I encouraged women to push a little harder to get what they wanted.

Chrisler and Golden (2018) state that ‘social construction’ is the biological reality of being female or male, embellished differentially in various cultural and situational contexts. The biological body is not born into, or developed within a sociocultural vacuum; rather, it is influenced by all kinds of external factors and contexts: cultural expectations, life situations, institutional pressures, environmental events, and even the presence or absence of particular people. Thus, the biological female is shaped by culture and time within which she lives into a girl and then a woman. The way women are treated and how men treat them, is determined by the behaviour of society. When society is transformed, then only will the perception of men towards women change and women’s own perceptions of themselves will change too.

I have dedicated a lot of time and attempted to become an agent of change. I wanted other stakeholders, teachers, learners and the community to see what I saw in women. Instead of just sharing this vision that I had, I allocated various tasks to females, to prove that they could in fact do what men could and most of the time these tasks were done meticulously. Cooper, McCray and Coffin (2017) comment that leaders believe in giving; they feel connected to the world in a way that earlier generations did not do. Somehow, I think I was able to share my vision with all stakeholders, despite the pre-existing prejudices they had of female leaders. *The Longman Dictionary* (2018:1841) defines the word vision as “an idea of what you think something should be like”.

When change takes place, the element of resistance needs to be eliminated. “As change entails something new, the uncertainty creates anxiety and increases resisting forces.” (Van Wyk, Van der Westhuizen & Van Vuuren, 2014:462). This means that wherever a female transformational principal is placed, there will be factors that will affect her, because teachers, especially males, do not want to change and accept a female principal (Diko, 2014). For this study, the elimination of these forces will mean that there will be no prejudice and discrimination against women at all levels. When these forces are eliminated, female principals will get an equal chance to prove that they are good leaders. Mestry and Schmidt (2012) define prejudices as an act of forming an opinion about a particular condition before assessing the actual condition, leading to misconceptions. For example, a misconception that women cannot make excellent leaders is a form of stereotyping which discriminates against women. Women are perceived as being sensitive hence men take their leadership positions seriously (Lips, 2017).

In the next section, the background of the research will be explored.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

When South Africa became a democratic country, the law of gender equality was also introduced. It sought to rid our country of gender discrimination. The Bill of Rights (section 9[2]) in the *Constitution of South Africa* (1996), makes provision for gender equality. Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. Although it is prescribed in the Constitution of South Africa, tradition and stereotyping women seems to have overridden the law. Men, even though there are fewer in education compared to women, still dominate management positions (Naidoo & Perumal, 2014).

It would appear that there is an unidentifiable style of management that can be deemed ‘feminine’ and this style of management is more likely to be found among women. Marishane, Van der Merwe, Van Zyl and Zengele (2013) consider the following definitions of management in their view: education management is a process of working with and through individuals, groups and other resources, whether they be learners,

educators, administrative staff, parents or other stakeholders, to accomplish educational goals or outcomes and it is the application of management theory, principles and skills in the education environment.

A principal is both manager and leader (Rieckhoff & Doesen, 2016). They further state that leaders and managers both work with people and are concerned about achieving organisational goals. The goal of management, however, is to promote order and consistency within the organisation. The principal sets the tone and culture of the school. According to Trevor Pilgram, the principal, together with the staff, works to set goals and objectives for the school to steer it in the right direction. If the most pertinent goals and objectives are not prioritised, then the school will be led in the wrong direction. These goals and objectives also promote order and consistency in a school.

The principal involves staff in the formulation of the goals and objectives, to increase engagement levels and enhance staff motivation. Goals are a potent form of motivation especially when teachers align their own goals with those of the school. (Pilgram, 2014, para. 3)

Leadership, on the other hand, pushes the organisation towards change and forward movement. Through good communication and relational skills, the leader aligns people for the mission and accomplishment of the vision while motivating and inspiring people along the way. Apart from fulfilling her management function she has to also lead by example. Female principals display a more caring demeanour than do men. Grogan (2012) describes women as being naturally inclined to care for learners. This may differ in men where they take on the authoritarian style of leadership (Diko, 2014). In this regard, learners may respond better to women and therefore achieve more in school. Lumby and Azoala (2014) state that mothering is a vital attribute of leadership. Women are said to be nurturing and caring.

Female principals also face the challenge of still being oppressed in the 21st century. It was thought that with the new democratic government, the state of schools regarding female leadership will change, but according to Mestry and Schmidt (2012), South African schools are still clouded by gender bias against female principals. Naidoo and

Perumal (2014), and Lumby and Azaola (2014) state that there is still only a small number of females in leadership in education.

In 2014, the concluded statistics illustrating the number of learners, educators and schools in the ordinary school sector by province, region and district showed that in 2014, a total of 8 712 educators were employed by the DBE in the uMgungundlovu District and of that number, 6 191 were female. This gender discrimination is attributed to the view that female principals occupy male positions. Diko (2014) says that this is the view of society, as they perceive men to be figures of authority. Women, on the other hand, are often perceived as incapable and emotionally unstable. Patriarchy in schools is still prevalent (Mestry & Schmidt, 2015). According to Naidoo and Perumal (2014), this perception is due to the fact that female principals are assigned to low-performing or dysfunctional schools with a corrupt culture. Hence, it looks as though the female principals are weak and incapable of running a school.

Peters (2012) states that qualitative findings reveal that women are good democratic leaders. They are better than men in leadership. They adopt a mentoring and coaching style which is more favourable in an organisation because it supported all stakeholders. Females were found to be nurturing, sensitive, empathetic and intuitive. A preliminary literature review pertaining to female leadership is presented in the following section.

1.3 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

This study attempted to uncover the above challenges as discussed facing female leaders and whether it is the result of their femininity of women or gender bias. According to Lips (2017), concepts such as feminine frailty, maternal instinct and female irrationality were all considered to be built into a women's' biology, and she claims that this traditionally was the reason for the restrictions on women's roles. Morojele *et al.* (2013), and Cooper *et al.* (2017) state that visionary leaders in education are those educators who are able to imagine and seek a different future for their schools, teachers and learners. It was not an easy task to share my vision and make it a shared vision among all stakeholders, but I can proudly say that today, both schools have female principals and both of them are doing an amazing job. God willing, they will be the focus of my intended study.

My aims were to research if the male teacher's perceptions of female teachers have changed. Male teachers feel that it is wrong for women to be superior to them. According to Diko (2014), remarks that men are socially constructed to have the upper hand still prevail. They feel that they become less manly if a woman 'rules' them. I wanted to check if the community's perceptions of female principals have changed. In the past, because of society's stereotyping, women were seen as being too sensitive for the role of principal. Lastly, I want to prove that females are effective leaders by researching if their styles of leadership have had a positive impact on the progress of learners (Reilly & Bauer, 2015). Learners see females as mother figures at school. They tend to respond comfortably to females because they are familiar with the personality traits of their mothers. Female principals are more nurturing and caring (Peters, 2012; Lips, 2014). Learners find this style of leadership encouraging and motivating. Thus, because they feel secure, they are able to concentrate better in class and achieve higher grades.

This study focused on the situation in South African education with regard to women leading schools. My intention was to explore the world of women and to explain the challenges experienced by female principals in the teaching profession. The challenges faced by women are common ones, for example, the law protects learners in schools. This is a good thing, but the impact of this is that the school discipline is affected negatively. Learners use this to manipulate the school's administration (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012). Other challenges that principals face is that of drug abuse, aggressive and disruptive behaviour, school violence, delinquency and late coming (Grobler & Khatite, 2012). Another challenge is gender bias against female principals (Mestry & Schmidt, 2012). The study will also show how men and surrounding communities perceive women and if their attitudes towards women in leadership have changed. Women have a unique style, which is nurturing and compassionate, and because of this, learners behave differently when the principal is a female. I sought more knowledge pertaining to this and whether it has any effect on the progress of learners at a school.

Conducting a study such as this is imperative if change is to take place. This change will be based on empirical evidence. For change to take place, the principal needs to

become the change agent driving change (Dosen & Rieckhoff, 2016). The principal has to use various forms of strategies to implement this change. Whilst trying to transform the school, the principal must also equip herself with the last information available as well as the latest technology available. She has to align herself and her practices with the 21st century. With this change, classes will become learner-centred, technology rich and democratic. Savvidis (2016) describes the top characteristics of a 21st-century classroom. Among them was the characteristic describing how the teacher has evolved into a facilitator of education. “the role of educators in the 21st century has evolved, teachers are expected to become facilitators in terms of inspiring learners to take ownership in their own learning by providing them with opportunities to learn key concepts and to discover the tools they need for learning” (Savvidis, 2016, para. 6). The staff at the school will become motivated and empowered, which will result in the vision and mission of the school being realised (Johnson & Sessions, 2016).

A transformational leader is caring and motivated. In my study I will focus on both of these characteristics, which is: mothering and transformational leadership and show how they both result in an improved school. In my opinion, I think the mothering and caring a female leader shows makes her different from male leaders. This nurturing style contributes to her transformational leadership style, because she is able to lead and transform everyone around her. The exploration of female leaders and how they influence and contribute to the school as a whole is what I intend to do. Many learners present many problems that the parents cannot solve at home. These may be socioeconomic problems, psychosocial problems, etc. and, according to Lumby and Azaola (2014), need to be tackled before learning takes place. Many women leaders appear to adopt a style that could be deemed transformational. According to Grogan (2012), these types of leaders lead rather than control. Keeler and Kroth (2012) perceive that there will be many benefits for the organisation when leaders care.

Stereotypes and theories about leadership are still predominantly male. Marishane *et al.* (2013) cite Barnette (2003), stating that transformational leadership occurs when leaders and followers join one another “in pursuit of higher order common goals”. Marishane *et al.* (2013) concur that these leaders build unity with their followers around

a clear collective vision, and a commonly understood purpose. These leaders behave as role models thereby inspiring others and motivating them. Their followers are inspired to take risks that will result in organisational improvement without reservation Shelton (2012).

Sarr (2017) describes transformational leaders as those who motivate their followers to achieve a vision that matches their values. The transformational leader is a good communicator, has inspirational traits and a trustworthy character that can promote teamwork. "Transformational leaders do not totally discard the organisation's hierarchal structure and programs but, in fact, may strengthen them by working within structure and policies to build and expand new ones and collapse old ones." (Shelton, 2012: 2).

Shelton (2012) describes transformational leaders as self-confident. Self-confidence allows transformational leaders to feel satisfied with themselves. They operate from a base of fixed principles rather than making the rules up as the go. Transformational leaders lead the way by setting examples. They are not long- distance leaders. They are not afraid of developing friendship-like associations. They listen without being condescending because the care about the individual that they lead. True transformational leaders will step above Maslow's self-actualisation to a level called 'idealised influence' that sheds one's own needs totally for another person. However, this is not used to control another person.

Sarr (2017) cites Kokemuller's (2015a) list of advantages and disadvantages of transformational leadership. Kokemuller (in Sarr, 2017) states that the advantage of transformational leadership is that this theory believes that people rise higher through positive motivation rather than negative motivation. The first disadvantage is that it does not include the dynamics of a situation and assumes that followers would want to work together to achieve a goal. The second disadvantage is that its approaches are not as effective in situations where followers do not have the necessary skills or experience to complete a task or are not motivated to perform without an immediate or tangible reward. The third disadvantage is that its results take time to happen. Although the disadvantages outweigh the advantages, if all stakeholders share the vision of the transformational leader, most of the battle is won.

According to Mestry and Khumalo (2012), females face many challenges at schools, for example, low school discipline. The main problems are truancy, absenteeism, late coming, bullying and Satanism. Vassiliki (2012) claims that females can become stricter and prove that they are capable of managing and leading the school. Society includes children who make up our learner component in schools. Their parents are their mentors at home. If society stereotypes females and believes that they are weaker and are supposed to be submissive to men, then the learners will bring this attitude to school; hence, there are so many problems in a female-run school. Learners also imitate their teachers. When they look at a male teacher or member of management consistently undermining the principal, the learner will definitely do the same.

Female principals face many challenges in their positions and this should not be the case because the constitution of South Africa dictates that all citizens should be treated equally and fairly. The rationale for this study is discussed below.

1.4 RATIONALE

The rationale for undertaking this research was based on the following reasons:

Firstly, based on my experience at schools, I strongly feel that if female teachers are given an opportunity to fill management positions, it will boost their confidence and make them feel valued. This will also motivate female teachers to stay in our country and feel content in their jobs.

Secondly, this study aimed at investigating the various challenges faced by female principals at schools in the uMgungundlovu District. It also sought to explore if the traditional barriers against female principals still exist at schools today.

Lastly, this study was undertaken for the sake of learning. Female principals in South Africa are doing an amazing job. The study aimed to document the coping strategies and leadership styles used by female principals in the uMgungundlovu District that have transformed their schools to 21st-century learning institutions. The problem statement is presented below.

1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The sections above now lead to the main problem statement of the study, which can be phrased as a research question: **What should the role of female principals be as transformational leaders to create school improvement?**

The main research question can be divided into the following sub-questions:

- What is transformational leadership?
- Why is there discrimination against females to be leaders at schools?
- Which skills and knowledge, does the female principal as transformational leader need, in order to lead the school towards improvement?
- Which practices of female principals at schools contribute to the effectiveness of the school?

From the research questions, the aims and objectives were formulated. They are mentioned in the next section.

1.6 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this study was to establish what the transformational leadership role of the female principal should be to create school improvement. The objectives of the study were to:

- describe and define the concept of transformational leadership (to be addressed in Chapter 2 as part of the theoretical framework);
- explain why there is discrimination against female leaders in schools (to be addressed in Chapter 2 as part of the theoretical framework);
- explore which skills and knowledge the female principal as transformational leader need in order to lead the school towards improvement (to be established by the empirical part of the study); and
- determine how the current practices of female principals at schools contribute to

the effectiveness of the school (to be addressed as the main outcome of this study).

The aims and objectives describe what the study intends to investigate. The next section describes how the study will be of value to all the stakeholders in education.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study took an in-depth look at the challenges faced by female principals at schools in the uMgungundlovu District. The study is of significance in that it attempts to provide insights and inform education stakeholders including teachers and the Department of Basic Education of the underrepresentation of female principals as well as the gender specific challenges that cloud schools. The study hopes to add to existing knowledge pertaining to the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions within the uMgungundlovu District. I hope that the study provides female teachers and principals insights into coping strategies that may be useful to them to deal with their current challenges. These insights could lead to empowerment and career growth among females in education.

1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.8.1 Research paradigm, approach and design to be followed

Beck and Kosnik (2012:7) quote John Dewey, “Education is not an affair of “telling” and being told, by an active and constructive process.” I plan to conduct this study within the constructivist paradigm. Social constructivism is an approach that encourages all members of a learning community to present their ideals strongly while remaining open to the ideas of others. It is a passionate approach, involving the whole person – thought, emotion and action (Beck & Kosnik, 2012).

A constructivist view of learning implies that each person forms his/her own representation of knowledge from their individual experiences. This is done through active exploration. This results in uncovering the discrepancy between what they know and their new experience (Beck & Kosnik, 2012). Social constructionism involves looking at the ways social phenomena are created, institutionalized and made into traditions by humans. The focus is to uncover the way in which individuals and groups

participate in the creation of their perceived social reality. According to Vygotsky (1978), constructionism refers to the development of phenomena relative to social contexts. Observation is the key to good research, as the researcher is able to observe and analyze the participants in their environments.

In my study, I observed the principals and educators at their places of work. This should give a clear picture of the views and attitudes of all stakeholders of the school. This could create an opportunity for theories regarding female transformational leaders to either be accepted or rejected. It is described as a sociological construct. Bryman (2012) describes constructionism as an ontological position that asserts that social phenomenon and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors. It implies that social phenomenon and categories are not only produced through social interaction but they are in a constant state of revision. During this study, I attempted to use this approach so that my perceptions are vivid of what life is really like for these female principals. By actually being a part of their world, I was able to conclude if in fact what is known in literature about female principals is actually the same, or if it has changed.

I have used a qualitative approach. According to Roller and Lavrakas (2015), humans constantly engage in some form of qualitative research. They take in information from the environment and develop it to react to a particular situation. In a formal method of inquiry, emphasis is placed on the individual role that context and relationships play in forming thoughts and behaviour. I have collected data directly from the school environment by physically being present. In this way, all phenomena of interest naturally occur. McMillan and Schumacher (2013) state that qualitative researchers believe that behaviour is best understood as it occurs without external constraints and control.

By observing what happens in the organisation, the researcher has a first-hand encounter with phenomena. Hence, qualitative research helps people to understand the organisation better (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). During observation, I had the opportunity to collect data face to face. During this time, I experienced how female principals cope with the discrimination posed by the community and her colleagues. I noticed the strategies they implemented to cope with each day. Much evidence was collected to

support my view that, in fact, females have additional traits like maternal instincts, which assist them when dealing with learners with personal, socio-economic, learning and discipline problems.

The research design that I used for this study was a case study. The case study is an essential form of social science inquiry. It emphasises a contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships. Creswell (2013: 97) states,

The case study method explores real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, thorough detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information ... and reports a case description and case themes.

Gustafsson's (2017) literature review concludes that single case studies are not time consuming. If a high-quality theory needs to be written a deeper understanding of subject exploration occurs. Single case studies can richly describe the existence of phenomenon and that the researcher can question old theoretical relationships and explore new ones. The single case study was best for my study because, according to Yin (2013), a single case study represents the critical case in testing a well formulated theory. The theory specifies a clear set of propositions. A single case may be used to determine whether a theory's propositions are correct or an alternate explanation may be more relevant.

In this study theories about transformational leaders and leadership styles were scrutinised and utilised. Yin (2018) states that single case studies represent an extreme or unique case. Female transformational leaders are unique. Females in education are underrepresented and thus reasons must be found as to why this happens (Naidoo & Perumal, 2014). Yin (2018) further states that the researcher has the opportunity to observe and analyze a phenomenon previously inaccessible to scientific investigation. Researchers can observe to get insights into problems. Single case studies are perfect on the grounds of its revelatory nature. For this study, data were collected from observations and interviews. This was done to reveal the leadership styles of the female transformational leader and how she is instrumental in school improvement.

Yin (2018) makes mention of Schramm's work, 1971 saying that, the central tendency of

all types of case studies is to illuminate a decision or decisions that are taken, how they were implemented and what the result was. The one phenomenon that I focused on was the female principal as a transformational leader and how she assists teachers in creating 21st-century skills in the classroom. From observations and interviews, data were collected and analyzed to provide answers about the transformational leader and the impact she has on the creation of 21st-century classrooms.

The qualitative study was conducted using a population of nine participants. Population and sampling is discussed below.

1.8.2 Population and sampling

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2013), a population is defined as a group of individuals or events from which a sample is drawn and from which results can be generalised. The population of interest for the study consisted of six teachers and three leaders at public schools in the northern suburbs of Pietermaritzburg, uMgungundlovu District. The area has permanent residents comprising different ethnic groups representing various socio-economic backgrounds.

The sample size is usually guided by the purpose of the study, focus of the study, primary data collection strategy and the availability of informants. Purposeful sampling was used for this study. Sampling is defined by Guest, Namey and Michell (2013) as the process of selecting a subset of items from a defined population for inclusion into a study.

I identified three schools in the Northdale area of Pietermaritzburg. The three schools are surrounded by three informal settlements. The children from these informal settlements attend the three schools. Such typicality increases the external validity of the sample. These three schools were chosen to be part of my study, because I was familiar with the day to day running of the school and the participants met the criteria.

I have been the chairperson of the school's governing body at one of the three schools. I was a learner at one of the schools. All three schools are easily accessible. I am known by most of the staff. All three schools are public schools. According to Ally and McLaren (2016), public schools are those schools that are allocated funds, but these

funds need to be supplemented by school fees. This means that the majority of the learners at these schools come from homes ranging from informal settlements, single-parent households and unemployed parent households; thus, many learners are exempted from paying school fees. This poses a big problem, as the progression of becoming an efficient 21st-century school is hampered. I interviewed a sample of nine (n=9) participants. They have been provided with detailed information regarding the phenomenon that I am investigating based on their perceptions. The female principals provided detailed accounts of their styles of leadership and the challenges they face at their schools. The male deputy principal from the third school offered his perception of female principals and provided evidence of his style of leadership. (cf. 4.5.4.2, 4.5.1.4) This comparison was crucial in providing answers to my questions. The instruments used to collect data is very important to a study. The data collection instruments I used are explained below.

1.8.3 Data collection instruments

I conducted semi-structured and open-ended interviews to generate data for this study. The questions for these interviews were guided by my research questions. I was able to elicit views and opinions from the participants. According to Galetta (2013), the questions are open-ended in order to create space for participants to narrate their experiences. However, the focus of the questions had to be very deliberate and tied to what the transformational leadership role of the female principal should be to create school improvement. I also gathered data by means of observation. Guest *et al.* (2013) describe observation as a connection of the researcher to the most basic human experiences that he discovers through an immersion and participation of human behaviour in a particular context. Guest *et al.* (2013:76) state that there are three elements of a participant observation study, namely:

- Getting into the location of whatever aspect of the human experience you wish to study. If observation is going to be meaningful, the observer needs to be present at the location. I visited the location to observe the role of the transformational leader. After observation, clarification and answers to questions were documented.
- Building rapport with the participants. Participants tend to be honest with the

researcher when mutual trust is created between them. I built a rapport with the participants because this is an important aspect when it comes to credibility of participants. I wanted their honest perceptions so that my research is meaningful.

- Spend enough time interacting to get the needed data. All events at the location occurred naturally. The researcher needs to be patient and wait to receive the information needed. During my research, I interacted with participants without being biased.

After the data had been collected, they were analyzed and presented.

1.8.4 Data analysis and presentation

Qualitative data analysis is an inductive process of organising data into categories with the purpose of finding pattern and relationships among these categories. For this study I used the inductive analysis approach. Inductive analysis is the process through which qualitative researchers synthesise and make meaning of data, starting with specific data and ending with categories and patterns (McMillan & Schumacher, 2013). The process of inductive analysis involves coding, categorisation and interpretation of data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon of interest. McMillan and Schumacher (2013) use the following definition of coding, namely as small pieces of data that stand alone. They further mention the examples of codes used in research. Examples include context, participants' perspectives, participants' thinking about people and objects, process, activity, event, relationship and social structures and strategies.

All data that were collected from interviews and observations were recorded and transcribed. It was recorded in the participant-used language to create the most realistic, most credible perspective of the participant. Wilson (2017) suggests that the researcher be systematic and make sense of what was done. Wilson (2017) mentions Zina O'Leary's (2005) book, *Researching real-world problems: methodical organised approach*. In O'Leary's book, the stages of data handling are described as data reduction, data analysis, data synthesis and data display. The purpose of transcribed data is to support and supplement observations. The narrative structure used will depend on the purpose of the research, the qualitative design and audience

(Richardson 1998, in McMillan & Schumacher, 2013). Next all the data that were collected had to be processed to convey meanings and findings of the study. Comparisons needed to be made in the final step between the findings of the study with the theories in education.

The responses from the participants were transcribed in their actual words to ensure that all participants perceptions were credible.

1.9 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE STUDY

As defined by McMillan and Schumacher (2013), validity in qualitative research refers to the degree of congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of the world. Validity is the ability of an instrument to measure what it is designed to measure. Validity of findings is paramount so that data is a representation of a true and full picture of constructs under investigation.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) state that validity and reliability are two aspects that are crucially vital in qualitative research; hence, the researcher needs to be sensitive to this. Researchers need to be conscious of the factors that pose risks to validity of findings and if these factors are not avoided it could cloud the interpretation of data (Frazen, 2013).

Validity and reliability in qualitative and quantitative research differ (Anney, 2014). Qualitative research, unlike quantitative research does not lead to statistical or empirical calculations of validity. Strategies and tactics need to enhance the truthfulness of validity in qualitative findings. “Novice researchers are often confused by the diverse nature of qualitative research thereby relying totally on the quantitative research trustworthiness criteria.” Anney (2014:272-273) The purpose of this study was to address what the role of the transformational leader at a school should be to create school improvement. I used a qualitative approach and I used multi-method strategies, participant language, verbatim accounts and member checking (McMillan & Schumacher, 2013), thus allowing for triangulation in data collection and data analysis. The purpose of triangulation is to increase the credibility and validity of results. Cohen *et al.* (2018) define triangulation as an attempt to map out or explain more fully the

richness and complexity of the behaviour of humans by studying it from more than one point.

Claims of validity is said to rest on data collection and analysis techniques. I used multi-method research strategies in this study to collect and analyze data. According to Seawright (2016:2), “multi-method research involves combining data-gathering and analyzing techniques from two or more methodological traditions”.

The central method of this study aimed to focus on structured interviews with document analysis. All data collected were phrased in the participant’s language using quotations and documents. This is part of the multi-method strategy ensuring credibility Anney (2014). All information was verified by participants after collection to ensure accuracy.

Anney (2014) presents the following strategies that can be practised that ensure validity of qualitative data:

- Use a variety of instruments, methods and resources to collect data. The process of using multiple method, data collection strategies, data sources or even multiple researchers is called triangulation. I used face-to-face interviews and document analysis to collect data.
- Engage in persistent and prolonged participation at the study site. The more time spent at the site will ensure that the researcher knows what is typical, atypical and or problematic within a setting. I spent a few hours at the school.
- Conduct member checks. This process involves asking participants to review the accuracy of the research report.
- Use peer briefing and external audits as mechanisms for verifying researchers’ processes. This is done so that a critical review and evaluation of the report can be done.
- Develop detailed descriptions and notes and engage in reflexivity. Detailed notes on observations and interviews should be as comprehensive as possible. Reflexivity is a process where the preliminary thoughts and interpretations of the researcher are integrated with actual observation notes. I transcribed all the

recordings from the participants. After this, themes were formulated and findings made.

- Analyze negative cases. Negative cases, e.g. people do not fit into the pattern that the researcher observed. They should not be ignored by the researcher; instead, the researcher should revise the pattern where these cases fit better.

This study was conducted amongst professionals. A code of ethics was consulted before conducting the study. An ethical clearance certificate was provided by UNISA.

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Qualitative research looks into the minds of a person or groups by exploring their feelings and behaviour. It is very different to quantitative research that is based on numbers. The researcher has a responsibility towards participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2013). Specifically, participants of a study are entitled to four types of rights that need to be secured, according to Govil (2013). They are a) the right to maintain privacy; b)

guaranteed anonymity; c) guaranteed confidentiality; and d) avoiding harm, betrayal or deception.

The guidelines that I needed to consider are that the researcher should work 'within an ethic of respect'. No distinction should be made on the grounds of age, sex, gender, etc., unless the nature of work warrants it. The same questions were asked to all participants so that no bias was created towards any gender. Participants must have prior knowledge of work that is expected of them. All participants work in schools so they are familiar with the daily functions of the school. Participants must be old enough to understand the choices that they are making. If they are minors, parents or guardians' consent should be given. All participants of this study are classified as adults, i.e. over the age of 18. Participants are free to leave at any time. They are not obligated to continue as part of the research if they do not wish to. I mentioned to all the participants that they may withdraw if they did not want to be part of the study. Participants are entitled to know the results of the research. I informed each participant that this thesis would be made available once it is accepted. The relationship between the researcher and the participant should be based

on honesty. Deception of any form should be avoided. All data collected from the interviews were recorded and transcribed to maintain credibility. Participants have the right to privacy and all forms of information require confidentiality. I ensured that the names of the participants and the schools remained anonymous in this study. I used coding to ensure this. Sometimes research activities disturb ongoing institutional activities. Attempts should be made to maximise disturbance. The interviews took place one day before the start of the new academic year so that the teachers were not taken out of their classrooms.

A letter explaining the intentions and the purpose of the study was sent to the participating schools. Another letter seeking permission to conduct the study was sent to the Department of Education, uMgungundlovu District. The letter outlined the intentions of the study and details of the whereabouts of the study.

Before data collection took place, an application had to be sent to Unisa for clearance before commencement. This is a standard procedure taken by the Unisa Ethics Committee to ensure that there is scientific validity and sound methodology.

Enough data were collected from the participants regarding female leadership; however, the study was limited to their perceptions only. The limitations and delimitations are explained in the next section.

1.11 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

I conducted several interviews with the participants during the collection of relevant data. The data that were collected are limited to what the respondents were willing to share with the researcher during the interviews. The interviews were conducted in English, which was not the native language of all the respondents. This might have resulted in the respondents not being able to express and convey their feelings to the researcher in fully. The study was limited to public schools in the uMgungundlovu District. Despite the limitations above, the research findings were worthwhile.

1.12 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.12.1 Transformational leadership

Leithwood and Jantzi (1990; 1999; in Shields, 2018) cite that the transformational leadership theory starts and ends with the focus on the organisation itself and the setting of organisational goals and mobilising resources to ensure that goals of the organisation are met efficiently and effectively. Hence, transformational leaders are primarily concerned with organisational effects and outcomes. Transformational leaders have a higher level of personal commitment to organisational goals and greater capacities of accomplishing those goals. According to Shelton (2012:17),

Leaders who have a transformational style and who have the respect and trust of the members will enhance the creativity, productivity and efficiency of each member, who will in turn will strengthen the team as a whole.

In my study I attempted to show that their nature and style of leadership of female principals resulted in positive outcomes for educators and learners. The followers see the female leader as a role model and begin to share her vision and own it.

1.12.2 Female leaders

Tappin and Marinovic (2017) report that these women belong to Generation X and have been exposed to more equality. They go on to explain that that means that they have more confidence to bring their ‘feminine’ qualities to the workplace. They tend to operate under the notion that women are equals. They possess qualities of being able to listen, care, communicate and understand very well, which contributes to their success. In this study I attempted to show that these characteristics of the female transformational leader benefit the school as a whole. Her ability to communicate, understand and listen is crucial for dealing with problems regarding learners and staff. It is also essential to the empowerment of all stakeholders “of a mothering approach to leading a school is a prerequisite for addressing the ills that result from the children’s poverty and also leads to better relationships with staff, so improves learning” (Reilly & Bauer, 2015:160).

1.12.3 Public Schools

Every year, the Minister of Basic Education in South Africa determines the national quintiles for public schools that must be used by MECs to identify schools that may not charge school fees. Schools in each province are classified into 5 groups, from the poorest to the least poor. Quintile 5 represents schools that are the least poor (Veriava, Thom & Hodgson, 2017). This is only a small allocation of money; hence, the school has to charge school fees. School fees are determined by the school's governing body. Section 41 of the *South African Schools Act (SASA) no. 84 of 1996* states that a public school may only enforce the payment of school fees after it has ascertained that the parent does not qualify for a fee exemption (Ally & McLaren, 2016). If the school is classified under quintile 5, this means that all the money needed to run the school does not come from the Department of Basic Education. The principal somehow has to 'make a plan' to raise this money. Thus the principal needs to possess some type of leadership style that motivates all stakeholders of the school to participate and raise this money. This money can be raised through school fees, fundraising events or from community members who own businesses. This is not necessarily easy, because for this to be done, the principal must be able to convince all stakeholders to help the school to raise money. The principal must be effective and use her leadership style to convince and motivate parents to pay school fees, and not just make excuses that they cannot afford to pay school fees. Statistics South Africa (www.education.gov.za) reports that there was an increase in learners who do not pay school fees from 3% to 65% in 2014. Of course, if there is not enough money to run the school, other facilities like innovative technology and employing qualified teachers will not happen.

1.12.4 School improvement

The Hannover Report (2014) states that school improvement involves 'quality improvement', which it defines as "the disciplined use of evidence based quantitative and qualitative methods to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, equity, timeliness or safety of service delivery process and systems". The process of school improvement is two-fold. The areas for improvement must be identified firstly, whereafter the areas of

improvement should be prioritised. My aim was to illustrate how female leaders contribute to school improvement through their leadership styles. School improvement takes place on many levels of the school and thus the principal is the main person to initiate school improvement.

1.13 PLANNING OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER ONE contains the introduction, background to the study and the motivation for the investigation. This chapter also attempts to delineate the origin and extent of the problem statement and sub-problems. The aims and objectives of the research were formulated. The methodology of the research to be undertaken and the value of the investigation are described. The main concepts are briefly described and explained.

CHAPTER TWO gives a review of the literature and the rationale regarding transformational leadership and the discrimination against female principals. The researcher links the current situation of the participants of the study with the theoretical framework and the literature relating to transformational leadership and challenges facing female principals in South Africa.

CHAPTER THREE mentions the research design and the research methods are described. This chapter deals with the description of the population, procedures and description of the tools and its application.

CHAPTER FOUR conveys the collected data. It is analyzed and a discussion of the results provided is given. The data collected are presented and interpreted.

CHAPTER FIVE is the concluding chapter. In this chapter, a summary is given of the research results, whether they are supported or not and conclusions and recommendations are made. Lastly, interpretation and further suggestions for the study are made.

I hope that this study will be valuable to improve South African education.

1.14 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The benefit of this investigation is derived from the fact that it gives a vivid description of the pivotal role and experiences of female principals at public schools in the uMgungundlovu District. I anticipated that it could be used to create an understanding of the daily experiences of the participants of this study to ensure that schools become professional centres of teaching and learning despite their challenges.

This study attempts to inform the broader professional body, namely all the stakeholders concerned with the school, the decision-makers of the Department of Education, supervisors and principals about the pivotal role and challenges that female principals encounter on a daily basis. I envision that if professional bodies are familiar with the challenges of female principals, then more support can be offered to them to promote growth and confidence among them. It might give policymakers insight into how to design policies the best by focusing on these challenges to ensure that schools are professional places of teaching and learning.

1.15 SUMMARY

In this chapter, a brief introductory background to the study was given. The background for the study and the problems related were outlined. The aims and objectives of the study and the research design methods were described. This chapter concluded with the limitations to the study, the explanation of concepts and the organisation of content. In Chapter 2, I will discuss the literature reviewed in relation to female leadership and the theoretical framework within a South African school context.

CHAPTER 2:

CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY FEMALE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

No general and education program will be successful without good leadership. (Obiakor, Banks Rotatori & Utley, 2107:1)

Through the eyes of the world, an organization may have great identity. However, without a leader with proper functionality in managing the organization, it is certain that the organization might face failure in the future". (Abdullah & Varatharajoo, 2017)

Education systems are a reflection of society. That is, the prevailing ideologies of governmental policies and philosophies of the time largely tend to influence policies, practices and curriculum within schools.

School leaders therefore are similarly influenced by societal and political forces of the day as they are expected to ensure compliance with and implementation of ministerial policies and to enact the change demanded to facilitate the alignment of school personnel with the expectations of government and by implication, society as a whole (Scott, Scott & Dudar, 2017:9).

According to the Wallace Foundation (2013), principals are the central source of leadership influence at a school. Their styles of leadership have a direct impact on whether the school will be successful or not. Principals constantly work on initiating and facilitating school improvement. Harris (2016) emphasises that principals can initiate and facilitate school improvement effectively through good communication. "Principals who communicate effectively have a positive influence on teachers, learners and other stakeholders." (Harris, 2016:18) Once the principal gains the trust and of all stakeholders, the principal can then start leading the followers towards the desired vision of the school. Shenninger and Murray (2017) state that school leaders must work diligently to build trusting relationships so that sustained transformation can occur.

This study focuses specifically on transformational leaders. Transformational leaders are responsible for changing schools so that they can satisfy the demands of the 21st century. Sheringer and Murray (2017) conducted many studies and concluded that the key to transformational change and intentional design is to build a dynamic school culture by comprehensively planning, investing in and empowering learners and staff, leading by example, and modelling the desired outcomes. Sheringer and Murray (2017) also mention that a leadership team should speak with one voice so that it is understood clearly. Failure cannot be blamed on miscommunication and ambiguity. It is crucially important for a principal to ensure that people are an integral part of the transformational process. A transformational leader is only successful in transforming the organisation if there is no or little resistance from followers. Anderson and Anderson (2015) suggest that “because transformation impacts people so personally, you must get them involved in it to garner their support, and the earlier the better”. Maister (2017) emphasises that the truth is that change is usually evolution, not revolution. Followers are transformed because their mindsets have changed. Only when this happens, change will occur. Change is not a permanent situation of chaos and uncertainty; it is an evolution of people with a shared vision.

What follows is a theoretical framework that provides insight to the literature pertaining to the concept of transformational leadership.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

2.2.1 Introduction

“As its name implies, transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms people.” (Northouse, 2016:161) Transformational leadership is a relationship between the leader and followers. Followers chose to follow the leader because of particular traits that he possesses. According to Samukange (2014), leadership causes change in followers and can thus be defined as a leadership approach that causes a change in individuals and social systems.

Cherry (2018) states that transformational leadership is a leadership style that can inspire positive changes in those who follow. Usually these changes are necessary to

improve organisations as a whole. The transformational leader is responsible for initiating that change. Prior to addressing these themes, transformational leadership theory is discussed, as it applies to this investigation on school leadership.

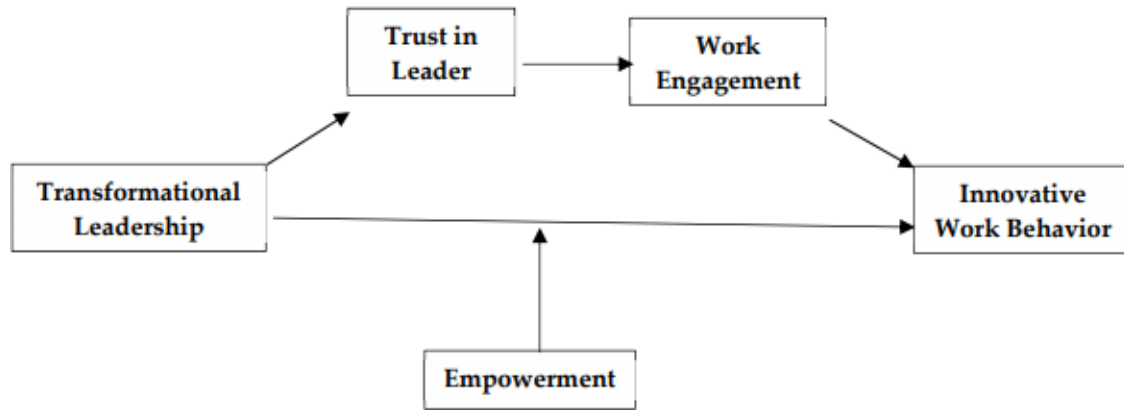


Figure 2. 1: Hypothetical framework – Empowerment positively moderates the relationship between transformation leaders and employees’ innovative work behaviour (Li *et al.*, 2019:7)

Leaders who adopt a transformational leadership style constantly motivate, encourage and inspire followers to perform better than what is expected of them. As a result, followers achieve things that they never expected to accomplish; hence, they attribute their success to the leader. Followers have strong levels of trust, admiration, loyalty and respect for the leader because they believe that the leader is responsible for their success (Washington & Leaver, 2016). Followers decide what they want to be involved in. Followers who are constantly motivated take up more roles and responsibilities Gözükara and Şimşek (2015) state that if followers are given more job autonomy then greater effort will be put into work engagement. Thus, through transformational leadership there is a positive effect on work engagement. Studies conducted by Li *et al.* (2019) reveal that transformational leadership and work engagement are significantly related to innovative work behaviour. When transformational leadership is practised, followers are given more freedom to work harder in a way that they want to. They are part of a shared vision and thus the work that they are involved in becomes theirs. Followers take ownership of tasks and strive to complete it successfully because they are motivated. Once they feel that they have accomplished the goal, they feel a sense of empowerment (Dover, Hariharan & Cummings, 2014).

The next section provides information about how transformational leadership originated.

2.2.2 The origin of transformational leadership

Although transformational leadership emerged in 1978, it was first coined by Downton in 1973. Kirimi and Minja (2012) discuss that a transformational leader needs to be committed to the vision he proposes to followers. Tourish (2013) also explains that vision becomes a shared vision and they are encouraged and motivated to act in certain ways to ensure the realisation of the goals. Furthermore, Washington and Leaver (2016) explain that charisma is needed by a leader to motivate and encourage and, most of all, lead followers towards the vision he has for the organisation. Thompson (2012) states that the effectiveness of a leader's communication skills is manifested in the leader's ability to engage followers. Hence, leaders must articulate the visions and goals of the schools and the result of engagement would be that the followers become invested in the goals that the leader sets. Charisma is an important characteristic that the leader needs in order to engage followers.

Transformational leadership became popular in the early 1980s. Transformational leadership emerged in 1978. Burns explains that leadership models and practices are based on transactional processes that focus on the interaction between the leader and followers. Burns (1978) furthermore states that transformation leadership "is a leadership style where one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality". He furthermore adds that transformational leadership as a process of engagement between leaders and followers. Sandell (2012), Blomme, Kodden and Beasley-Suffolk (2015) and Li *et al.* (2019) concur that there has to be engagement between leaders and followers so that that the objectives, goals and vision of the organisation can be realised. This creates a connection that results in an increased level of motivation and morality in both the followers and the leaders themselves (Clayton, 2016). Bass's model of transformational leadership is presented in the next section.

2.2.3 Bass' model of transformational leadership

Transformational leadership was operationalised and expanded by Bernard Bass (1985). He noted that transactional and transformational models were more of a continuum rather than two separate entities. In addition, Bass (1985) included the concept of laissez-faire or delegation on the continuum. According to Murray, Eldridge and Kohl (2019), *laissez-faire* is a type of leadership style where leaders appear to be uninvolved. Unlike the transformational leadership style, the laissez-faire leader allows the group members to make all the decisions. These types of leader's delegate duties to group members and they have a 'hands-off' approach. Cherry (2018) states that research shows that laissez-faire leadership style leads to the lowest production among group members. The laissez-faire leader offers very little guidance to group members. If the group is motivated, they can work without the leader; however, if the group lacks motivation and creativity, it could be detrimental to the organisation (Buch, Martinsen & Kuvaas, 2015). Group members, if motivated can become even more creative, because they are given total freedom and the leader provides all tools and resources (McGiboney, 2018). According to Adams (2018), when the leader delegates tasks to followers, the tasks are delegated according to the individual growth needs of the individual follower. The leader will provide everything that is needed by the follower to achieve the goals of the organisation. When delegation takes place it is monitored by the leader.

According to Kooharian (2017), the Bass model of transformational leadership also emphasises that the transformational leader is responsible for evoking and changing the mindsets of followers so that they can be part of a team that shares the vision of the organisation. According to Mahajan, Mahajan and Dewan (2016), maximum delegation occurs in an organisation that are decentralised. This means that decision-making takes place across the organisation, whereas, where decision-making is done by top or near the top management, there is less delegation of tasks. Autocratic leaders do not delegate tasks. The reason for this, according to Houghton (2016), is that the autocratic leader does not trust subordinates and the leader wants to control everything that happens within the organisation, hence autocratic leadership is a top-down approach. Laissez-faire leaders will delegate duties to avoid taking the blame for failure amongst

the groups. Transformational leaders delegate tasks to develop subordinates for personal growth as well as empowerment.

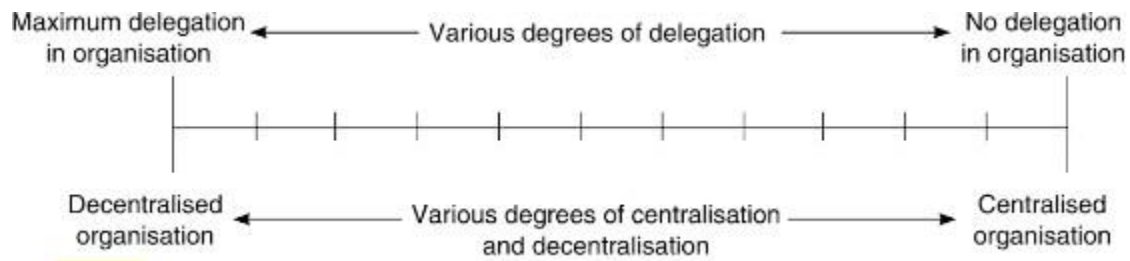


Figure 2. 2: Centralised and decentralised organisation on delegation continuum (Mahajan et al., 2016:157)

When maximum delegation within an organisation occurs, the organisation will tend to be decentralised. When an organisation is a decentralised one, decisions, for example, are delegated to middle management and lower levels. (Barrett, n.d.). Organisations that are centralised tend to have a lower production and performance level, because the workers feel demotivated. Brodzinski (2018) states that there is little or no autonomy because the head of the organisation is responsible for all decision making.

2.2.3.1 Maslow's Hierarchy needs

According to Worth (2019), Burns (1978) was influenced by Maslow's hierarchy of needs. With Maslow's hierarchy of needs, humans address lower order needs before satisfying higher order ones. The various types of needs are depicted in the illustration below.



Figure 2. 3: Adapted from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Russ & Gonzales, 2014:170)

Cherry (2018) explains that at the base of the pyramid are the basic physical needs including, the need for water, food, sleep and warmth. Once all the basic physiological needs are met, safety is found at the next tier.

This tier deals with the safety of the individual and the individual tries to protect what they have, which include employment, family, resources, and morality. (Pichère & Cadiat, 2015).

According to McConnell (2018), once the individual feels safe, they reach the next tier, which focuses on the psychological and social needs of the individual such as family, friendship and sexual intimacy. When relationships are formed, it is based on trust. Samukange (2014) explains that transformational leadership deals with trust, where followers trust the leader so much that they achieve goals that they did not think were possible.

Cherry (2018) states that the individual becomes more confident and this builds his self-esteem. If the individual has a good, strong self-esteem, he can progress to the next level, which is about developing himself by accomplishing his goals and objectives.

According to McConnell (2018), the follower now believes in reaching goals, because the transformational leader who has become the follower's hero has taken him to that level. The follower will aspire to achieve more, because the experience has taught him that it is possible to achieve more than was expected. The individual grows as a person.

Like Bass (1985), Burns (1978) believed that the transformational leader dwelled towards the top of the Maslow's Hierarchy of needs pyramid, floating in the sweet elixir of self-esteem and a powerful sense of self, thus inspiring a committed relationship between the leader and his followers (McConnell, 2018). The leader was equipped with all the tools to motivate and inspire his followers to complete tasks to the best of their abilities. The transformational leader has found "self-actualization", according to Maslow. (Daas, 2015). The leader will not only try to develop him; he will also try to support and empower his followers. According to Cherry (2018), when a leader is in the self-actualisation stage, he is not concerned with the opinions of others; they are concerned with personal growth as well as fulfilling their potential.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs identified that an employees'/individuals' needs must be met in order to become motivated. An organisation can offer the employee many benefits, for example, salary, housing and transport allowance in order to satisfy the employee's needs. In return, the employee is motivated to work. Regarding delegation, the leader must trust the employee enough to delegate tasks. The employee must be able, willing, capable and confident enough to perform tasks. An employee can only become confident when the first four levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs have been met. In a decentralised organisation, the transformational leader delegates tasks to empower and motivate employees. When an employee reaches the self-actualisation stage and the employee is concerned with self-development, then according to Meek (2013), the transformational leader can delegate duties effectively.

Like Maslow, Bass's model of transformational leadership was based on the 4 'I's which made up the elements of transformational leadership.

2.2.3.2 Four I's of transformational leadership

As described by Bass (1985), the transformational leadership theory is based around four elements, namely Idealised influence, Intellectual stimulation, Individualised consideration and Inspirational motivation.

Transformational leadership has four original dimensions created by Bass in 1985.



Figure 2. 4: Four components of Transformational leadership (Renjith, Renu & George, 2015)

The illustration above is explained in the following table in more detail.

Table 2. 1: Elements of transformational leadership (McGrath & Bates, 2017)

Elements of transformational leadership	Explanation
Individualised Consideration	This element encompasses the need for respect for the individual's contribution to the team (Lentz, 2012). The leader provides empathy and support to his followers (Kerzner, 2015). The followers have a will and they aspire towards self-development. They have an intrinsic motivation for their tasks (Gujral & Phil, 2013).
Intellectual Stimulation	Leaders stimulate and encourage creativity among their followers by challenging assumptions, taking risks and soliciting followers' ideas (Renjith, Renu & George, 2015). Leaders nurture and develop independent thinkers. Leaders value unexpected situations and see it as a learning opportunity. Followers thus, are given opportunities to think deeply about the tasks presented to them and they try to figure out unique strategies to execute their tasks successfully (Amin, Yusnita, Ibrahim & Muda, 2013) Bass used the term "transformational" instead of transforming to explain how transformational leadership could be measured and how it impacts the follower's motivation and performance. The followers of transformational leader are willing to work harder than originally expected because the leader offers something more than just working for self- gain (Bayler, 2012).
Inspirational Motivation	The leader articulates a vision that is appealing and inspiring to followers. Leaders with inspirational motivation challenge followers with high standards, communicate optimism about future goals, and provide meaning for the task at hand because followers need to have a strong sense of purpose if they are to be motivated to act (East, 2019). Purpose and meaning provide the catalyst that drives a group forward. The visionary aspects of leadership are supported by communication skills that are vital to make the vision understandable, precise, powerful and engaging (Zehndorfer, 2014). The followers are willing to invest more effort in their tasks because they believe in their abilities and they are optimistic about the future.
Idealised Influence	The followers see the leader as a role model who displays high ethical behaviour, instils pride and gains respect and trust. In Bass' original model, he proposed that transactional leadership has two components, namely management by exception and contingent reward (Iszatt-White & Saunders, 2017). The leader relies on management by exception that intervenes only when failures or deviations take place. Some managers meet desired goals through these deviations. Bass reported in his research that there were significant positive relations between contingent reward and effectiveness of the leader (p. 01), self-reported subordinate satisfaction and extra effort of subordinates (Shrestha, 2012).

Idealised influence describes the leader as being a role model. Hence followers respect and admire the leader but most of all they instil trust in the leader. Inspirational motivation describes the leaders as a motivator that inspires and creates an inspiring future vision. The leader assumes power not with the purpose to control but to empower followers and inspire them to believe that they are capable of performing to the best of their ability. Intellectual stimulation deals with the leader's innovative abilities. The leader is one who is supportive and thus, when problems arise within an organisation, the leader creates an awareness of these problems. The transformational leader focuses on individuals. The transformational leader makes followers believe that they are worthy as individuals and thus their beliefs and values are considered. Individual consideration is all about valuing followers as individuals. According to Clayton Alderfer (Alderfer & Brown, 1972), the growth of an individual only occurs once the first two stages, i.e. existence and relatedness is realised. Growth of an individual in an organisation can be possible if there is a transformational leader who constantly motivates and inspires them to grow as individuals. Another model that focused on leaders was that of Clayton Alderfer (Alderfer & Brown, 1972), who presented the ERG theory.

2.2.3.3 ERG Theory

Clayton Alderfer (Alderfer & Brown, 1972) created the Existence, Relatedness and Growth model. Alderfer offered three levels of needs, namely existence, relatedness and growth needs. Alderfer uses Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a basis for his ERG theory. Maslow's five human needs (Pinder, 2014) were reduced to three in the ERG theory.



Figure 2. 5: Alderfer's ERG theory.

Alderfer's ERG theory in *Ergonomics: How to design for ease and efficiency* (Elbert, Kroemer & Hoffman, 2018:479). Alderfer's first stage is existence needs. This stage corresponds with Maslow's physiological and safety needs. According to Bess and Dee (2012), in order for a human to exist, extrinsic needs such as food, water, air, warmth and shelter are needed. Thus, they form the basis for human existence. The Relatedness needs stage corresponds with Maslow's social needs and external self-esteem needs. Every human needs to interact with other humans, be it family, friends or colleagues. Interpersonal relationships are very important for a persons' social status (Podmoroff, 2016). Alderfer's Growth needs stage corresponds with Maslow's fifth tier of his hierarchy, which was self-actualisation. The growth needs refer to humans growing as individuals. They find ways of developing themselves to perform better than is expected of them. According to Pandey (2016), individuals become more confident, creative and more productive.

Bass agreed with Alderfer's ideas. He argued that transformational leaders can change the order of those hierarchies of needs.

More quantity is no longer enough; quality must improve dramatically. Leaders may help in bringing about a radical shift in attention. For instance, groups orientated toward traditional beliefs will be shifted so they come to value modern approaches. The contextual framework may be changed by leaders (Bass, 1985, in Eweje & Bathurst, 2017).

Thus, leaders can raise subordinates into becoming self-actualisators, self-regulators, and self-controllers. Therefore, transformational leaders have the ability to bring about radical changes in an organisation (Fitzgerald & McDermott, 2017). Hughes (2016) mentions that the leader is tasked with changing the context. Bass' theory also suggests that managers can learn the techniques and obtain the qualities they need to become transformational leaders. Belephant (2017), explains that women need to learn the skill of communication, especially when it comes to communicating with her male counterparts. The next focuses on women as transformational leaders.

2.2.4 Females as transformational leaders

Women have always been seen to be compassionate as well as good listeners and communicators. According to Belasen (2012), women have the ability to take a holistic approach to their profession. They are aware of how to separate home life from their job. At work women are more willing to listen and respond directly to the interests of all stakeholders. Sheninger (2017) claims that female principals are also empathetic and sympathetic to the needs of the staff and learners. Bakker and Xanthpoulou (2013) perceive female principals as transformational leaders who are charismatic.

Like Bass, Paludi (2013) believes that transformational leaders have the ability to lead and inspire any group of people despite cultural differences. Mother Theresa was a female transformational leader. She managed to change people and their mindsets by leading by example and by encouraging followers despite what their cultural backgrounds were or where they came from (Pettinger, 2016). The advantages of transformational leadership are explained in more detail below.

2.2.5 Advantages of transformational leadership

Based on Bass' transformational model, Judith Dwyer (2013) lists the behaviour of transformational leaders. The behaviour of transformational leader's influence and transforms the followers by:

- increasing their awareness of task importance and values;
- focusing their interest on learning or organisational goals, rather than their immediate self-interest; and
- concentrating on the higher-order needs of achievement and self-actualisation.

According to Bass (in Eweje & Bathurst, 2017), transformational leadership is universally applicable. This aspect is very important to this study, because South Africa is known as the rainbow nation. It comprises of many different cultures and nationalities. Hence, transformation is not restricted to a certain culture or race.

Harris (2016) comments that principals who are transformational leaders have the ability to communicate effectively with teachers, learners and other stakeholders. In turn, this effective communication has a positive influence on everyone. In the context of this study, this is crucial that the vision of the school as an organisation can be realised by all stakeholders. Effective communication will also result in everyone working together.

Dwyer (2013) explains that transformational leaders have the ability to evoke strong emotions in their followers. Only when the followers work in unison with the leader to accomplish goals and objectives, the vision becomes a reality. The leader is able to transform followers and entice them to share the leader's vision. The followers start working to accomplish the shared vision holistically as a team, not as individuals (Effelsberg, Solga & Gurt, 2013). Followers are motivated to expend greater effort than would usually be expected of them.

These leaders inspire, motivate, and appeal to followers through an array of skills and behaviours, which communicate their value to the institution, the potential of their contribution, and high expectation in accordance with a supportive environment. (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012)

Santamaria and Santamaria (2012) further explain that transformational leaders serve as role models to others, modelling the characteristics, behaviours and actions that they seek from all members of their organisation. This set of behaviours and actions serves to guide institutional success beyond what is expected of followers.

Leaders need to lead by setting examples. Followers need to see them as being different from every other leader and the leader's leadership style needs to be influential and powerful. It has to be noticed. The leader needs to have a unique quality or qualities that the followers notice. They have to notice and admire the leader. Carroll, Ford and Taylor (2015) concur that transformational leadership refers to an alignment of goals between leaders and followers for the good of the organisation or society.

Transformational leadership is effective because transformational leaders encourage followers to set goals congruent with the followers own authentic interests and values. By doing this, the leader values who the followers are, irrespective of where they come from. There are no barriers. Carroll *et al.* (2015) describe the transformational leader as being radical and making major changes. They state that when a leader transforms an organisation or a follower, these changes are not minor. These changes are fundamental, complete and extreme. These radical alterations are made to both superficial and deep aspects of the object. Finally, they imply that the “leader will fundamentally change the follower’s appearance or form as well as their character or nature” (Carroll *et al.*, 2015:70). Followers give up their personal goals in exchange for the goals of the organisation and will perform beyond what is expected of them. Followers see their work as important and their goals align with who they are (Nelson & Quick, 2015). Nelson and Quick (2015) further state that employees who work for a transformational leader are more satisfied, motivated and perform better than those who do not. It is assumed that these employees feel less pressure and they enjoy doing the tasks assigned to them. Although there are many advantages to transformational leadership, there were many criticisms to transformational leadership as well.

2.2.6 Criticisms of Transformational Leadership

There have been many criticisms leveled against transformational leadership theory. Firstly, transformational leadership theory is a combination of many theories and thus it is very difficult to teach. Thus, the transformational leadership theory lacks conceptual clarity, because it covers a range of activities and it is very “difficult to define the exact parameters of transformational leadership”. This is the reason for the overlap between each of the four factors of transformational leadership, inspirational motivation, idealised influence, individualised consideration and intellectual stimulation (Northouse, 2013:202). According to Lee (2014), some of the transformational leadership factors are not unique to the transformational leadership model, instead, they correlate laissez-faire factors.

Secondly, followers are manipulated by leaders. They are forced to believe in the leader’s vision. The leader’s vision does not always lead to a successful or good path.

Tourish (2013) states that leaders are often inclined to use self-deception and impression-management techniques to motivate followers to perform better than they expected. The leader is also perceived as the most active person in the organisation that drives this vision. Little emphasis is placed on the followers who actually do the work. Antonakis (2012) claims that researchers have not established that transformational leaders are actually responsible or capable of transforming individuals or the organisation. Tafvelin (2013) describes transformational leadership as elitist and antidemocratic, because the leader is directly involved in all activities, for example, creating changes, establishing a vision, and advocating new directions.

Thirdly, Ciulla (2014) points out that Bass did not incorporate Burns' emphasis on conflict and the dialogue between leaders and followers about values. Kounas (2015) claims that a leader changes people's values and visions. Thus, Ciulla (2014) concludes that Bass' theory depends on charismatic leaders who could be evil leaders. Bass uses the example of Adolf Hitler being a transformational leader. Hitler was responsible for heinous crimes that led to the persecution of innocent people.

2.2.7 Summary

Female principals go beyond boundaries to lead their schools towards success. There are many challenges that persists at South African schools, as well as challenges that specifically deal with female principals themselves. Problems stem from to the gender gap that was created by society with the notion that a woman's place is at home. Due to this dilemma, women have to do more than what is expected of them to lead the school with ease.

It is evident that policies are in place to assist women to get into leadership positions, but what happens to them when they reach there? There are very few support structures to assist female principals in the event that something goes wrong at the school. For example, communities in which the schools exist still pose challenges for female principals. Most of the time, there is direct confrontation by community members at schools because they don't agree that the school should be managed by a female principal. The result of their adverse behavior is that their negative stereotypical ideas of women being weak are passed on to their children who spread them in schools. This

stereotyping and discrimination plague schools, from the staff to the learners.

Research shows that many female principals give up, but there are those few that persevere and use calculated strategies to win the staff and learners. The two female principals in this study have opted to adopt a transformational leadership style where they drove their visions that eliminated discrimination and stereotyping, thereby creating successful learning and teaching environments. The subsequent section deals with strategies that female principals in other countries use to manage their schools.

2.3 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP TRENDS IN EDUCATION IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

2.3.1 Introduction

The aim of this section is to describe the trends in other countries regarding transformational leadership. The purpose is also to reveal that the teaching profession is not only dominated by females in South Africa, but also in the majority of the other countries. It was my intention to also illustrate that women are still underrepresented in leadership positions in other countries, which will show that this dilemma is not unique to South Africa.

2.3.2 The Netherlands

Thoonen, Slegers, Oort and Peetsma (2012) have found that school leaders demonstrated transformational leadership behaviour in the Netherlands. Thoonen *et al.* (2012) conclude that improved leadership practices seem to benefit the organisation by enhancing teacher's motivation, promote professional learning and facilitating the improvement of the school's organisational conditions. Moolenaar and Slegers (2015) conducted a study among 46 elementary schools. Their findings suggest that those principals who are more involved in collaboration with teachers are more central in their school's network. Principals give tremendous support to their teachers.

Transformational leaders may reach out to others more to ask for advice (in network terms: higher out-degree centrality), encourage relationships among their staff and colleague principals so that they can quickly reach others (creating shorter network paths, thus increasing closeness centrality), and try to exert

influence by connecting educators that are themselves unconnected (higher betweenness centrality). In addition, as transformational leaders involve teachers in building a shared vision and setting clear goals for their school, show individualised attention to the needs and aspirations of teachers, and stimulate and challenge teachers to try new approaches, they may also be sought more for advice and collaboration (higher in-degree centrality) in schools and districts than less transformational leaders. (Moolenaar & Slegers, 2015:14)

2.3.3 Singapore

According to Boon (2018), principals get the opportunity to work with a wide spectrum of people. Boon comments that such experiences shape principals' views and convictions about leadership and management in schools. Furthermore, Boon (2018) mentions the experience of Mrs Lily whose experience was unexpected, because principals are always stereotyped and expected to be what everyone thinks they should be. According to Mrs Lily's experience, during her interaction with other principals, she discovered that there is no set leadership style in Singapore.

There were different leadership styles. In one school, the principal was very laissez-faire. He let the heads of department do the work, although he knew what was going on. He only called them in if things didn't work out. In another school, the principal was the supportive kind. In the third school, the principal was the iron-handed type. Teachers in class used whistles and learners were not allowed to play in the big field. All learners had to go to the canteen to read and the results were very good. But when the new principal came, teachers were ready for a change. These three school heads used different styles, but I prefer a balance. (Boon, 2018:126-127)

Leadership performed by school leaders is transformational by nature, whereas middle managers perform instructional leadership (Ng & Ho, 2012). The principal's pivotal role is initially to initiate the schools' vision and thereafter act as a facilitator (Ng, Nguyen, Wong & Choy, 2015). In order for education reform to occur, the leader needs to be dedicated and drive the vision. The principal motivates and encourages middle management not just to delegate duties and responsibilities, but to empower middle managers. In this way, middle managers feel valued and inspired. They will ensure that

whatever tasks are assigned to them, will be done. This is why Singapore’s education is considered one of the best in the world (Gopinathan, 2013).

2.3.4 The United Arab Emirates (In a Dubai context)

The UAE Ministry of Education is responsible for public schools in Dubai. Public schools are for nationals only. More than 90% of school education takes place in the private sector. There are 194 private schools that are regulated by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority.

In the following table Ibrahim and Taneiji (2012) shows that the most practiced style of leadership was transformational leadership.

Table 2. 2: Adapted from: Ibrahim and Al Taneiji (2012:49)

<i>Leadership Styles by Means</i>			
Leadership style		Means of sub-styles	Average Means
Passive or Avoidant	Laissez-faire	0.93	1.088
	Passive management-by-exception	1.25	
Transactional	Contingent reward	3.34	3.215
	Active management-by-exception	3.09	
Transformational	Individualized influence (attributes)	3.49	3.303
	Individualized influence (behaviors)	3.18	
	Inspirational motivation	3.53	
	Intellectual stimulation	3.21	
	Individualized consideration	3.10	

Ibrahim and Al Taneiji (2012:50) conclude that “principals in 34 government schools in Dubai are more transformational than transactional”. Transformational leaders motivate and inspire their followers to perform beyond what is expected of them by providing a them with a future vision. Transactional leaders focus on goals and thus they provide extrinsic motivation for the completion of tasks. They go on to explain that the reason for principals using the transformational leadership style is attributed to the influx of teachers from the West who bring with them their transformational leadership approach. Findings show that female principals were able to create more transformational atmospheres at their schools. Lastly, this study showed that schools with female principals performed better than schools with male principals.

2.3.5 Malaysia

Leithwood (2012) states that the principal's leadership style is the key factor in creating an effective school. It determines whether the school will fail or succeed in producing an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning and to achieve certain set goals. (Ministry of Education, Malaysia, 2013) The Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (MoE, 2013) emphasises the need for effective school leaders.

The study conducted by Talebloo, Basri, Hassan and Simiran (2017) included 410 teachers. Of the 410 teachers, 311 (75.9%) were female and 99 (24.1%) were male. The study revealed that a transformational leadership style was practised in schools. This is evident because principals establish a sense of vision in their schools (Clayton, 2016). They demonstrate the importance of continuous learning through visible engagement (Harris, 2016), and they establish a climate of trust and respect (Thompson, 2012).

2.3.6 Summary

Based on the research from different countries, it is evident that the transformational leadership style is generally practised in schools. It is also very apparent that the education sector is dominated by females especially in primary schools. However, women are still underrepresented in management positions, and despite this being the case, the few that are there definitely strive to becoming effective leaders at their schools.

This study focuses on female transformational leaders in an South African context. The next section gives more detail.

2.4 CURRENT STATUS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

South Africa was governed by the apartheid government for many years. With the government came national apartheid policies that restricted the majority of South Africa. South Africa transitioned from the system of apartheid in 1994. With the newly elected ANC government came radical changes in all spheres of South Africa. The South

African does adopted the *South African Schools Act, no. 84 of 1996*, which governed schools.

According to Motshekga (2014), the purpose of the new education system was to break away from apartheid and to unite all citizens as equals. Hence, more women began to apply for jobs and for leadership positions in South African education. With this notion, stereotypes created by society cannot be tolerated at schools. It is the principal's job to drive a vision that upholds the values of the constitution. Stevenson (2014) states that a great deal of pressure is placed on school principals. *The SASA* of 1996 provides a guide to principals' roles and responsibilities. The principal has many roles. The ultimate goal of the principal is to transform the school as a whole. The principal must be a transformational leader to drive the vision, encourage and motivate staff and to be knowledgeable about the curriculum in order to provide guidance to teachers. Xaba (2012) states that great emphasis has been placed on professionalising principal ship.

Lumadi (2014) conducted interesting research among schools in South Africa that focused on a variety of problems that were commonly persistent at all the schools. Firstly, principals face many financial problems at schools. There is a government allocation that schools receive every year; however, it is not sufficient for the daily running of the school. Most principals in South Africa has difficulties collecting school fees, because many parents are unemployed. Secondly, many teachers feel demoralised and lack confidence. They are unable to keep up with curriculum changes and thus they cannot perform as well as they should. Teachers also feel very pressurised because of the heavy workloads in overcrowded schools. Schools in South Africa are multi-racial and multi-cultural. Many principals and staff have not been able to facilitate integration among races and cultures.

From the research conducted by Lumadi (2014), it was apparent that apart from the principal being involved in administration matters, the biggest role that principals had to play was that of 'motivator'. Thus, many principals in South Africa practise a transformational leadership style. They have to support and encourage staff so that they can be motivated to work. Mthethwa (2012) states that the principal's role is to uplift the morale, motivation and the morals of their followers. With regard to the multi-cultural and

multi-racial learners found in South African schools, transformational leaders are needed to transcend the cultures of the institutions (Mouton & Widschut, 2015). The transformational leader is a vision and mission driver. The principal has to drive the mission and vision of the school for the staff, who in turn passes it on to the learners. Transformational leaders facilitate teamwork; this is needed in schools to reduce teacher isolation (Steyn, 2013).

Costa (in Bayler, 2012:582) describes the three functions of transformational leaders.

Firstly, transformational leaders serve the needs of others by motivating and encouraging their followers. In South Africa, teaching is challenging because of all the problems mentioned. It becomes even more challenging for the principal. If the principal does not possess the “transformational traits” as described by Bass, the principal will not be able to motivate and encourage followers. The school will be in total chaos. Thus, it is evident from research presented by Lumadi (2014) that schools are not chaotic. Principals have adopted the transformational leadership style and schools are transforming.

Secondly, transformational leaders charismatically lead, instil trust, pride and set a vision whilst working with followers. A good example of two charismatic leaders in South Africa are Wendy Horn, a principal and Marjorie Brown, a teacher. Both have been nominated as the top teachers in the world. Both are transformational leaders that shape their learners to excel making their schools successful. (De Klerk, 2017; Nsoho, 2018)

Lastly, if followers are intellectually exposed to similar situations to which leaders are exposed, then followers acquire the same level of leadership. *The South African Schools Act no. 84 of 1996* clearly defines and describes the roles of the principal and staff at South African schools. If one looks at the management hierarchy, it shows that there is a principal at the top. Below the principal is the deputy principal/s, heads of departments and teachers. Although teachers are at the bottom, it does not mean that they do not fulfil any leadership purpose. Each teacher belongs to a committee and in that committee, they will have to assume some leadership position. Teachers are also conveners of various activities. The school management team (SMT) also delegates duties and responsibilities to staff. The principal being a transformational leader encourages and motivates teachers and also gives them the freedom to solve problems that arise in the school.

This empowers teachers. Brown and Lambert (2013) state that the transformational change process is based on strong collaboration among diverse interests.

Although the South African Constitution dictates that there should be gender equality, the transformation in South African education is, as mentioned throughout this discussion, taking place at a slow rate. Female leaders still experience many challenges in their positions.

2.5 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY FEMALE PRINCIPALS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The biggest problem so far in South African schools is that although females dominate the teaching profession, males dominate the leadership positions.

The single most important problem facing contemporary women in an educational context is the unjustified underrepresentation of women in top management positions. (Greyling & Steyn, 2012)

As mentioned in Chapter one, challenges that hamper female leaders are related to the triple role they need to fulfil, that is, in the home, in the community and at work (Lumby & Azaola, 2013). Women are seen by society as mothers and society believes that mothers should stay at home and bring up their children. With our fast-moving world, it is essential for both parents to work to live comfortably. South African society is made up of many single-parent households, where only the mother or the father is the breadwinner. Once a female works, she needs to balance her time with the demands of the home, the community and the pressures of the work environment. Awumbila (2006:95, in Mnisi, 2015) states,

most developing countries, even if a woman assumes a leadership position, she still needs men's collaboration to support her actions and decisions or else the influential men will work towards her downfall.

Female leaders merely act as the ceremonial spokesperson for the school (for statistical reasons). Males dominate the scene and still claim supremacy. This male dominance and supremacy resonate across social, economic, political and culture systems of South Africa (Waite & Bogoth, 2017).

Section 2.3.3 of the *Constitution* of South Africa provides for equality and non-discrimination on the basis of race, gender, social background and creed. Other policies such as the *EEA of 1998* and *The South African Schools Act no. 84 of 1996* all aim at addressing the issue of marginalisation of female leaders at schools. According to Schmidt and Mestry (2014), women continue to be underrepresented and marginalised and face challenges when they are appointed in positions of leadership. Faulkner (2015) and Lumby (2015) conclude in their research that Black women principals, in particular experience many challenges. Apart from gendered constraints, they also experience inherent complexities of colonialism and racism that make their role very challenging.

Although many policies and legislation try to balance out the inequalities that exist in the education profession regarding leadership positions, many researchers conclude that the situation has not changed very much. According to Davids (2018), “female teachers make up 68% of the country’s teaching force. But only 36% of principals are women”. Africa Check (2018) presents figures obtained from a speech delivered by Angie Motshekga who was the Minister of Education in 2013.

According to Motshekga,

There are 257 633 female teachers (68.3%) and 119 679 male teachers (31.7%) in public schools in our country. There are only 8 210 female principals and 14 337 male principals appointed in permanent posts. Female principals represent only 36.4% of all principals.

Africa Check (2018) presented the latest statistics on the existing data on gender gaps.

Table 2. 3: State-paid personnel in 2018 (Skosana, 2018)

Gender	Teachers	%	Principals	%
Female	265 179	72.5%	8 070	37.3%
Male	100 528	27.5%	13 551	62.7%
Total	365 707		21 621	

Sinden (2017) states that the reason for the existing gender gap is because there are barriers in the workplace that prevent women from enjoying equal employment. Because of these barriers, women fail to apply for management positions.

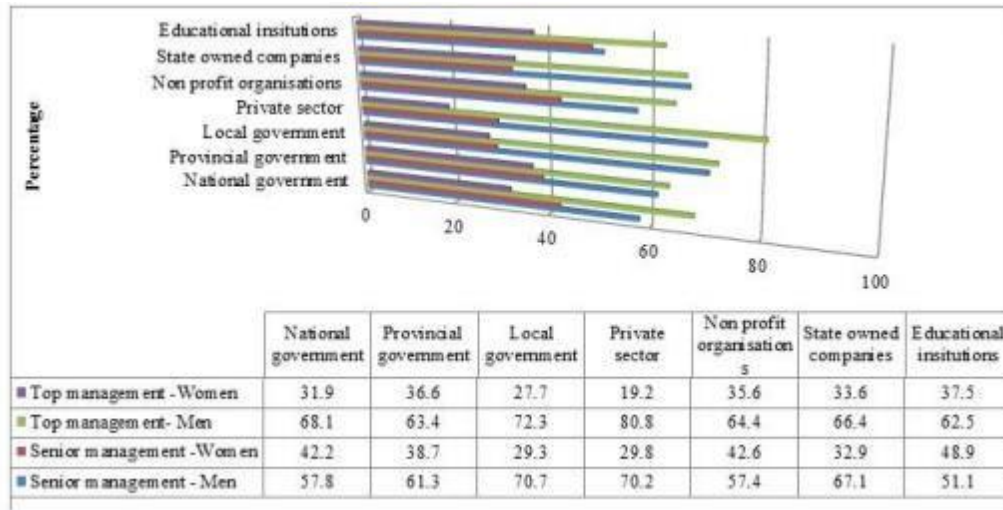


Figure 2. 6: Exploring the gap between male and female employment in the South African Workforce (Sinden, 2017:47).

Wills (in Africa Check, 2018) explains that the problem “emerges at the middle management level and widens at higher post levels”. Furthermore, she explains there has only been a 2% increase in female leadership appointments from 2004 (34%) to 2016 (36%). Moreover, she elaborated that, this could be a reflection of gender stereotypes and subtle practices of discrimination suffered by women in the workplace and at home. These are the reasons why fewer females apply for leadership positions.

Faulkner (2015) suggests that there are internal and external barriers that affect female leaders. Women possess a lack of confidence when applying for and filling leadership positions (Orton, 2018; Davids & Waghid, 2016). They feel as if they are not good enough to apply for leadership positions. Coleman (2002; 2005; in Faulkner, 2015) states that the lack of confidence is seen as an internal barrier that is self-imposed and self-constrained due to the fear of success and failure. Women are doubtful that they are capable of achieving leadership. If women attain success in assuming a leadership position, she is fearful of rejection by her male counterparts and of society. Diko (2014) explains that, when women are in management positions, men feel less superior and

women in management disrupt the order of society. Society dictates that the man is the leader and he has the authority to lead. Many societies are against the idea of women being leaders (Holmarsdottir, Nomlomo, Farag & Desai, 2013). Women look at the future and generally most of them think about marriage and family rather than their career. Many women do not plan their career whilst they are learners (Faulkner, 2015).

The external factors are factors that are not brought about by the individual. Instead these are barriers that exist within the context in which the leader is found. There is an external cultural tradition of male dominance, stereotyping of roles and socialisation that exists in South Africa (Moodly 2015; Naidoo, 2013; Diko, 2014). Women are very used to just assuming a supporting role to men. Men are usually the leaders who drive the organisation. This is what they are supposed to do. Women make decisions but just in support of men. Men are perceived by society as being superior. Men give little help or support of female leaders (Diko, 2014). When men do not support females in leadership it becomes very challenging for them to operate efficiently (Naidoo, 2013). There are very few female leaders that newly appointed female leaders can get assistance from. These institutional structural practices and patterns restrict women's access to and in administrative positions. Duff (1990, in Faulkner, 2015:76) elaborates that "personal and professional mentors can help women overcome society's imprints of self-doubt and poor self-esteem". Faulkner (2015), like Schmidt and Mestry (2015), agree that women are underrepresented in the South African education system and states that it is due to gender-role stereotyping. Women traditionally have been associated with child rearing and household chores (Faulkner, 2015). Women are viewed as 'unsuitable' for leadership due to their innate female characteristics, their traditional role, and the demands of their domestic responsibilities.

According to a research conducted by Davids (2018), it is evident that there are two dominant narratives in research about female principals and educational leadership in South Africa. The first one encompasses the idea that women struggle to gain leadership positions in schools. This is the reason women are still underrepresented in school management teams in South Africa. The second one relates to the challenges that women face on a daily basis to retain their positions. However, both narratives have

a common theme that males still dominate leadership positions in South African schools (Davids, 2018).

During the past two decades, provision was made for the empowerment and progressions of females into management arenas across all labour sectors. Diko (2014) boldly states that even the few women who are appointed in management positions are not accommodated. This is the reason they encounter so many challenges. Diko (2014) continues to point out that the only reason a woman is not accommodated is because it is regarded as not being her place. Society today still views management positions to belong to men only. Women in management positions is not an idea that is socially acceptable. Hence, men at schools are unwilling to collaborate with females (Morojele *et al.*, 2013). Even other females are unwilling, because they do not accept the fact that another female is managing them (Duma, 2015). Msila (2013) states that women have poor perceptions of themselves. This is because of the societal norms that they grew up believing. Female staff notice the challenges and pressure that the female principal is placed under and they refuse to apply for management positions, even though they are quite capable of filling a specific position.

The socialisation of women and stereotyping are intertwined in cultural contexts (Faulkner, 2015; Diko, 2014). Leadership is perceived by the South society as being more authoritarian, aggressive and a masculine role. Women are perceived as passive and supportive, and many communities reject the idea of women leading schools. Diko (2014) adds that gender discrimination is another facet of external barriers that affect female leaders. Gender discrimination occurs when there is favouritism based on the gender of the individual. Bowles (2012) reports that gender discrimination is evident, not only in developing countries, but also in developed countries.

2.6 THE WAY FORWARD WITH TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Abdullah and Varatharajoo (2017) present the framework of the so called 'big box functionality' of transformational leadership. According to them the objectives are achieved and functionality of transformational leadership in which leaders acquire is the key element that contributes to the organisation's effectiveness. They propose a

framework to provide an insight into the type of functionality that a transformation leader needs in order to be effective. The elements are: exerting and idealizing influence, open and imaginative and intellectual stimulation and idealize influence and intellectual stimulation. Further they recommend that training is needed to foster the organisational leaders to learn and implement an effective transformational leadership style. Like Bass (1985), they concur that different kinds of strategies should be used when it comes to decision-making. Leaders could attend leadership training programmes to familiarise themselves to leadership behaviours as in the case of Singapore (Retna, 2015), where appointed principals attend leadership programs to develop their personal leadership skills.

The world is changing at a rapid pace, especially in education. Our methods of leadership are changing too. Most educational leaders are adopting the transformational leadership style to lead schools because it empowers followers. It gives followers a sense of working for a purpose and not just following the leader. According to East (2019), leading with heart and leading with soul are elements of transformational leadership that belong in human services work. As mentioned, women are said to have traits pointing towards caring, mothering and sensitivity. This as society perceives female leaders is negative, however, it does not need to be negative. Female leaders could use what is seen as negative and turn it into something positive. A transformational leader is one who is able to use his/her charisma to influence his/her followers; likewise, because females possess this innate trait, they can use it to their advantage. Women, unlike men, are generally more understanding and willing to do more to assist colleagues. This is another factor of transformational leadership.

Female leaders have the power to develop themselves to make radical changes in an organisation to achieve goals. Schmidt and Mestry (2015) suggest that in order to promote and develop the efficacy of a transformational female leader in education, female principals need to join professional learning communities. This is where women can come together to explore their aspirations, ambitions and challenges. They can create platforms where their leadership styles can also be explored. The main aim would be for professional growth and development. Technological platforms, training and tools that enable female transformational leaders, especially targeting those

schools where there are no mentors present.

Schmidt and Mestry (2015) also propose that there should be some type of financial backing like non-profit organisations to assist with the funding of leadership programmes benefiting newly appointed principals.

Like in Singapore, South Africa could offer leadership programmes to teach and empower female principals how to become effective school leaders. With such support, female principals will gain more confidence to lead by example thus creating 21st-century teaching and learning institutions.

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter examined the research into and literature emanating from transformational leadership theories and models, gender studies and discrimination. The literature explored the challenges that female principals experience in leadership positions in a South African context. Naidoo (2013) indicates that research pertaining to female transformational leadership in South Africa is still limited. From existing research, though, it is evident that patriarchy still exists in South Africa. Society still believes that men should be the head of an organisation, which resonates in the latest figures that show that men still dominate leadership positions in education in South Africa (Davids & Waghid, 2018). Internal and external barriers that hamper the growth and progress of female principals were also explored. In the next chapter, these internal and external barriers will be explained in more detail.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN FOR THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to clarify the difference between the research design and methods used for this investigation. The research paradigm is discussed in section 3.2. Section 3.3 serves to outline the research design used whilst 3.4 explains the research approach. Section 3.5 gives a description and analysis of the location of the study. Section 3.6 describes the participants and the sample size and sampling techniques are discussed in section 3.7. The instruments used for data collection are discussed in 3.8 which is followed by the validity and reliability methods and instruments used in the investigation in 3.9. 3.10 discusses the data collection procedure, while 3.11 describes the data analysis procedures. Section 3.12 of the study, ethical considerations that were put in place before, during and after the investigation are described. The chapter is summarised in section 3.13.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The paradigm is constructivism. I chose to do qualitative research where I could use words to describe phenomenon that occurred in schools, particularly with regard to female principals. The driving force behind the choice of research design is the research question that needs to be addressed and the aim of the research itself. The research question for this study is **What is the role of female principals as transformational leaders to improve schools?** (cf. 1.5).

This study aims to:

- describe and define the concept of transformational leadership
- explain why there is discrimination against female leaders in schools
- explore the knowledge that the female transformational leader requires to lead efficiently and, determine how the current practices of female principals in schools contribute to the effectiveness of the school.

The Cambridge Dictionary (2019) defines a phenomenon as “something that exists and can be seen, felt, tasted, especially some unusual or interesting”. Phenomenology allows the researcher to live the experiences of female principals in this context (Daher, Carre, Jaramillo, Olivares & Tomicic, 2017). Klenke (2016) states that a phenomenon is studied in its natural surroundings. A qualitative approach was followed where it encompasses phenomenology as its branch with the purpose of understanding how female principals adapt to their environments to become efficient transformational leaders. From this perspective, female principals are free to express the challenges related to their leadership positions and the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges. The next section seeks to clarify the research design and methodology pertaining to this study.

33 CLARIFYING RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Regoniel (2017) describes research design as the plan that guides data collection to achieve the objectives of research, which is to generate new information based on existing ones. In the case of this study, I investigated what the transformational leadership role of the female principal should be in schools in order to create school improvement (cf. 1.1). Bhat (2019) defines research design as a framework of methods and techniques chosen by a researcher to combine various components of research reasonably and logically so that the research problem is effectively handled. Thus, it provides insights about how to conduct research using a particular methodology. For this study, a qualitative approach was used. I used case studies, interviews, and document analysis to gather information. Hasa (2017) states that research methods are procedures that will be used to collect and analyze data. It also focuses on suitable ways of collecting data and this depends on the research design. A differentiation is made by Lee (2019) who states that research methods are generalized and established ways of approaching research questions, for example, qualitative versus quantitative. However, research design involves determining how your chosen method will be applied to answer research questions. A multi-site case study design was the best for this study because phenomena could be studied in their naturalistic settings. Press Academia (2018) defines a case study as “a research strategy and an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context”. De Chesnay (2017) presents the

following advantages of using case studies in research:

- Case studies provide enriched experiences of unique situations. For this study the unique experience of the researcher was to explore the dynamics of female transformational leaders at uMgungundlovu schools.
- The researcher's perspective of the theoretical position of the study is shared. The researcher linked the experiences of transformational female leaders to existing literature of transformational leadership.
- Case studies are less likely to produce defensiveness and resistance to learning. For this study female leaders from the uMgungundlovu District were studied. They have provided ideas of leadership that are unique to this district and thus other districts can learn from this case study.
- Bearing the advantages in mind, I used the case study method to create a theory based on real-life occurrences. The qualitative approach was the best approach for this particular study because it provided a detailed description of the real-life occurrences in the chosen schools in the uMgungundlovu District.

34 QUALITATIVE APPROACH

I found that the qualitative approach was most appropriate for this study. To show the relevance of the qualitative approach, a brief historical background of this theory is mentioned in this study to outline the qualities and characteristics of this approach. For this study, it was imperative to use the qualitative approach to understand fully how female principals operate and contribute to the effectiveness in schools. The theoretical context will show how various methodologies contribute to this approach especially phenomenology. Researchers often use these methods to answer research questions because methods such as phenomenology focuses on living human experience (Paley, 2016).

3.4.1 Background and relevance of the qualitative approach

The qualitative approach can be traced back to the nineteenth century. It achieved the greatest development in the 1970s (Silva, 2017). The direct data source is the natural environment where the investigator is the main instrument in the data collection process (Glen, 2019). The investigator gives a detailed descriptive account of the data collected. The qualitative approach focuses on the process rather than the results or products. The researcher analyzes data inductively to create an understanding of the phenomenon. In this study, it was imperative for me to be in the context in which the female principals existed to understand day-to-day occurrences to make a constructive conclusion and offer suggestions to improve the situation in South African schools. The research problem was: What should the transformational leadership role of the female principal be in schools in order to create school improvement? (cf. 1.1) In order for this question to be addressed, I had to physically experience the daily routine in the schools to realize and understand what was going on so that an appropriate answer could be formulated with the gathered evidence.

Glen (2019) outlines the characteristics of qualitative research based on Merriam (1997). The findings are judged by whether they make sense and are consistent with the collected data. The advantage of the qualitative approach of this study is that it is experienced by the researcher in its naturalistic setting (Silva, 2017). I was able to interpret the environment from the principals' perceptions of her role and efficiency in the school. This provided more insight into the transformational leadership styles of female leaders in the uMgungundlovu District. It also helped me to find answers to the research questions and discussion of data which formed the findings of this study (cf. 1.5).

Results are validated externally by how well they might be applicable to other situations. This is tough to do; rich, detailed descriptions can help to bolster external validity. According to Cuncic (2019), external validity pertains to how well the outcome of the study can be expected to apply to other settings. The focus of the research was to capture the experience of female principals in the uMgungundlovu District, in specific their transformational leadership role in schools in order to create school improvement.

External validity was important to this study because the views expressed should create a generalization of all public schools in the uMgungundlovu District. I ensured that the study took place in such a way that the participants did not feel pressured to create false responses. I did this by conducting interviews in a vacant room and the names of the respondents were kept confidential.

Data are usually collected from small, specific and non-random samples. Paley (2016) mentions that once the researcher collects the data, this data will then form themes and generalizations which will answer research questions. Data are saved in the form of words gathered from interviews and document analysis. In this study I conducted interviews and analyzed documents to collect data. Verbal responses were captured using a voice recorder. Field notes were used to record non-verbal responses. (cf. 4.1) Documents were analyzed for more information. The voice recording was transcribed. I ensured that the voice recording was transcribed so that the information is accessible for anyone interested in this study. (cf. 5.2) Coding was then done to identify topics, issues, similarities and differences that were revealed during the interview. I analyzed the information and categorized them into different sections. (cf. 5.2) Themes arose from coding. I used the themes that arose from the different categories to build a summary. (cf. 5.5) Data synthesis done where a summary of all the data collected was done. (cf. 4.5)

A report was compiled which illustrated the findings of the phenomena studied. (cf. 5.4). This study focuses on female leaders in education.

3.5 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

The study area was delineated into conceptual and geographical areas. This section will discuss both of these areas to show the transformational leadership styles of female principals in the uMgungundlovu District of South Africa.

3.5.1 Conceptual delimitation of the study

Conceptual delimitation deals with the researcher stating what will not be included in the study. This study showed what the transformational leadership role of female principals

should be in schools in order to create school improvement. The study also aimed to depict the challenges that face them and strategies that female principals are adopting to overcome these challenges. Besides the challenges and strategies, this study also sought to explain the historical factors contributing to the challenges that female principal's experience (cf. 2.5.1) The study also explored the gender gap in South African schools, especially in leadership positions (cf. 2.5.2).

3.5.2 Geographical delimitation of the study

The research was conducted in the KwaZulu-Natal Province in the uMgungundlovu District. Although the study focuses on one district, the schools are found within an 80 km radius. Female principals were targeted because they are so underrepresented in leadership positions in education in South Africa, hence, neighbouring schools could not be used. Three schools were selected for this study. Two from Pietermaritzburg and one from Howick. Although these schools are situated in different cities, they fall under one district. One of the two Pietermaritzburg schools is led by a female principal and that is a primary school. The other school in Pietermaritzburg is a high school that is led by a male principal. The school in Howick is a high school led by a female principal.

The reason why I chose these three schools is that all the principals are in the same age group with similar years of teaching experience. This group made up the target population for this study.

36 TARGET POPULATION

According to Allen (2017) a population can be defined as what and who is going to be studied. This can be done when the researcher determines the population boundaries.

The population boundary separates who or what researchers are going to study. The population for this study constituted of staff from three different schools ranging from principals to Post level 1(PL1) educators from the uMgungundlovu District in KwaZulu-Natal.

The description of the sample size and techniques are discussed below.

3.7 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

I found this crucial to analyze the effectiveness of the principal's transformational leadership styles. The school's management team directly assist the principal to make decisions, thus their perceptions are imperative to this study. With the perceptions from the SMT, I could gather if the principal is being effective enough in that position. It is also an external view of how the principal functions and what effect this has on the rest of the school. Educators also contribute to the study because from their perceptions the researcher can deduce if the transformational leader is effectively leading or not. The challenges and perceptions of the target population paint a clear picture that provides evidence to answer the research questions.

The sample size is (n=9). This is a small sample to maintain credibility. My aim was not to alarm the rest of the school about the investigation. This encourages unnatural behaviour which will affect the results of this study. The purposive sampling technique was adopted for this study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method that was selected based on the characteristics of a population and the objective of the study (Crossman, 2018). The SMT and the educators, both assist the principal in the day-to-day functioning of the school, thus their input was crucial to this study. Their inclusion gave a clearer picture of how the principal is perceived and the challenges posed. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents, no names were mentioned. The school principal, the SMT member and educator of School A were coded P1, SMT 1 and E1. The participants of School B were given the codes, P2, SMT 2 and E2. The Deputy principal, the SMT member and educator from School C, were given the codes P3, SMT 3 and E3, respectively.

I used face-to-face interviews and document analysis to obtain data. The methods of data collection and procedure are discussed in the next section.

3.8 DATA COLLECTION AND PROCEDURE

Data collection for this qualitative study was done using the in-depth interviews and analysis of documents. The participants involved in the data collection process were nine participants in total. According to Canals (2017), data collection is done in which

participants make oral or written contributions that are useful for research purposes and for the improvement of the learning process. The study or investigation was a case study because it studies a group of people in an environment in which they exist. Heale and Twycross (2017) also describe a case study as an intensive, systematic investigation of a single individual, group, community or some other unit in which the researcher gains more insight into the phenomenon related to the group studied. This study was confined to the uMgungundlovu District of KwaZulu-Natal. Document analysis and interviews were used as a method of data collection.

3.8.1 In-depth interviews

According to Trigueros, Med and Sandoval (2017), interviewing involves asking questions and getting answers from participants in a study. For the interviews, I contacted the nine participants and arranged a suitable time and venue to conduct the interviews. These were in-depth interviews so the participants had to confirm whether they had enough time prior to the interview. In-depth interviews seek to elicit as many answers as possible from the participants. Each interview lasted at least 45 minutes. For this reason, it took a few days to complete all the interviews. All the interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants.

The interviews were semi-structured. The aim of an interview was to elicit information concerning a phenomenon. Conducting a semi-structured interview provides a guide to the questions that will be asked. With a semi-structured interview, the interviewer will have an opportunity to probe for more information by adding questions to the set questions. According to Goonewardene and Persad (2018), during a semi-structured interview, a comfortable environment should be provided for participants to express their opinions freely, thereby contributing to the topic and developing further concepts. This is ideal for this study, because it was my intention to gather as much information as possible to support existing literature to that it may be used to improve the stance of female transformational leaders in education in South Africa.

The interview was a face-to-face interview. For this study, I feel that conducting face-to-face interviews will be more valuable to the study, the reason being that I will be able to observe body language and emotions of the respondents during the interviews.

Hamilton and Creel (2016) state that words cannot always convey what a person feels. I discreetly noted these aspects down to use after the interviews are concluded. Baulch, Watkins and Tariq (2018) mention that the face-to-face, in-depth interview is a powerful method of phenomenological investigation, because although it is a loosely structured discursive conversation, it is a good way to access participants' conscious experiences, which will result in the emergence of their realities. For this study, in-depth interviews were the best option for me because it allows for an opportunity for me to step into the mind of another person.

I observed the following measures as proposed by Nayeem and Huma (2017).

- Greet the subject. Try to win the trust of the subject. I decided to use a universal greeting for all participants. I asked if they required anything before the interview started to make the participant comfortable.
- Test audio equipment before the commencement of the interview. I used a digital recorder.
- Try to put the participant at ease so that they can reveal information even that of which is sensitive. The researcher must assure the confidentiality of the interview or data collected. I performed this action when the participants signed the consent form. I will ensure confidentiality of all information that is supplied. No names were used in this study to guarantee the respondent peace of mind.
- Use interview techniques to gradually integrate difficult or sensitive questions. I tried as much as possible to elicit much of the information from the participants. I did not want to feed them with questions because this would have created a bias towards the researcher's mind-set. To allow participants to speak freely, the interview questions were open ended. Simpler questions led to the more difficult or sensitive ones.
- The researcher should listen 90% and speak only 10%. I just read the questions to the respondent. The respondent was given thinking time to respond.
- Avoid sensitive questions that will result in anger or that may end the interview.

By reading just the planned questions, I avoided such situations.

- Do not repeat questions that the participant decided not to answer. If a respondent chose not to answer questions, they need to be respected. If the researcher insists on the respondent answering these questions, they will become unresponsive and maybe even decide not to be part of the study. The researcher should make field notes if the respondent chooses not to answer certain questions and not force them to answer. I made field notes in this regard.
- In an in-depth interview, the researcher is given an opportunity to analyze facial expressions, gestures and body movements of the respondent. Try to read the non-verbal communication. I jotted down all non-verbal actions. This was important for me because I referred to them later when analyzing the responses.
- If the researcher feels that the respondent is offering input that is irrelevant to the study, the respondent should not be told to stop talking. The respondent needs to be made to feel that all her points are valid. I did not interrupt any of the respondents.
- The researcher should consider all ethical issues. Off-the record information, for example, should never be published. Off-the record information was never used in this study. Respondents need to be respected at all times. If they do not want certain things to be mentioned, especially confidential or private information, then the researcher should not include it in the study. If the researcher chooses to use off-the-record information in a study, the whole study could be jeopardised. This type of practice leads to the respondents not trusting the researcher and could affect the credibility of the study.
- Lastly, the researcher should ask if the respondent would like to add any further before terminating the interview. I made it my duty to ask all the respondents if they had any questions, queries or comments. Most of the time, the respondents added much more information that strengthened this study.

Another method used to collect data was through document analysis.

3.8.2 Collection of data through documents

According to Smulowitz (2017), there is an abundance of document types that the researcher can use to provide additional rich data. Through analyzing documents, the qualitative researcher is able to evaluate their meaning to support the research findings.

Written data sources include anything that was written by someone. In a school context, it can include minutes of meetings, agendas, discipline records, statistical analysis of the school, evaluation records and many more. I chose to use the following documents:

3.8.2.1 MINUTES OF MEETINGS

Minutes of meetings provided me with abundant information relating to the functioning of the school. The minutes, uncover challenges that face the female transformational leader, highlighting the strategies that the transformational leader implements to deal with these challenges and provides insight into the perceptions of other staff members towards the female transformational leaders (in the case of the high school with the male principal, the perceptions of the staff towards his styles of leadership will be explored).

3.8.2.2 DISCIPLINARY RECORDS

Discipline in a school is a major issue. The principal oversees that strategies to curb disciplinary problems are strictly followed. Disciplinary records can provide evidence of the strategies implemented by the principal. Notes attached to learners' disciplinary records showed the efficacy of the principal.

3.8.2.3 STATISTICAL EVALUATION RECORDS

All statistical information was valuable for the researcher in this study. For example, the diagnostic statistical analysis of the school year for each year was analysed so that the researcher can conclude if learners do achieve the learning outcomes. If they do, it proves that the principal has an effect on whole-school improvement.

3.8.2.4 NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS

Newspaper clippings were used by the researcher because they report what information

about the school goes out to the community. For example, if the school is riddled with serious disciplinary problems, this will make headlines in the newspapers and obviously this news will be conveyed to all stakeholders of the school. The cause of the problem in this case would be that the principal is not strong enough in her position. On the other hand, if good things about the school are constantly published in newspapers, it was evident to all stakeholders and the researcher that the principal was making a sincere attempt to improve the school in some way.

I obtained the above mentioned documents by sending a letter to the principal with the purpose of inviting him/her to participate in this study. Once the principal agreed to participate, I verbally requested permission to photocopy the documents so that they may be used to extract data. I photocopied the documents on the day of the interviews.

All data collected from the interviews and documents were analyzed.

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis deals with how we make sense of text so that it answers the research questions. According to Freeman (2017), data analysis is an interactive process so strategies are not just applied to data; hence data prompt the researcher, coerce the researcher to think in certain ways and there is no single way to analyze data.

3.9.1 Analysis of in-depth interviews

Bhatia (2018) presents the most common methods of data analysis, namely:

- a) Content analysis: This is one of the most common ways of analyzing qualitative data and it is used to analyze documented information in the form of texts, media or even physical items. Content analysis is usually used to analyze the responses from interviewees.
- b) Narrative analysis: This method is used to analyze content from various sources such as interviews, observations or surveys. It uses stories and experiences shared by people to answer research questions.
- c) Discourse analysis: It is very similar to narrative analysis in a way that it analyzes

interactions with people. It analyzes the social context in which the communication between the researcher and respondent occurred.

- d) Grounded theory: Refers to using qualitative data to explain why a certain phenomenon happened. It does this by studying similar cases in different settings and using the data to form causal explanations.

For this study, I used content analysis. A detailed analysis of the interviews and analysis of documents is found in the following chapter. Neuendorf (2017) states that the purpose of content analysis is to describe substance characteristics of message content. I used all the information that was collected. They were then categorized and used to enhance the study. I made inferences to producers of content. By making inferences, it creates a picture for the reader without actually stating ideas bluntly. This is done by describing content in such a manner that it is not ambiguous and it is simple enough for the reader to understand. I did this by using simple language to deliver content that was simple for any reader to understand. I had to determine the effects of content on the audience. I ensured that all content was relevant to the study and did not lead the audience astray.

I analyzed every single data source and tried to sift out main ideas and theories to support this study. The content analysis makes it possible for the audience to recognize through inference the objective of the sources.

Data were also collected from the documents that I collected from the schools.

3.9.2 Document analysis

Harvey (2019), states that document analysis refers to the systematic examination of documents and the data gathered therefrom are used by the researcher. I decided to analyze documents because it would add credibility to research. All documents were compiled prior the study thus I would not have had any influence on those documents. What is stated in those documents are the actual events that took place in the school during my absence. Data Collection Methods (2018) lists the advantages of doing document analysis. Document analysis is inexpensive. Everything already exists in the school so it is basically a matter of me asking for permission to use them. I ensured that

permission was given by the KZN Department of Education as well as the principal of the schools to use the information needed for this study. It is a good source of information. The documents are factual and have information pertaining to actual events that took place in the school. I made sure to use relevant and up-to-date documents that enhanced the ideas of this study. It is unobtrusive. When a researcher analyzes documents it is done in an unobtrusive manner. For this study, I analyzed documents in isolation so that he could choose what was most relevant for this study and it was done in isolation so that there were no interruptions and bias created by any of the school staff. This contributed to the credibility of this study also. It reveals issues that were not mentioned by other means. Some information is too broad to understand from one interview. Hence documents were analyzed for me to get the whole picture. I spent a day at the schools, analyzing the various documents to understand what was really happening in these schools.

I undertook the following steps to plan and conduct the document analysis. I decided on which type of documents to use. I decided to use minutes of meetings, disciplinary records of teachers and learners, minutes of SGB meetings, records of the learners pass rates, school achievement records and EMIS documents. I assessed the documents for example minutes of meetings and to check their relevance to this study. I ensured confidentiality as some of the documents were sensitive or confidential. Documents were analyzed in isolation so that there was no interference. Finally, a summary of the data collected was compiled. The documents were photocopied and essential points were highlighted and categorized.

All documents were in their original form. They were photocopied and no information was changed. This was done to ensure credibility in the study.

3.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS, VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The truth of qualitative research is always a concern. Although it is the researcher's account of what was experienced, the researcher has the responsibility to present the actual truth. Cypress (2017) states that trustworthiness refers to the quality, authenticity and truthfulness of findings. It is the researcher's duty to carry out the research process correctly. For this study, I used triangulation to ensure internal validity and credibility. I

collected data through a combination of interviews and document analysis. The main reason for this is for the researcher to link what the participant said during the interview to the data collected from the document analysis. If they correlate then the internal validity is strengthened (Merriam & Grenier, 2018).

3.10.1 Conformability

Conformability refers to the objectivity of research during data collection and data analysis. Conformability demonstrates the quality of the study because it is a measure of the researcher's findings against the supporting data that are collected (Mandal, 2018). This was achieved in this study because I used triangulation as a tool of conformability. (cf. 4.5)

3.10.2 Transferability

Transferability pertains to whether or not the data obtained from the analysis can be applied to other settings and contexts and this acts as a check for external validity of findings (Fusch, Fusch & Ness, 2018; Mandal, 2018). For this study a detailed description of the setting and contexts in which the study was conducted have been provided (cf. 5).

3.10.3 Reliability and validity

According to Glen (2016), reliability implies consistency and a test is valid if it measures what it was supposed to. The instruments developed for this study were designed in such a way that it captured the views of all the participants pertaining to transformational leadership, women leaders, their challenges and their adopted strategies. The views of a small sample of nine participants were information-rich and in-depth, and that is why a small sample size was effective and sufficient for this study. The information gathered was information-rich and in-depth, and that is why the small size of the sample was effective and sufficient. Responses from interviews and analysis of documents were qualitatively analyzed in accordance with the research questions. All the views of the participants were regarded as valid and reliable because in no way were the responses altered and the participants were not put under any pressure to answer the questions in a specific way. To add to the validity and reliability of this study, the researcher used

data collection methods and instruments that allowed for detailed responses from participants. This opportunity to express innate feelings resulted in a detailed description of what is happening in South African schools, specifically in the uMgungundlovu District. To ensure validity and reliability of this study, participants acknowledged that their responses were their own individual responses and that they were not altered in any way. (cf. 5.2)

3.10.4 Dependability

According to Mandal (2018), dependability refers to the idea of reliability and how reliable the researcher's work is and if it will remain invariant over a period of time. For this study, I ensured that proper documentation of data, methods and accurate decision-making was undertaken. All records were kept for auditing processes if the need arises.

All data were treated as confidential and were stored safely.

3.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Mohd Arfin (2018), the protection of human subjects through appropriate ethical principles during a research study. Where humans are concerned, their safety, integrity and dignity should be ensured at all times. I implemented relevant measures to ensure this during this study. With regard to the process, I first went to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, uMgungundlovu District was contacted to request permission to conduct this study. Permission was granted by the Head of Department, uMgungundlovu District. (cf. Appendix B) After consent was given, participants were purposively sampled and were given official letters to request and confirm their voluntary participation. A sample of nine participants was given letters in total. A consent form was completed by each of them. (Appendix C) Appendix C also states that participation in the study was voluntary in nature.

Siegle (2017) states that all researchers are bound by rules of ethics when conducting research and mentioned that participants should be protected from physical or psychological harm which includes loss of dignity, loss of autonomy and loss of self-esteem. I ensured this by making sure that I conducted the interviews and analyzed the documents very discreetly and transparently. Everything that was said and analyzed is

very confidential, so I made sure that every participant and document was respected. Participants' privacy and confidentiality should be protected. No names were mentioned in the study to protect the confidentiality of the participants and schools. Participants should be protected against unjustifiable deception. I always informed the participants about what my intentions were and the reason for the study was also mentioned. The subject must give voluntary informed consent to participate in research. I asked each participant if they were willing to be part of a study prior to the study. If they agreed they signed the voluntary informed consent form. I ensured that the rights of all participants were protected and all participants' responses remained anonymous.

3.12 SUMMARY

The chapter focused on the research design and methodology of a qualitative approach that dealt with the transformational leadership styles of female principals in the uMgungundlovu District. The qualitative case study focused on an in-depth understanding of What should the transformational leadership role of the female principal be at schools in order to create school improvement.

Data were collected using in-depth interviews and document analysis elicit as much information as possible from all participants. The participants in the study included three principals, three school management team members and three educators from three different schools in the uMgungundlovu District. Trustworthiness, validity and reliability of the study was also explained. Lastly, research ethics was briefly discussed. In the next chapter, the study findings will be discussed in detail.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter data that were collected during face-to-face interviews and document analysis will be presented. Interviews were held with three principals, three management members and three Level 1 educators from each of the three schools chosen. In Chapter 1 of this study, the role of female leaders was brought to light as well as the challenges that they are exposed to on a daily basis.

The main focus of this study was to explore the role of female principals as transformational leaders to improve schools in the uMgungundlovu District, KwaZulu-Natal. The aim of the study was to also investigate and gather more information pertaining to the qualities and knowledge that female leaders possess. Another factor that will be revealed deals with the causes that are responsible for creating challenges for female principals such as gender discrimination. It is mentioned in Chapter 1 of this study women possess personality traits that differ from those of their male counterparts. For this reason, they are able to function differently at work. This study strives to deliver content exposing what is happening at schools in the uMgungundlovu District, highlighting the current practices of female principals and the impact they have on the effectiveness and improvement at those schools.

4.2 UMGUNGUNDLOVU EDUCATION DISTRICT AS A STUDY SETTING

There are 550 schools in the uMgungundlovu District. Table 4.1 shows the number of schools found in the various circuits in the uMgungundlovu District.

Table 4. 1: Number of schools in uMgungundlovu Education District (2019)

Circuit	Number of schools
Camperdown	154
Midlands	238
Vulindela	155

According to Table 4.1, there are 550 schools in total, of which 356 are primary schools, 55 combined schools and 139 secondary schools. The three schools that were chosen for this study are situated in the Midlands circuit. I chose this area as a study site because this is where I reside and thus the most familiar with. The other reason is that in the uMgungundlovu District, the Midlands circuit has the greatest number of schools; hence, the suggestions and findings of this study will benefit many schools to move forward and develop.

The uMgungundlovu area will be described in more detail in the next section.

4.3 UMGUNGUNDLOVU AREA AS A STUDY SITE

The uMgungundlovu District covers a vast area of 9 602 km². Cities include Asburton, Camperdown, Cool Air, Dalton, Hilton, Howick, Impendle, Mooi River, New Hanover, Pietermaritzburg, Richmond and Wartburg. The main city in the area is Pietermaritzburg, which is both the capital city of KwaZulu-Natal and the legislative capital city of KwaZulu-Natal. The main economic sectors are community services (925-30%); finance (15-20%); manufacturing (10-15%); agriculture, forestry and fishing (10-15%); wholesale and retail trade (10-15%); and transport and storage (10%).

It can be said that a school education system can be gauged by the results that it produces. For South African schools, the matric pass rate is a reflection of this. In the Department of Basic Education Report released in the January 2020 (page 1), the results indicated that in the uMgungundlovu District, 9 436 learners wrote the exam and 7 816 learners attained their Grade 12 certificate. This means that the pass rate was 82.8%. If one compares the pass rate in the previous years, it has improved. In 2016 it was 76.3%; in 2017, 81.5%, and in 2018, 77.6%. It is quite evident from these figures that the education system is achieving its goals academically. All nine participants reside in the uMgungundlovu District.

4.4 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF THE NINE PARTICIPANTS

Data collection came from the three participating schools, each represented by three participants. During the qualitative phase of this study, I had a brief meeting with each

participant to gather biographical data. During this time, two principals mentioned that they would not be able to participate in the study. However, they granted permission for their deputy principals to do the interviews instead. The reason for their withdrawal was due to the fact that it was the second day of the new school year and they had to assist many parents who were looking for schools for their children. In total there were nine participants. Table 4.2 below gives a brief description of the biographical data.

Table 4. 2: Biographical data

SCHOOL	PARTICIPANT	GENDER	POSITION
A	P1	Female	Principal
	SMT 1	Female	Deputy Principal
	E1	Male	Educator
B	P2	Female	Head of Department
	SMT 2	Male	Educator
	E2	Female	Educator
C	P3	Male	Deputy Principal
	SMT 3	Male	Head of Department
	E3	Male	Educator

Of the three schools, two schools are managed by female principals and one by a male principal. All three schools fall under the uMgungundlovu District and they are all ranked quintile 5. Educators at all three schools are both state-paid as well as governing-body paid. From my observations, all three schools were excelling. The schools were in a neat condition and the staff at all three schools were very accommodating. The main purpose of presenting biographical data for the study is to show that females are leading education in schools and I endeavored to present the link between the female principals' leadership roles and whole school improvement. The main research question is "What should be the transformational leadership role of the female principal to create school improvement?" (cf. 1.5). I hope that the study provides female teachers and principals insights into coping strategies that may be useful to them to deal with their current challenges. These insights could lead to empowerment and career growth among females in education (cf. 1.7).

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Qualitative data use words instead of numbers to give a detailed description of the natural environment that I have chosen to study. According to Sarstedt and Mooi (2019:31), qualitative data's biggest strength is their "richness, as they have the potential to offer detailed insights into respondent's perceptions, attitudes and intentions".

I conducted in-depth interviews as a method to gather data. In total, nine participants were interviewed. According to Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2020:134), "the strength of in-depth interviews is to gain in-depth personal data on experiences, life stories and feelings". I conducted single interviews with each participant. However, beforehand, the time frame for the interview was arranged with each interviewee. During this time of meeting I took the opportunity to create a social relationship with the interviewees and to collect biographical data. I gained many new insights from the interviews and thus the connection between the data analysis and the literature study in Chapter 2 was established. The relationship between the themes and sub-themes is closely interrelated, as indicated in the literature review in Chapter 2. The table below illustrates the themes and sub-themes.

Table 4. 3: Themes and sub-themes

No.	Themes	Sub-themes
1	Transformational leadership	1.1 Transformation: A collective ideal 1.2 Perceptions of an ideal leader 1.3 Empowerment of teachers
2	Barriers and Discrimination	2.1 The reality of gender discrimination in South African schools 2.2 Factors resulting in gender discrimination 2.3 Parties responsible for discriminatory practices
3	Skills vs Efficiency	3.1 Men skills vs women skills 3.2 Fruits of labour 3.3 Factors that can improve a female leader's efficacy
4	The power of femininity	4.1 Representation of female leaders in principal posts 4.2 Methods implemented by female leaders to embrace change. 4.3 Suggestions for aspiring future female leaders

Based on the data collected from the interviews, it is very evident that the effort that is put into running a school is tremendous when it comes from female leaders. The two

female principals of the two schools are making huge waves in education. Their tremendous efforts are not contained to the schools they are connected to, but they both share their knowledge and skills with stakeholders; thus, on their path of transformation they motivate and encourage everyone around them.

Each of the themes and sub-themes will be explained in further detail.

4.5.1 Theme 1: Transformational leadership

4.5.1.1 Introduction

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 revealed that female principals experience their leadership roles different than their male counterparts. Instead of being autocratic like men, women tend to choose democratic and collaborative leadership styles. Their feminine nature of caring and empathy enables them to transform the culture of schools.

For the presentation of data presented below, I refer to the Transformational leadership theory by Bass (1985). As described by Bass, the transformational leadership theory is based on four elements, namely Idealised Influence, Intellectual stimulation, Individualised consideration, and Inspirational motivation (cf. 2.2.3.2). According to Bass (1985), the advantage of Transformational leadership is that the behaviour of the transformational leader influences and transforms followers to set goals congruent with the followers own authentic interests and values.

Sheninger and Murray (2017) have conducted many studies and concluded that the key to transformational change and intentional design is to build a dynamic school culture by comprehensively planning, investing in and empowering learners and staff, leading by example, and modelling the desired outcomes. Burns (1978) states that transformation leadership is a leadership style where one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality (cf. 2).

4.5.1.2 Transformation – A collective ideal

Webster and Whelen (2019) state that in an ideal society there would be no hardships

and disadvantages in the schooling system. The reality is that the education system is riddled with hardships, in particular in the South African education system. Participant E3 stated,

I feel that we are losing our discipline in South African schools so the whole educational process is falling and as a result results are also falling so instil discipline in schools.

Webster and Whelen (2019) continue by saying that if transformation is to occur, it must be a collective and individual action that leads to greater justice in the schooling system and in order to obtain transformation, all stakeholders should envision and work towards an ideal and just society. Participant P1 explained,

For whole school improvement we are not only looking at the curriculum we are looking at all facets. We want to develop our learners holistically because we want them to get out into that world and we want them to survive and we want them to come up with some type of innovation. We want them to realize that each one of them has a potential. (cf. 2.2.3.1)

In agreement with P1, Participant E2 stated the following,

My principal encourages and motivates the learners and by doing all these types of things, the motivation that she gives the learners actually, that is where we are seeing our results in our school. She goes the extra mile to make sure that every learner is seen to.

In Bass's Transformational leadership theory, Inspirational Motivation is one of the 4 L's. According to Kerzner (2015), the followers are willing to invest more effort in their tasks. Hence the teachers are motivated to work harder with their learners to achieve the desired outcomes and realise the vision of the school. Followers are also very optimistic about the future because of the leaders' constant motivation and encouragement. They are encouraged to believe that anything is possible if they do it to the best of their ability (cf. 2.2.3.2).

Day (2019) explains that change processes consists of the role of involvement, participation and giving those affected choice on both the process and form of the change. Participant E3 stated,

He gives us opportunities in which we can grow and transform ourselves.

According to Participant P1,

every person is a leader in their own right and you as a leader should bring out, he leadership qualities in all the other leaders and that is how you can move forward. An ideal leader should not only transform the leadership in terms of educators but also in terms of the learners.

According to Participant SMT1,

She also gives opportunities to others to be empowered and become leaders themselves.

Participant P2 stated,

She is consistently changing with the times. She adapts to certain personalities and she adapts to different situations as well and contexts.

Participant SMT 2 agreed that,

She is evolving all the time; she's changing and adapting to the needs of the learners. Every day is seen as a new day and she is constantly adapting to the changes not just in the education system, not just with the curriculum but also with the social changes that are happening within the school, within the community and nationally.

Participant E2,

My principal encourages and motivates the learners and by doing all these types of things, the motivation that she gives the learners actually.

Participant E1,

She has moved from the old school of teaching into the newer era with the new learner teacher support materials and the newer systems of teaching so she has encouraged and embraced transformation especially with the younger generation of educators.

Participant P3,

Consultative processes are the most important as a leader.

According to Participant SMT3,

we are all given equal opportunities to present our skills to the best of our ability and we are not side-lined in any way and our opinions matter.

All nine participants were in strong agreement and commented that change processes consist of role involvement, participation and giving those affected choice on both the process and form of the change (cf. 2.2.5).

South Africans have enjoyed 26 years of democracy and in that 26 years, the education system has gone through tremendous changes. For the world, South Africa appears to be growing because the country is capable of such rapid change in such a short space of time. However, a teacher who started his/her career during that time would have gone through many changes thus far. Change is good, but the question would be if people are capable of changing that fast and adapting fully with these changes. In order to change timeously, a really good leader is needed, preferably a transformational leader who can motivate and encourage change. I have come across two very effective leaders through the process of interviews. Although change was enforced on them, they embraced this change and through their transformational leadership style they were able to transform their followers to accept and change.

Participant E1,

She has moved from the old school of teaching into the newer era with the new learner teacher support materials and the newer systems of teaching so she has encouraged and embraced transformation especially with the younger generation of educators.

Participant SMT1,

She gives guidance where needed. She leads by example and she also gives opportunities to others to be empowered and become leaders' themselves.

Participant P1,

I'm able to bring out the best and build on growing the institution and keep it moving so

it's not a stuck school.

Participant P2,

She ensures that teaching and learning is happening every day. She ensures that if teachers are absent syllabus still continues, that classroom and children are taken care of. She also ensures that the teachers are consistently developing as well.

Participant SMT2 agreed that

she is always at the fore front of what is happening in education.

Participant E2,

She is excellent in whatever she does. She has actually made such a difference to our school and she really someone that you can admire.

In the next section, the participants' views of what they thought an ideal leader is will be brought to light.

4.5.1.3 Perceptions of an ideal leader

This sub-theme will be explained in two sections. Firstly, a discussion will be given on what an ideal leader is and secondly, it will be followed by a discussion on what qualities a leader will need to run a school effectively.

Sendjaya (2019) describes ideal leaders as those who can identify the gap between their performance and expected performance. By bridging this gap, leaders can eliminate problems and thus their organisations run smoothly. Zenger and Folkman (2020), on the other hand, describe an ideal leader as being emotionally resilient, innovative and knowledgeable enough to anticipate and solve problems.

All nine participants in this study had varying ideas of what an ideal leader is. Participant P1, who is a principal, clearly and boldly described a leader as

someone who is a visionary and is able to embrace change and is able to transform according to the situation.

She also added that

the ideal leader should be able to listen to their constituents, be able to bring out and

develop the best qualities of each individual in the organization in the hope that they will perform to the best of their ability.

In agreement with Participant P1, Participant P3 stated that an ideal leader had to be a visionary who is able to delegate responsibilities effectively. Kirimi and Minja (2012) discuss that a transformational leader needs to be committed to the vision he proposes to followers (cf. 2.2.2).

Participant E2,

Someone who is assertive, someone that is firm, organised and dedicated.

Participant E1,

A transformational leader is one who is willing to accept change, is willing to go with change and willing to socialise with people who are willing to change (cf. 2.2.7).

Participant E3,

Ideal leader should obviously have experience in that field. The ideal leader should lead by example and rather not by delegation only. An ideal leader must be fair and must be unbiased (cf. 2.6).

Participant SMT1,

I think an ideal leader is one who works with his or her subordinates. Someone that is open to suggestions. A leader is one that leads and supports and should be working with the people under him or her instead of dictating. A leader should be one that puts the needs of others before himself.

Participant P2 had a similar perspective to E3 and SMT1, namely

an ideal leader is one that is democratic, but should be more of person that others can follow.

In agreement with Participant E3, Participant SMT2 stated,

A good leader is someone that leads by example; someone who is at the forefront; open minded, is willing to and open to hearing other people's suggestions and opinions; someone who is willing to agree and acknowledge when they are wrong. It is someone

who takes suggestions in their stride; positive and negative criticism and work in the best interest of the school by incorporating the best interest of everyone.

Participant SMT3,

An ideal leader is someone who takes initiative. It is the driving force and is the person behind the wheel of the car basically.

This theme dealt with what teachers think an ideal leader is. Many participants had different perceptions of an ideal leader. Ultimately, many traits that were similar to that of a transformational leader were described.

An ideal leader is a visionary. Kirimi and Minja (2012) describe a transformational leader as someone that is committed to achieving the goals of an organisation. Tourish (2013) states that a leader's vision becomes a shared vision where all followers work together with the leader to achieve the goals of the institution. Participants mentioned that an ideal leader was a good listener. Transformational leaders listen to their followers because it results in higher levels of motivation and morality among them (cf. 2.2.2). Participants mentioned that the ideal leader should not only delegate tasks. A leader that delegates tasks without any involvement is a *laissez-faire* leader. A transformational leader delegates tasks. However, he is involved in all the tasks and he is constantly monitoring what is being done. Thus the leader seems interested in what the followers are doing, with the result that they will do their work better (cf. 2.2.6). An ideal leader is someone that is firm, organised and dedicated. A transformational leader has these traits too. A transformational leader provides everything that is needed for personal growth (cf. 2.2.3). An ideal leader is someone that leads by example. A transformational leader also leads by example. This is known as idealised influence, because a leader's high ethical behaviour is constantly monitored by his followers. Hence, he needs to set an example to his followers (cf. 2.2.3.3). The ideal leader must be fair and unbiased. A transformational leader respects the contribution made by followers. This is known as individualised consideration and this is how trust is created between a leader and his followers (cf. 2.2.3.3). The ideal leader should put the needs of others before himself. A transformational leader is focused on the needs of the institution and will do everything to achieve it. He motivates himself firstly because of his vision and then this vision is

shared to his followers. The leader has to motivate and encourage followers to buy into the vision. This is known as inspirational motivation (cf. 2.2.3.3). The ideal leader should create opportunities. The transformational leader also creates opportunities for followers. This is known as intellectual stimulation where the followers are given opportunities to grow and succeed (cf. 2.2.3.3).

4.5.1.3 Perceptions of the qualities an ideal leader needs to manage a school effectively

The perceptions of each participant differed slightly from one another; however, they all infer that a leader has to have some unique qualities in order to manage a school efficiently. Participant SMT1 described the ideal leader as one who is open to suggestions and thus works with subordinates without dictating,

a leader is also one who puts the needs of others before himself.

According to Participant E1, an ideal leader is

one who is willing to accept change and willing to 'socialize' with people who are willing to change.

By socialising, the leader finds out the needs of their followers and thus goes the extra mile to offer support and guidance to followers. Hence, E1 was in agreement with the ideas that SMT1 had to offer.

Participants P2, SMT2 and E3 were all in agreement and explained that leaders should lead by example (cf. 2.5). When leaders lead by example, the followers begin to also follow the same type of characteristics. If a leader is motivated and confident, so too will the participants be. Participant P2 stated in a nutshell that an ideal leader is one that is

democratic and leads by example.

Transformational leaders are very democratic in their approach. They do not order their subordinates to do certain tasks. When a leader is democratic, more autonomy is given to subordinates. They feel responsible for the task they are put in charge of; thus, the effort that is put into it is much greater, compared to something that was assigned to a group. Nelson and Quick (2015) further state that employees who work for a transformational leader are more satisfied, motivated and perform better than those who

do not. It is assumed that these employees feel less pressure and they enjoy doing the tasks assigned to them (cf. 2.5).

Participant SMT2 said that an ideal leader should

lead by example, be open-minded, willing to listen to other people's opinions, suggestions and also acknowledge when they are wrong. Ultimately an ideal leader should work in the 'best interest' of the school by incorporating the best interest of everyone.

Harris (2016) comments that principals who are transformational leaders have the ability to communicate effectively with teachers, learners and other stakeholders (cf. 2.5). By the leader functioning in this way, subordinates feel as if they matter. When the leader listens to them and their ideas, they feel as if their contribution makes a difference.

Transformational leaders are responsible for radical changes in an institution. These radical changes are not for personal gain, but rather for whole school improvement (cf. 2.2.3).

Participant E3 concurred that

An ideal leader should lead by example and added that the leader should be fair and unbiased.

For a leader to be efficient and successful, they need to adopt an attitude where everyone is treated equally. In the South African context, many employees are sensitive to this issue. Many leaders favour subordinates according to gender, culture and race. If individuals are treated equally, there will be less conflict in the workplace. Individuals will also feel respected and this will motivate them to work harder (cf. 2.2.3.3).

Participant E2 described an ideal leader as one who is assertive, firm, organised and dedicated. Wilson (2018) states that male leaders come across as being assertive and firm, whereas women come across as being 'soft' transformational leaders. This stereotype was created by society. It can be inferred that Participant 2 is probably used to that type of leadership. Perhaps that style of leadership is more effective than transformational leadership. Participant SMT3 described ideal leaders as leading from the front because they take initiative and are the driving force of an institution. Leaders

are called leaders because they lead the pack. They are given the crucial task of leading an organisation. They have to be at the forefront of everything. They drive the vision of the school with the help of their followers.

All participants mentioned various qualities portrayed by a transformational leader. A leader does not demonstrate these qualities in isolation; instead, they are interrelated and interdependent (P E3). Many followers are willing to change, provided that the leader gives them a reason to change (SMT 2). If the followers are motivated enough and believe in and what the leader is providing them with, they will change. Some teachers, especially male teachers, are very resistant to change. Change becomes harder when it is implemented by a female leader, because this is seen as something that is socially unacceptable. In order for a female leader to be effective, she needs to be attentive willing to listen to subordinates and take that information and make it useful. Women come across as better listeners than men. They are also more empathetic, compared to their male counterparts (cf. 2.4). When subordinates are respected in this way their tasks are more meaningful, because their efforts are appreciated. In order for leaders to collect this information, they have to socialise with staff. A leader cannot work in isolation. Leaders need to work together with their subordinates (cf. 2.2.2).

A transformational leader leads by example. A transformational leader is someone who has charm and charisma and is admired by his/her followers. Charisma is an important characteristic that the leader needs to engage followers (cf. 2.2.2). Followers look at the qualities and characteristics the leader has. This is very important, because followers will only trust the leader once these characteristics are noticed. Samukange (2014) explains that transformational leadership deals with trust, where followers trust the leader so much that they achieve goals that they did not think were possible (cf. 2.2.3.1). Transformational leaders also empower subordinates to become leaders themselves. A transformational leader is seen as a change agent. Transformational leaders have the ability to bring about radical change in an organisation (cf. 2.2.3). Radical change is fast. Usually the leader has to be very assertive or else the subordinates will not take him/her seriously. There has to be some sanctions at first to motivate and drive the change (cf. 2.2.3.3). Some might be very resistant to change at first, but once they see that goals are achieved, they later change their minds. This

leads to the next section, which describes what the ideal transformational leader is and what exactly transformational leaders in schools do.

4.5.1.4 Empowerment of teachers

In Chapter 2, the literature was presented. To recap, transformation leadership became popular in the early 1980s. Transformational leadership emerged in 1978. Burns explains that leadership models and practices are based on transactional processes that focus on the interaction between the leader and followers. Burns (1978) states that transformation leadership “is a leadership style where one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality”. He furthermore adds that transformational leadership is a process of engagement between leaders and followers (cf. 2.2.2).

Transformational leadership was operationalised and expanded by Bernard Bass. He noted that transactional and transformational models were more of a continuum rather than two separate entities (cf. 2.2.3). Participant P1 stated,

Sometimes, as a female exercise your authority.

Participant SMT2, in agreement with Participant P1, explained,

it important for them to surround themselves with a strong group team that can support them in their weaknesses similar to other members of staff who would have weaknesses and the principal as a leader who supports them, so it's a two way process of give and take, maximizing each person's strength in making the team the strongest that it can hence the principal who is the strongest.

As described by Bass (1985), the transformational leadership theory is based around four elements, namely Idealised influence, Intellectual stimulation, Individualised consideration and Inspirational motivation. I will discuss each of these elements now.

- **Idealised influence**

Idealised influence describes the leader as being a role model. Hence followers respect and admire the leader, but most of all they instil trust in the leader. Participant SMT1 commented,

She leads by example and she also gives opportunities.

Participant E3 was in agreement with SMT1 and commented as follows,

He gives us opportunities in which we can grow and transform ourselves so by doing that I feel that he leads by example.

Participant P1 added,

try to motivate your staff and the staff tries to motivate the learners to bring out the best in each one of them.

Participant P1 was also in agreement that a leader should lead by example,

an ideal leader is one that is democratic, but should be more of a person that others can follow. Teach by example.

Like the above-mentioned participants, Participant SMT2 was in agreement with this idea.

A good leader is someone that leads by example; someone who is at the forefront.

Participant E2 mentioned that her principal was very admirable.

She has actually made such a difference to our school and she really is someone that you can admire.

Participant E1 mentioned that the influence of the principal had brought about lots of change in the school.

She has encouraged and embraced transformation especially with the younger generation of educators.

Participant SMT3 explained that everyone was treated fairly and given equal opportunities. This instils trust between the leader and followers. He also said that individual contributions were valued by the leader. This bond was also strengthened by these practices.

We are all given equal opportunities to present our skills to the best of our ability and we are not side-lined in any way and our opinions matter.

Lastly, Participant P3 concurred that, in order for a leader to good in his position, individuals need to be heard and consulted. This demonstrates that there is respect between the leader and followers.

You must be able to have democracy; you must be able to listen to other people's opinions and other people's advice and weigh it out. Consultative processes are the most important as a leader.

Transformational leaders lead by example. The followers regard them as role models and try to follow their example. The followers trust the leader because they feel that their success is because of the leader (cf. 2.2.5). The transformational leader creates opportunities for followers. In turn the followers are grateful for those opportunities and perform better and become more confident in performing their tasks. The individual feels self-worth and do not feel as if he/she is side lined (cf. 2.2.3.3).

- **Intellectual stimulation**

Intellectual stimulation deals with the leader's innovative abilities. The leader is one who is supportive and thus, when problems arise within an organisation, the leader creates an awareness of these problems. The transformational leader focuses on individuals and makes followers believe that they are worthy as individuals. Thus, their beliefs and values are considered.

Participant P2 stated,

My principal ensures that there's a full staff compliment. She ensures that teaching and learning is happening every day. She ensures that if teachers are absent syllabus still continues, that classroom and children are taken care of. She ensures that daily things such as electricity is working or resources are there for the children that they could use. She also ensures that the teachers are consistently developing as well.

Participant P1 stated that if there were problems, it needed to be addressed so that learning could continue and that quality education was provided. She gave an example of Math:

So what we've done at this school, we've got the senior teachers to mentor new Math's teachers and mentoring is not only for the new teachers, you may be an old teacher but

you are teaching Math's for the first time so you need mentoring for that teacher.

The problem here is that the educators have a lack of the skills that are imperative for teaching. Participant P1 identified the problem and devised an innovative way of handling it. So now, instead of her followers being discouraged because their lack of skill has made them poor workers, they are now motivated to learn, because they are given these lifelines to develop and advance in their careers through mentoring. Thus, the followers will have more admiration for this leader.

Participant SMT1 spoke about her principal, Participant P1, and she confirmed that she was a leader who shared her knowledge by teaching and passing on her knowledge to her subordinates to empower them.

She also gives opportunities to others to be empowered and become leaders themselves, e.g. she shares her knowledge and skills and she shares the work and she always guides people in terms of what and how it should be done.

Participant SMT2 commented that his principal adapted to changes in order to act in the best interests of the learners. The education system has gone through many changes; thus, if teachers do not keep abreast with the changes, then the outcomes of the curriculum will not be realised. The best person in an institute who can drive change is the leader. This is true of the principal of Participant SMT2.

She is evolving all the time; she's changing and adapting to the needs of the learners. Every day is seen as a new day and she is constantly adapting to the changes not just in the education system, not just with the curriculum but also with the social changes.

Participant E2 also mentioned the same principal.

My principal encourages and motivates the learners and by doing all these types of things, the motivation that she gives the learners actually, that is where we are seeing our results in our school. She goes the extra mile to make sure that every learner is seen to.

From the feedback it is evident that this leader is directly in contact with learners at the school. She comes up with innovative ways to motivate them to do well. She goes the extra mile to ensure that learners are stimulated intellectually by her and her staff.

Participant E1 spoke of innovations that female leaders were using in schools today. Thus, these schools became progressive schools and hence teachers wanted to be part of these schools.

The change from writing on the chalkboard to white board learning. Interface with learners.

Participant P3 was in agreement with Participant E1 and stated that a transformational leader needed to be the link between technology and learners. He explained,

Transformational leadership with changing trends and changing technology, if we don't transform, learners are not going to be fully aware of what's going on in the world and they cannot adjust to it.

So, the institution needs to be informed and aware of technology that exists; thus, this knowledge is transferred to the learners. The leader must initiate this information transfer process in a school (cf. 2.1).

Like Participant P1, Participant SMT3 spoke about skills. His principal focused on the strength and abilities of teachers,

They were given equal opportunities to present our skills to the best of our ability.

The principal is responsible for creating this arena where teachers are given an equal opportunity to display their skills and talents. When teachers enjoy doing what they do, they tend to want to do more. Teachers may even choose to develop professionally by studying to acquire more skills.

The transformational leader motivates and encourages followers to such a level that they begin to work better and will perform their duties with instructions given. Like the leader, they too become goal orientated and will begin to develop themselves professionally to achieve those goals (cf. 2.2.3.1). The leader focuses on the individual and how the individual can be utilised in the organisation with the aim of achieving goals. Each individual is strengthened and developed individually to benefit the organization (cf. 2.2.3.3).

- **Individual consideration**

Individual consideration is all about valuing followers.

Participant E3,

He gives us opportunities in which we can grow and transform ourselves.

Participants SMT1, SMT2, E1, E2, SMT3, P2, P1 and SMT1 agreed,

She is open to suggestions.

This principal does not disregard the suggestions from her staff. They are valued in such a way that their suggestions are considered.

Participant SMT2,

As innovative principals they look at the strengths of each individual and use those strengths to their advantage of the school but by saying to the person 'you are an excellent person in this here so please continue it and develop it and take those that are interested in it and capacitate them and build on that' and as such you will find that each person wants to be the master in what they are doing and they are giving off their best because they have the trust of the principal in what they are doing.

Participant E1

encouraged and embraced transformation especially with the younger generation of educators.

When educators, especially novice teachers, are valued like this, they grow. In the beginning they may feel overwhelmed because they have never been in a school before.

Participant E2:

She is really someone that you can admire.

In order for this teacher to have so much admiration for her principal, it can be inferred that she feels valued by the principal as a part of the team.

Participant SMT3:

We are not side-lined in any way and our opinions matter.

Participant P2 stated that the principal was not only concerned about the teachers, the

curriculum and the infrastructure of the school; she was also concerned about the advancement and development of teachers.

She also ensures that the teachers are consistently developing as well.

Participant P1 placed great value on her staff, noticed their strengths and gave them credit for their efforts.

If you look at your staff and look at their strengths and you look at nine people who are going to drive those nine areas of functionality.

Growth of an individual in an organisation can be possible if there is a transformational leader who constantly motivates and inspires them to grow as individuals. The follower needs to feel that his contributions are taken into consideration. Opportunities need to be created by the leader so that the follower can realise that his work is making a difference in the organisation (cf. 2.2.2.3). When the individual realises that the leader has taken his work into consideration, he will be motivated to work harder and perform better. In most cases the followers achieve goals that they never thought were possible (cf. 2.2.3.1).

- **Inspirational motivation**

Inspirational motivation describes the leaders as a motivator that inspires and creates an inspiring future vision. Participant P1 added,

You need to have a vision not only for your school but for yourself.

The leader assumes power not with the purpose to control, but to empower followers and inspire them to believe that they are capable of performing to the best of their ability.

Participant P3,

As a leader, as I said vision is paramount. You must be able to have democracy; you must be able to listen to other people's opinions and other people's advice and weigh it out. It is clear from the above discussed elements that there is evidence that the participated school were practicing transformative leadership practices at their schools.

All eight participants agreed that their principals were transformational leaders. However, I noted that from the data collected that the transformational leader roles and effort differed among different genders. From the data collected from the interviews, much less data were collected to support the fact that the male principal was much of a transformational leader. The following response shows that, unlike the two female principals, the male principal did not constantly work to drive the school and staff. Participant P3 stated,

There are changes at our school at certain times.

It seems like, unlike the female principal, this male principal is not taking the initiative to make change based on the evidence collected. One can infer that change is made when it is necessary and that subordinates are not involved in the transformation of the organisation. Wilson (2018) explains that leaders are expected to be assertive. Women leaders tend to be more nurturing, empathetic, collaborative and cooperative, compared to their male counterparts. Hence women tend to adopt a transformational leadership style, whereas males will continue to display autocratic leadership styles, where they do not delegate duties. They have to be on top and give instructions to their subordinates.

With regard to the female principals, it is clearly evident from the data collected that they are change agents and are going the extra mile to involve every single stakeholder in the daily running of the school. Participant SMT1 affirmed that her principal was definitely a transformational leader and this was her response to what she did at the school to move it forward.

She believes in being a lifelong learner. She is open to suggestions. She gives guidance where needed. She leads by example and she also give opportunities to others to be empowered and become leaders themselves, e.g. she shares her knowledge and skills and she share the work and she always guide people in terms or what and how it should be done. She's constantly monitoring everyone in terms of what they do to ensure that it's done to the best of their ability, so I would say that she is a transformational leader.

Iredale (2018) defines lifelong learning as a concept that applies both to the teachers themselves and to their role in helping others to learn successfully and become part of a learning society. Obiakor (2018) states that lifelong learners believe that learning has to

occur for change to occur and thus lifelong learners are abreast of the times. Participant SMT1 described her principal as a lifelong learner and concurred,

In terms of our principal I think that she believes in being a lifelong learner. she also gives opportunities to others to be empowered and become leaders themselves, e.g. she shares her knowledge and skills and she shares the work and she always guides people in terms of what and how it should be done. She's constantly monitoring everyone in terms of what they do to ensure that its done to the best of their ability.

She not only teaches and empowers teachers; she monitors to learn behaviours to develop and adapt her leadership styles. The leader will not only try to develop him; he will also try to support and empower his followers (cf. 2.2.3.1)

In agreement with SMT1 who is at the same school, Participant E1 added that the principal was indeed a transformational leader because she was able to

move from the old school of teaching into the newer era of teaching (cf. 2.6).

Participant SMT2 from another school also concurred that his principal was a transformational leader who had the ability to change and adapt to the needs of the institution. He said in agreement with SMT1,

She is always at the forefront of what is happening in education, she is evolving all the time, she's changing and adapting to the needs of the learners (cf. 2.1).

It is evident that these principals were able to transform the school through the empowerment of staff. Participant E3, in agreement with SMT1 and SMT2, held the following view:

He gives us opportunities in which we can grow a transform ourselves so by doing that I feel that he leads by example.

Participant SMT1 explained,

she leads by example and she also give opportunities to others to be empowered and become leaders themselves, e.g. she shares her knowledge and skills and she share the work and she always guide people in terms of what and how it should be done. She's constantly monitoring everyone in terms of what they do to ensure that its done to the

best of their ability (cf. 2.4).

Participant E2, in agreement with SMT1, SMT2 and E3, concurred that

she is excellent in whatever she does. She has actually made such a difference to our school and she really someone that you can admire.

Only a true transformational leader has the ability to encourage and motivate individuals to transform and accept and embrace change (cf. 2.2.1). When this principal was interviewed, she identified herself as being a transformational leader. She described herself as being a visionary who was able to listen to her constituents, thus making her open minded. She described herself as one who drives change through motivation and by understanding staff. She also stated that she tried to empower staff to ensure autonomy.

Participant P1 stated,

I think if you want whole school improvement you have to find strategies to move it that way which means you must be a visionary, a change agent and to get everyone to buy into this.

Participant P2 stated that her principal was a transformational leader, because

she is constantly changing with the times. She adapts to certain personalities and he adapts to different situations.

Vallabhaneni (2020) concurs that leaders wear different hats at different times. This is because they need to assess the situation and change their thought processes in order to solve problems that may exist innovatively. Bass describes this as intellectual stimulation, one of the 4 L's of transformational leadership (cf. 2.2.3.2). Participant SMT2, who is at the same school, described this principal as a transformational leader as well, stating,

One of the main reasons is that, she is always at the forefront of what is happening in education, she is evolving all the time, she's changing and adapting to the needs of the learners. Every day is seen as a new day and she is constantly adapting to the changes not just in the education system, not just with the curriculum but also with the social changes that are happening within the school, within the community and nationally.

Participant E2 at the same school has become a true follower of this transformational leader. She said that her principal was

really someone that you can admire.

If this principal were not doing a good job, then this follower would have been negative and would have felt adversely towards this principal's style of leadership. Bass describes this characteristic of a transformational leader as idealised influence. The follower believes in the ability of the leader and thus feels comfortable following this leader to further make changes in the institution (cf. 2.2.3.2). This, however, is not always the case. Many teachers, especially male teachers, are very resistant to becoming followers of female principals; thus female leaders experience many challenges in their positions. Barriers and discrimination will be explained further in the next section.

4.5.2 Theme 2: barriers and discrimination

4.5.2.1 Introduction

Peters (2012) presents findings obtained from qualitative studies that consider women to be good and democratic leaders whose approach is supportive and inclusive. Literature presented in Chapter 2 of this study outlines a female leader's attributes of being nurturing, sensitive, empathetic, intuitive, compromising, caring and cooperative. Despite all these qualities that make them better and effective leaders, they still face challenges at their schools. They face many barriers in their jobs, for example, dysfunctional schools, lack of funding, poor infrastructure and lack of resources, to name a few. One of the biggest barriers they have is gender discrimination. This of course makes their leadership and management duties difficult, the reason being because they occupy positions that are stereotypically referred to as male positions. This discrimination does not only come from men; women too can sometimes be their own enemies, because they lack confidence and assertiveness.

4.5.2.2 The reality of gender discrimination in South African Schools

The *South African Schools Act no. 84 of 1996*, *The Employment of Educators Act no. 76 of 1998*, *The Employment Equity Act no. 55 of 1998* and the *Gender Equity Act of*

1996 facilitated the entry of women into previously male-dominated school management positions. These acts prohibit unfair discrimination in the workplace. It is also a measure put in by the government to close the gender gap. Morojele *et al.* (2013) state that women are still underrepresented and discrimination is still prevalent in education, limiting the access for women to leadership positions. Wills (2015) states that while women are well represented among teachers, most school principals are men. Literature in Chapter 2 of this study presents evidence that only 36.4% of principals are female. Spaul and Jansen (2019) say that gender equality in education reflects gender inequality in society. Society dictates that the man is the leader (cf. 2). Schmidt and Mestry (2015) insist that patriarchy in schools is prevalent. They explain that this happens mostly among schools led by black or coloured female principals. These principals face many barriers and challenges in their posts, for example, resistance, insubordination and sabotage. The reason for these challenges stems from the cultural and societal belief that men are better leaders compared to women, who can be described as being incapable and emotionally unstable. Schmidt and Mestry (2015) and Diko (2014) confirm that men are socially constructed to have the upper hand in areas of power (cf. 2).

Morojele *et al.* (2013) state that women are caught between domestic and work responsibilities. Participant P2 also mentioned this point. Women are afraid to apply for leadership positions because they think about their families. They feel as though they will not be able to cope with family responsibilities and work responsibilities. Participant P2 also stated,

Sometimes when the posts come up you think twice because you think about your family and the time and the strain that goes with it.

Participant SMT2 blamed the mindset of people for creating this stereotype of women staying at home. Women constantly have to prove that they can balance work and home pressure.

I think that a lot of the people come from the old school and they believe that men should be in the forefront of leadership, and that women have a place and that place is at home, so when they look at a woman, they don't see them as equals but rather see them as subordinates.

Mathevula (2014) contend that family responsibility is another barrier hindering women progress to higher levels. They do not get much support from their families who believe that management posts are for men only. They believe that their daughters, mothers and sisters have no place there because they are sensitive and incapable of running schools efficiently. Seven of the nine participants agreed that female leaders are being discriminated against in South African schools. Participant E3 said that he was unaware of any discrimination taking place at the moment.

Not that I am aware of or it hasn't been brought to my attention.

I tried to find reasons as to why this participant was not aware of current discrimination. One factor could be that the participant is male and that this issue did not concern him, or it could be the fact that his school is led by a male principal, so perhaps he is not exposed to some of the challenges encountered by female principals. The fact that it has not been brought to his attention could be because the school is managed by males, hence there are no complaints by females. Participant P2 is also under this impression that perhaps females are very secretive about being discriminated against. She said,

I think that it is probably happening and secretly people don't stand out and talk about it.

The main reason this could be is that women do not want to expose that they have failed at something. Participant E2 revealed that she was not sure if there was any discrimination or not. I was under the impression that this participant did not want to answer this question fully. There are many female teachers that feel very intimidated by these types of questions. They choose not to create chaos so they will avoid these types of questions. I am a male myself, so maybe she even felt intimidated by me and did want to not offend me. Participant P3 and Participant SMT3 also mentioned that women should be out there and speak up for what they want. Participant SMT3 stated that women need to be

more authoritative and to put themselves out there.

Participant P3 commented that,

women tend to shy away from doing it and its always the male that wants to come

forward and do it. They rather sit in the background and not want to take that role ... I've seen that through years that certain women the fall back and they don't fight for what is right and what they need to do. They just passive in everything.

It is for this reason that women continue to be harassed and oppressed in their workplaces (cf. 1.). Seely (2019:12) strongly and openly airs her view on this subject, saying "I believe that passivity is exactly what the radical conservative right wants from us so that it can continue to violate our rights and limit our resources."

Participant SMT1 agreed that there was definitely discrimination occurring and added,

In terms of female principals, I think that there are too few of them and the few that we do have don't get the recognition in terms of the work that they do.

Again, the response from this participant concurs with the literature from Chapter 2, reaffirming that females are underrepresented in leadership positions (cf. 2). Davids (2018) states that males still dominate leadership positions in South African education (cf. 2.5). In agreement with Davids, Participant SMT2 affirmed this, stating,

Clearly the female gender is not well represented as principals. If you look at majority of high schools in particular there are far fewer female principals in my opinion from the schools that I know of.

According to Waite and Bogotch (2017), women have the ability to be effective leaders but gender inequality in school leadership is conspicuous due to the covert and overt gender discrimination in appointments and promotion (cf. 2.5). Schmidt and Mestry (2015) blame stereotyping as the cause of this problem. They continue by stating that stereotypes emanate from the belief systems of South African culture, privilege, power and patriarchy that causes this gender gap. As a result of this, women are made to think that they are not good enough to lead a school. Men perceive women as weak and incapable of running a school (cf. 2.5). Statistics presented in Chapter 2 of this study clearly illustrates that women are underrepresented as principals in schools (cf. 2.5). More principals are employed as principals in primary schools because men feel that they are capable of leading younger children. When it comes to high schools, it is preferred for men to lead as principals because they have the 'muscles' to deal with older children.

4.5.2.3 Factors resulting in gender discrimination

The main factor contributing to gender discrimination is the patriarchal beliefs of the South African society in general. Participant E2 backed up this statement stating,

Probably because of the old orthodox belief where females need to be at home, they not supposed to be working and that's why there is so much of discrimination, it's always where the males are given the upper hand and all the privileges.

The society has not transformed to a level where both genders are treated equally. Participant SMT1 concurred with this statement,

I think that it is the mindset. I think that a lot of the people come from the old school and they believe that men should be in the forefront of leadership, and that women have a place and that place is at home, so when they look at a woman, they don't see them as equals but rather see them as subordinates, so they don't take them seriously and that's the issue and that's the main reason for discrimination.

Men do not take women seriously. It is as if they undermine women and males tend to be very difficult with females in leadership. Participant P1 also agreed with this point saying,

I think it is the other older males are so staunch in the old system where they would prefer not to take any authority or instructions from younger females.

At a school this is very evident when it comes to the staff. Male staff are 'pushed' into management positions very early in their careers. They are 'favoured' and thus they get that post and stay in it (cf. 2.5). The reason for this favouritism is based on societal belief systems. Society believes that men are stronger and are better leaders because they can be assertive and be authoritative in their positions when it comes to teachers and learners. According to Mberia (2017), women, on the other hand, are too soft and understanding too. Many females in South Africa are seen as unsuccessful because their schools have become underperforming schools and are dysfunctional. Participant P1 agreed with this statement, commenting,

the key is to be assertive when you have to be.

Participant SMT1 confirmed this idea by saying,

They need to be firm.

Participant E2 said that women should be strong enough to hold on to their posts. They should not become victims of abuse whilst they act as leaders.

They should be given an opportunity not to be bullied or harassed in the position that they hold.

Participant SMT3 was under the impression that women were not strong enough to lead. He emphasised that in order for them to be effective leaders and improve they should become authoritarians,

To be more authoritative and to put themselves out there.

Men focus on failing principals and thus do not look at ways to support and promote them. Instead, they continue to demotivate them and stereotype further.

Participant E1 supported this statement,

I feel that we still have that stigma that leadership should be male dominant so males still feel that females cannot handle discipline with learners or with human resource issues when it comes to managing the school.

When departmental vacancies are advertised, the Department of Basic Education seeks to ensure that strategies are implemented to decrease the gender gap. In a Parliamentary Monitoring Group meeting held in 2017, Chairperson Memela reported, "Gender was mainstreamed through the DBE's policy and programs that were formulated, such that gender issues are taken into consideration with policies all inclusive." Mainstreaming was discussed. Preference was given to women in the recruitment of Senior Management Staff (SMS) to achieve the 50% target of women employees at SMS level. The succession planning programme also targeted women in middle management. On the gender on numbers of teachers and principals he recounted that there are 63.0% (27,464) female and 37.0% (16,123) male, Heads of Department; 43.9% (5,184) Female, and 56.1% (6,619); while 73.5% (215 419) Females and 26.5% Males account for the teachers. This confirms that women are still underrepresented in leadership positions in education. despite the efforts made by the Department of Basic Education (cf. 1.7). Participant SMT1 also blamed school

governing bodies who represent the parent component in the process of hiring state-paid educators.

To a large extent, the governing bodies are male dominated and to a large extent there is still this idea that the male is a stronger person than a female. In physical terms that may be true, but in terms of the running of the school for example, there are many more dynamics that come into play. The stigma that a female is a strong person is just sticking to them. I think a lot more females need to prove themselves and they need to be given a fair opportunity.

In agreement with the comment, Participant P1 spoke from experience about the biased recruitment process:

So, it's happened and when it comes to the Department of education posts the same thing has happened. They will choose male even though the male is not highly qualified and they don't look at your ability transform, competencies, your skills. They go by the fact that you are male or female.

By doing this, it is evident that this is not a real concern for the Department. If proper measures are put in place to close the gender gap, this will result in fewer incidences in gender discrimination.

4.5.2.4 Parties responsible for discriminatory practices

Men firstly are to blame for discrimination. Most men in society believe that a school should be run by a male. Participant P1 has had first-hand experience about this issue and had the following view:

For me there's been a lot of discrimination. I've applied for many posts and I'm highly qualified for the job and I feel that I'm able to bring out the best and build on growing the institution and keep it moving so it's not a stuck school but in many of the interviews I went for I realized that they were looking for a male because they have that inherent believe that a male is a better principal than a female principal.

This is for the simple reason that they feel that women are too sensitive and that they do not possess the necessary skills to run a school. They believe a principal should be a figure that demonstrates authority and that everyone should fear the principal. Hence, in the past and even today, male-led schools do not experience many disciplinary issues.

This was proved by Participant E1 who is male and was able to share the current perspectives of males.

I feel that we still have that stigma that leadership should be male dominant so males still feel that females cannot handle discipline with learners or with human resource issues when it comes to managing the school.

Male learners at the school also believed that women were weak and thus they did not respect females. They looked at what happened in their homes and demonstrated the same behaviour at school. This is one of the reasons that female principals give up their positions because they cannot cope with bad discipline at schools. Male subordinates do not respect female managers and principals. They tend to be difficult and refuse to take instructions from female leaders. Participant P1, a female principal, shared her view on this aspect.

When we meet, we talk about the problems that they are encountering, especially in dealing with your staff and the males who find it very difficult to take instructions from female principals or from a female leader. They sometimes think we are joking or we are not serious about it. I think the only time they know that we mean business is when we enforce or force whatever it is to show them. We have to work much harder than a male and you have to apply sanctions for them to listen to you. I think with me, I have a way with male staff and I respect them and I try to motivate them.

Waite and Bogotch (2017) cite Msila (2014), who states that women are disregarded by ethnic authorities who prefer male school administrators. Men do not take women seriously because of the stereotype created by society. Female activist Megan Seely vividly states that women are seen as bad if they speak out or make suggestions. because it is not their place. However, if a man performs an act of rage, it is just seen as him being frustrated. It is acceptable for him. So, there are double standards in terms of what is accepted.

Why is it that a woman who gets angry is immediately called a bitch? A man may put his fist through a wall and while we may think him foolish, we rarely demean his character ... But, instead we women, learn to control ourselves, not to speak out of turn, keep our voices and our heads low, and ask for qualifiers of our speech (Seely, 2017:10).

As Participant P1 said, if one were not serious, then staff would not take one seriously either, especially male staff. As Seely (2017) states, if one enforces rules and sanctions, then one gets labelled. Men can even start working towards the downfall of the principal (cf. 2.5).

In the religion also, God is referred to as being a man. Participant P1 stated,

It's a mindset that men have that they must be in. It not only in education, but it's a religious thing. If you go back and look at various religions, the man has been elevated, even God is a him. It comes down from religion, but in certain religious groups, like in my religious group the female is revered. If you go to South India, there is a temple where they celebrate a female. If you look at India again, the mother is in the centre and the mother is the centre of the family. The mother cannot be left out of decision-making, but I think that it is in the country that you are in too, because if you look at South Africa, everything is about the man.

This is the reason why men are put on pedestals to be respected. Participant SMT2 held a similar view,

This is a social aspect and if look at in homes and from a religious perspective, a lot of religions go to the idea that the male is the dominant person in the family and that being the case, in the family it extends out into society and as such you find that it is just something that is taken for granted that a male must be the strongest person in the family, in the institution, in a country, etc.

Women, on the other hand, are put in a lower place and there is a glass ceiling placed on top where, even if she tries her best, she will never reach the position she wants to get to (cf. 2.5). In some religions, however, females are given an equal position. Mothers, especially in those faiths are revered a respected. This means nothing in schools with multiracial and multicultural learners, though. Each learner comes from a different type of household with different beliefs and each one demonstrates it according to how they live. This of course creates many disciplinary problems at schools. Ndebele (2018) states that female principals are not only perceived by their male colleagues as incompetent and unable, but also by their female colleagues, the reason being the entrenched culture of male dominance that exists. He reports that these female

principals also experience negative attitudes from parents because they are undermined because of their gender.

It is all well and good that we have a new constitution and new laws that govern people, but when it is not monitored it has no effect. We live in a democratic country and we have many laws that prohibit discrimination (cf. 2.5). The question would be if those acts are really achieving the goals as described in the constitution. When the Department of Education advertises vacancies, the gender ratio is not mentioned. According to the Department of Basic Education website (<https://www.education.gov.za/Vacancies.aspx>), it only mentions that “It is our intention to promote reprehensively (race, gender, disability).” This means that the school could select only males if they wanted to. There are not any strict policies to ensure that does not take place. The interview panels of the school are made up of parents, union members and teachers. A point to consider is that if the panel were made up of all males, it would be natural for them to choose a male principal. Dall (2019) reports that, according to David de Korte, who is the chairperson of the South African Principals’ Association, governing bodies have “good intentions, but outdated ideals” when it comes to appointing principals, as they can tend to favour “iron-fist disciplinarians”. Then, comes another factor, a factor that proves that females are failures. For example, women are unfamiliar with duties that were previously reserved for men, like dealing with procurement and school infrastructure and buildings. What if this was included as the basis of selecting principals? Many women do not know about that because they are never given a choice to do it. The fact that this process of interviewing and selecting principals is flawed has become one of the major reasons for the gender gap that exists in the South African education system today. Participant P1 shared her knowledge about her experience and what she was currently doing,

So, it's happened and when it comes to the Department of Education posts the same thing has happened. They will choose male even though the male is not highly qualified and they don't look at your ability transform, competencies, your skills. They go by the fact that you are male or female. And yes, I've been discriminated on many occasions. It's unfair and I think there's a lot of strides are made in my profession where they have tried to bridge the gap because the Department is aware of these injustices and you

know one of the aims of the constitution is to address these injustices and I think we have a female principal support group program and I'm also on that program to help support female principals.

According to Ndebele (2018) and McNae and Reilly (2018), women are their own enemies. Women are too afraid of trying to get what they want. They lack the confidence to be assertive in their positions. Even when they get the job, they are reluctant to be assertive. They delegate duties, fair enough, but hesitate to jump into action when something unexpected arises. They always want to weigh up the situation before acting. This is seen by men as delayed responses, or that they want guidance from their male counterparts, or they just do not know what to do. It is as if they are always afraid. The learners also pick up on this and they are under the impression that female principals are easy and will feel sorry for them and not punish them. 50% of the participants were in agreement that women were to be blamed for the discrimination they faced.

Participant P1,

Definitely not. I don't think they are to be blamed, but when you talk about women that have been abused and they say they are scared, they don't want any sort of problems in their staff so they try to accept the status quo of the men. But in certain instances, there are women to be blamed because they don't stand up. For me, I don't experience that problem anymore, I'm much more mature now and I know how to deal with the situation.

Participant SMT1, in disagreement with Participant P1, said,

To an extent I would agree and say yes, because I think that women themselves don't believe in themselves enough. They don't take enough authority. They don't empower themselves. So they allow themselves to be exploited, they allow themselves to be brought down and they don't take the stand enough so partially they are to be blamed.

Women grow up in a society where they traditionally have a place. It is impossible to believe that they would be able to change overnight. That mindset is hard to ignore or change. Because this gender stereotype has been created by society, this is how women think. They believe that they have to be submissive to men and that their duty is to take orders from them. This is the reason why they do not empower themselves when

they assume leadership positions. When they face resistance from men, they do not put up a fight. They become 'sensitive' and give up. Hence, they become puppets who just take up space and are controlled by their male counterparts (cf. 1.1). Porritt and Featherstone (2019) explain that there is a confidence gap that separates the sexes. Men seem to have more confidence in the workplace. Women, on the other hand, have a lack thereof and thus it holds them back from doing many things. Finally, women cannot cope and they give up (cf. 2.2).

Participant P2,

Nobody can really blame themselves for being discriminated, but if a woman basically doesn't speak up or takes charge and shows that she is capable and not assertive about it, then yes she could be basically abiding by that discrimination.

P1 was in agreement with P2:

But in certain instances women are to be blamed, because they don't stand up.

Participant SMT1 was also in agreement with Participants P1 and P2,

To an extent I would agree and say yes, because I think that women themselves don't believe in themselves enough. They don't take enough authority. They don't empower themselves. So, they allow themselves to be exploited, they allow themselves to be brought down and they don't take the stand enough.

Also, in agreement with Participants P1, P2, and SMT1, Participant P3 felt that women were to blame for the discrimination against them,

Certain women they fall back and they don't fight for what is right and what they need to do. They just passive in everything.

In disagreement, however, was Participants E3, E2, E1 and SMT3, who said that women were not to be blamed for the discrimination that they faced (cf. 1.2; 2.5). Msila (2013) and Diko (2014) blame the discrimination against women on societal beliefs of patriarchy that exists in South Africa, which most often is culturally motivated. Ghodsee (2018), on the other hand, blames women for the discrimination against them, explaining that researchers fault women for not being ambitious enough or not 'leaning in'. Also, researchers found that women experience challenges of combining work with

family responsibilities and frequent career interruptions. Ghodsee (2018) goes on to explain that women see applying for leadership positions as treachery and that women are not willing to join the fray, and even if they do, ambitious men will backstab them first.

Women are perceived as not having the 'right' skills necessary to manage a school.

4.5.3 Theme 3: Skills vs efficiency

The principal is the person who manages the overall school management (Were & Wanyama, 2017). Educational management includes curriculum management, learner affairs, personnel, facilities and infrastructure, finance and school relationships with the community (Townsend, 2019). A principal must be able to manage every facet of the school so that the goals of the school can be realised effectively and efficiently to the maximum. Efficiency is a concept that describes the extent to which time is used well for the intended task. Skills, on the other hand, describes the capacity to do something well. Komariah *et al.* (2018) state that the principal who has importance and influence in the school, manages all the components of the school, which in turn has an effect on whether the school will move forward or backward and whether it is a high-achieving school or not.

4.5.3.1 Men's skills vs women's skills

This study aims to reveal the role of female principals as transformational leaders to improve schools in KwaZulu-Natal. At the same time, it also shows how women in general have metamorphosed from being inferior housewives. Pearson *et al.* (2014) confirm that the role of women was to raise children and feed and care for her family (cf. 1). Chrisler and Golden (2018) state that social construction is a biological reality of being female or male, embellished differently in various cultural and situational contexts (cf. 1.1). Hence, women are not born into this social vacuum. Instead, external factors mould and shape women according to cultural expectation, life situations, institutional pressures, environmental events, and even the absence or presence of particular people. Ultimately, a woman is shaped by culture and time. Likewise, a man is also constructed by society and by the culture within which he exists.

Women are stepping up, not only in education, but in the world as well. Women are learning to equip themselves with what is needed in order to excel in the workplace. The two female principals in this study are excellent examples of this. Like all principals, these two principals were novice teachers at one stage, graduating from university with knowledge only and very little management skills (Yisrael, 2012). They are both lifelong learners who are easy adaptable and are successfully transforming their schools (cf.1.1; 2.1). Unlike the male principal, they are constantly working to make an effort to transform their schools on a daily basis (Zenger & Folkman, 2019).

It was my aim to elicit information regarding whether males and females needed different skills in order to manage a school. This was important because it is imperative to draw the line when it comes to the limitations placed on female leaders in education. If the Department of Education or society dictates that women are not good leaders and they are incapable of running a school, then it was my duty to present information to educate society about what is actually going on in schools at the moment. According to the nine participants, all responses pointed in the direction that males and females should have the same skills to run the school.

Participant P1 stated,

OK, definitely, because as I said to you that the job of the principal is not only to monitor the curriculum, it's about procurement, it's about tendering, it's about painting, it's about marking the grounds, it's about fixing toilets, it's about water leaks, repairs and renovations, its endless and in the society that we live in, it's a man's forte. So, for me I had to really acquire these skills.

This is the most common problem for female leaders. They lack skills when it comes to dealing with the infrastructure of the school because they were previously never given those tasks to handle so they know nothing about it.

Participant SMT2 was in agreement with P1, saying,

Yes, my advice to them would be that they need to get involved in all aspects of the running of the school, in particular when it comes to the maintenance and labour issues and so on. I think that the weakest point when it comes to a female principal is perhaps

when it comes to the maintenance of buildings and furniture etc. It is historically a man's job to know about maintenance and repairs and development of a school and as such when females get to understand it will be a strong point in their advantage.

Hunter, Brown and Donahoo (2012) present similar information. They state that initially, men who were teachers in schools during the 19th and 20th century were given jobs as administrators of the schools, whilst women taught. Their duties included clerical record keeping, building maintenance and upkeep, class assignments, disciplining learners, supervising teachers and managing the school day. In schools in South Africa currently, women are side lined when they apply for leadership posts, even though they are highly qualified. Even female teachers that have many years of teaching experience do not apply for those positions, because they feel that they do not have any experience in the building and maintenance of schools.

Participant SMT1 said,

In terms of skills I would say not, I think that they need to be more empowered. So, I think more communication, and also just to ofay themselves with running the school.

Women tend to be afraid to speak about what they want. In the society that we live in girls tend to be the ones that are 'shy' and quiet and have to listen to a man in many cultures, so this type of behaviour is brought into the workplace as well.

Pastorino and Doyle-Portillo (2019) concur that women are influenced by stereotypes and prejudices from culture; hence, the result is that many of these cultural ideas get imprinted in the minds of females and thus determines the way that they behave. This is very evident in schools. Women rarely ever challenge anything in the school. They come across as being shy and if they dare say anything they are labelled (Seely, 2019).

Participant P2 was in agreement with SMT1 and was very adamant that women did not lack any skills whatsoever and that women could be effective in their positions.

The same skills that men use to run a school is the same skills that females have to run a school.

Participant SMT2 stated that gender did not matter. A leader should be able to acquire those skills whilst moving up the ladder.

To run a school, whether you are male or female, you need the same skills. The question is what skills you are exposed to in your career on your way to becoming a leader. So male or female could be lacking in skills because of circumstances or knowledge or whatever. But in terms of skills of running a school male or female, you need the same skills.

Participants E2 and E1 were in agreement with this statement. Participant P3 agreed with this statement:

I think that everyone is equipped with the same amount of skills and levels. I think that this is kind of debatable. Why do they need more skills? If we need skills to carry out something, it's a skill. It doesn't need to be more because you are a female or male.

Participant SMT3 stated his opinion as follows,

In my opinion, how do we justify which skill if they are not given the opportunity?

This clearly shows that there are not enough women in leadership positions in schools in the uMgungundlovu District. They are not given the opportunity to practice being leaders. Participant E3, in agreement with SMT3, commented,

Why would they need more skills when they could have the same skills? As I said, if they can empower themselves equally as men do and run the school just as effectively and efficiently and run the school as men do.

According to this participant, women have to equip themselves with similar skills that men have. Unfortunately, he did not go into detail as to which skills he was talking about actually.

A man can wear a suit and look like a leader, but a woman has to put in all her effort for some recognition (Schnackenberg & Simard, 2019). Patriarchal beliefs of society have brainwashed genders to believe that they are factory set to operate in a certain way (cf. 2.5). Women are adapting and more and more are acquiring more skills to lead better than men. Hunter *et al.* (2012) state that in the old days, men were chosen as

administrators so they could be disciplinarians for teachers and learners. With laws and policies protecting the rights of teachers and learners, there is no room for that type of an autocratic style of leadership anymore. Leaders now have to uphold the legislation so as not to infringe upon the rights of anyone. In a South African context, *The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995* protects teachers at a school. The *Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998* also makes provision to close the gender gaps in South African education (cf. 1.1).

Regarding the skills of women, women come across as being soft and nurturing, but many male and female teachers see this as a weakness. They are perceived to be passive supporters of men (cf. 2.5). There are areas where women lack certain skills to run a school, for example, school maintenance and stock, which is one of the factors that can be attributed to the reason why they do not apply for leadership positions. Those jobs that were historically set aside for male teachers are foreign to them, and instead of them facing disappointment in not getting the job, they do not apply at all. Porritt and Featherstone (2019) state that another reason is that it is not a case of women not having good skills or the right skills; it is about the level of confidence that women have to run a school. Again, because of society's brainwashing and gender stereotyping, women believe that they are not good enough to run a school and this have an impact on the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in education.

4.5.3.2 Fruits of labour

I aimed to establish a link between leadership styles of the principal and the performance of everyone in the school (cf. 1.6). Muenjohn *et al.* (2018) explain that the leadership in organisations produces a positive effect when it lifts the performance of individuals and groups. At the three schools where this study was conducted, it was evident that the leaders are trying to make an effort to uplift their institutions. During the interview, a question was asked to all nine participants, "Do you think the matric pass rate is a reflection of how effective the principal is?" I felt that this question was very important to determine how effective the principal is. The reason for this is because one of the ways that a school is gauged is how well they do in the matric examinations. Although one of the schools was a primary school, the question was still asked because

the primary school sets the foundation for high school. If learners excel in primary school, they tend to do well in high school as well. Darling-Hammond *et al.* (2019). For this question there were some mixed responses from the participants, because some of them said that principals encouraged learners to do well through teachers, but some said that it was entirely the learners' responsibility to study and do well.

Participant E3 said,

It is a bit of a generalisation; however, I feel that there's lots of aspects in how the pass rates can be determined. One coming from the discipline of learners and from the background of these learners. Obviously, discipline comes from home by the parents and so I feel that if the learner is not disciplined that learner is not going to have a great pass and that will determine the pass rate. Also in terms of management, management also plays a role, but we have all these other factors that come to play. Principals play a vital role in the process in which they can also instill discipline in the school.

This participant said that the discipline of the learner determined how well he/she did. This, according to him, comes from home and not from the school. He also stated that discipline could be instilled in the school to force good behaviour and thus this good behaviour would result in good results. This can only be driven by the management and principal of the school. So here again, if the principal is effective, it will lead to good learner results. Parents have to encourage and monitor learners whilst they are at home. According to Gonzalez-DeHass (2020), parents can help learners to become more independent and autonomous. If there is an absence of the parent at home, then the teacher and the management of the school are the only forces that can influence the learner. With transformational leaders, they have charisma and charm to influence followers (cf. 2.5). Teachers and learners are followers. They can be motivated by the leader in such a way that they are able to accomplish goals that they never thought were possible, despite the hardships that they may be facing at home.

Participant P1 agreed 100% that the matric pass rate is a reflection of how effective the principal is. She added many points, for example,

I think that the matric pass rate is a reflection because if a leader starts at the beginning of the core grades, for example if you are a primary school leader you must make sure

that the core basics are done in each grade so that by the time the child leaves primary school in my case that they are competent to reach high school.

The most crucial points of her discussion are that the principal should constantly be monitoring what is going on in the school. If something needs to be done to improve the situation, then it should be done by those persons responsible.

Some of the other participants were in agreement with Participant P1. Participant SMT1 stated,

Definitely, I think it all filters down from the head. In terms of the head, if the head is in order it will filter down to the teachers which will filter down to the learners. So, I think that the pass rate is very reflective of the leadership especially the principal of the school.

Participant P3 collaborated and said,

I agree, 100%, because if that principal can put in measures in place in the school as a head and take his teachers to task when they don't do the work, then the results are the principal's domain. It was proved in the school when the ex-principal became the principal and the results changed because he put in measures, you know, made changes and got teachers working and motivating them. These are important things, working with the children as well is important.

Participant SMT2, in agreement with P3, added,

Our matric results have exceptional ranging from 100% to not lower than 95%. Our bachelor rate is extremely high; we are producing excellent matric results. Our matric results are directly linked to manner in which the principal, management and teachers conduct themselves in the school and the way in which the learners conduct themselves as well. Everyone needs to abide by what's in the best interest of the child that is putting education first and foremost.

Participant E2 was of the opinion:

My principal encourages and motivates the learners and by doing all these types of things, the motivation that she gives the learners actually, that is where we are seeing our results in our school. She goes the extra mile to make sure that every learner is seen to.

Participant E1 added,

I would say that the pass rate should reflect on the management and the effectiveness of the principal. Not saying if it is a male or principal but as a whole as a principal. Whether it's a male or female the principals need to make sure that his or her management team is clamping down on teachers, the management team needs to check if the teachers are doing their jobs and education is taking place, i.e. teaching and learning are taking place.

In disagreement with the participants above were these two participants who said that the pass rate did not reflect how effective the principal was. Participant SMT3 disagreed with Participants P1, P3, SMT2, E1 and E2 and made the following statement,

I would beg to differ. No matter how forceful or stern the principal is in the school, it all depends on the learner and parents itself. In the current situation, parents do not play the part of reinforcing skills and knowledge that is presented to them at school level.

Participant P2, in agreement with SMT3, but also in disagreement with P1, P3, SMT2, E1 and E2, collaborated,

No because the principal does not write the exam. The principal is there to ensure that the exams run smoothly and that the curriculum is taught. Just like the management is there to ensure that the curriculum is covered. Ultimately it is the learner who sets the tone, it is the learner who is committed towards studying and doing their work consistently and that's when you get the matric pass rate which I think no you can base it on how effective the principal is.

The transformational leader has great influence over the followers. The transformational leader is a change agent who brings about radical changes in an institution (cf. 2.6). The transformational leader tries, to the best of his/her ability to realise the vision of the institution (cf. 2.2.3.2). This is much needed by the followers because they need to have a sense of purpose. When it comes to the management of the school, they have to work in unison with the principal to achieve the goals of the school. The school's management team is directly responsible for the teachers. The constantly have to monitor what the teachers are doing and if they are coping. When it comes to matric learners, extra effort is put in to ensure that they excel in the external standardised examinations set by the Department of Education in South Africa.

Ultimately, it is the principal who must drive the institution to success. If the leader is not efficient, the school becomes a low-performing school and just another statistic. The female transformational leader has unique traits. Female leaders are seen as nurturing, motherly and compassionate (cf. 1.1). Learners are able to respond better to female principals and thus they are more motivated by them.

4.5.3.3 Factors that can improve a female leader's efficacy

Female leaders have their own style of leadership which is caring and nurturing. Sometimes this sensitive nature is taken for granted, and sometimes female leaders are underestimated. From the interviews conducted, it is evident that female leaders are taking the reins and they are really making an impact in education. Some, however, are still not convinced that females can make good leaders, because they still lack certain qualities. So, does this mean that every male that is put into a leadership position is perfect at what they do?

It is true that women are more caring than males and are able to handle situations better, sometimes because they are more patient. Learners also do not feel intimidated by them and sometimes respond better to them, compared to males. However, there are some issues that came up during the interviews that really need to be considered.

The principal that was interviewed (Participant P1) is a female. She is a successful leader who is seen as a role model to many. She too once upon a time was afraid, harassed and side-lined. However, she refused to accept that.

For me there's been a lot of discrimination. I've applied for many posts and I'm highly qualified for the job and I feel that I'm able to bring out the best and build on growing the institution and keep it moving so it's not a stuck school but in many of the interviews I went for I realized that they were looking for a male because they have that inherent believe that a male is a better principal than a female principal.

According to her, she still had problems, but there was nothing she could not handle, because she had grown and developed and she had enough experience to solve problems confidently. She added that in order for females to be effective they had to be assertive and adaptable to certain situations.

I think you have to be very assertive; you must assess the situation because sometimes you will be in situations where people respect you and listen to you and they do their work. But in certain situations, you'll find that people will not listen to you so you have to adapt your leadership style, if you want to be a transformational leader you can be this one type of leader, you have adjust your leadership style according to the situation and I think that you need to be a good listener, you have to be assertive, you mustn't be like you want the people to know that you are the boss, it's not what will help you to function better but it's about listening to what your constituency wants and to work with them and to be a visionary and listen to what everyone else says. Have constant meetings so that people know what you want and you know what they want and the key is to be assertive when you have to be and as a result your leadership style changes according to the situation.

Participant E2 reaffirmed what Participant P1 stated above,

They should be given an opportunity not to be bullied or harassed in the position that they hold. I think that males should work with them. They should be more generous toward females.

Therefore, despite the many laws and policies implemented by the government, this practice is still prevalent in education and in our country.

A huge problem is that female leaders do not believe in their abilities. They tend to underestimate themselves and they become afraid of delegating duties and speaking out. Many participants had a similar view. Participant SMT1 said,

Number 1 they need to believe in themselves. They need to be firm. They need to do their research. They need to be open to advice of others and in terms of that I think they would be able to do their jobs to the best of their abilities.

Participant was in agreement with SMT1,

Number 1, they need confidence. Number 2, they need to update themselves constantly with policies and the main think is practice what you preach because the people who are under you look to you and they see how you set an example.

Here Participant P2 reaffirmed the idea that women are not confident enough in their positions. Leaders need to be confident in their positions to become role models for

others.

Unlike the participants above, Participant SMT2 said something different. He said that women were in a tough position and even though they were in those positions, they were still mothers, wives, sisters. This means that other than work they still have other duties to perform; hence, they should be supported by their followers and colleagues.

I think to a large extent, have a little of a disadvantage in terms of when they are restricted to household chores, when they have to travel long distances at night, when their place of accommodation is far away from the school, in terms of our countries safety issues etc. so from that point of view they have a little bit of disadvantage not because themselves personally but because of society and the social ills that come with it and hence it important for them to surround themselves with a strong group team that can support them in their weaknesses similar to other members of staff who would have weaknesses and the principal as a leader who supports them, so it's a two way process of give and take, maximizing each person's strength in making the team the strongest that it can hence the principal who is the strongest.

Participant E1 offers a suggestion which suggests that instead of imitating male behaviour, a woman can use her own feminine traits to win over learners. In most cases this works, because learners look at females as a mother figure (cf. 1).

To my experience, female leaders do their jobs to the best of their ability. Everyone is different and everyone's psychology is different and physiology is different. E.g. a man is better at handling discipline in a rugged and stern way where a female can handle the same discipline issue in a calmer and more satirical way.

Participant SMT3 suggested that women should be more authoritative in their approach.

I think to be more authoritative and lead by example.

Maybe the reason for this could be so that others do not take advantage of them. As Participant P1 mentioned, males sometimes think that female principals are not serious when delegating a task.

the males who find it very difficult to take instructions from female principals or from a female leader. They sometimes think we are joking or we are not serious about it. I think the only time they know that we mean business is when we enforce or force whatever it

is to show them. We have to work much harder than a male and you have to apply sanctions for them to listen to you.

According to Participant P3, leaders need to stand up for what they think is right.

A leader is a leader. I think they need to come out more strongly in terms of what they feel is right or wrong and they must be able to stand for those things.

Previously, women have always been oppressed and now that they are in leadership positions they need to be heard.

Women are perceived to be soft and incapable of leading a school (cf. 1.1). This stereotype is slowly disappearing, because more women are proving that they have more than what it takes to be a leader. In South African education, there has been an increase in the number of females in leadership positions (Davids, 2018). A woman does not need muscles to lead a school; she is capable of leading a school with her feminine traits.

However, many participants in this study commented that women should be more assertive and firmer. With the stereotype that was created by society, women are not leaders and they should stay at home and leave the leading to the men. Male teachers do not take women seriously and they become defensive when they have to take instructions from female leaders. This is how society molded them. It is time for them to change their mindsets to allow gender equity and equality to happen. Women also need to build confidence instead of muscles. They too have to change their mindsets to be taken seriously and to be accepted. They should speak out more and equip themselves with skills to deal with every aspect of the school. Followers need to listen to the leader as much as the leader listens to them in order for the leader to be effective (cf. 2.5).

Female principals use their feminine traits to lead efficiently.

4.5.4 Theme 4: The power of femininity

Ideas about gender identity are very powerful. Being a woman or man comes with its own set of characteristics, most often dictated by society, one's parents, media and the group of people who are constantly around one. For women, it is not only about work.

Women are mothers and wives too. With those roles come responsibilities which she needs to balance with work and for men it could be a little more different. However, today's society is changing; so too are the responsibilities of men and women. Women now have become the breadwinners of households. They go to work, come home and take care of their children. Previously, a women's role was to see to her house and raise her children.

Dauids (2018) explains that women's identities as leaders are both informed and inhibited by a range of factors and in order to overcome these factors, they need to shift parameters and perceptions, both in relation to pre-existing tradition, patriarchal norms, as well as their own autonomy and agency.

4.5.4.1 Representation of female leaders in principal posts.

Dall (2019) states,

According to the latest payroll data from the South African Department of Basic Education (DBE), 73 percent of the country's teachers are female, but only 37 percent of the nation's 21 621 principals are – a gap of 35 percentage points.

Mlambo (2014) quotes Minister of Education Peggy Nkonyeni in an article where she states, "Just 36% of the 6248 schools in KwaZulu-Natal had female principals, while only two of the 12 districts were led by women." From the statistics above it is clear that males still dominate leadership positions in schools.

Sinden (2017) states that the reason for the existing gender gap is because there are barriers in the workplace that prevent women from enjoying equal employment (cf. 2). It is also because of apartheid's overtly discriminatory laws. Yes, these laws are just part of history now, but if one looks closely at certain practices, the mentality that was instilled in the people of the past still raises its ugly head. If one looks closely at the appointment of principals, for example, it continues to be shaped by gender biases. The SGB is made up of parents who are part of the community within which the school exists. Some of them, when selecting the principal, use outdated ideas and hence seek a principal who can lead with an iron fist, because they think that these disciplinarians will be more effective than female principals, who are seen as being sensitive, caring

and nurturing (cf. 1).

89% of participants confirmed that they knew females that were currently occupying leadership positions in schools. Participant E3 stated that he did not know any female principals. However, he said that,

To be honest, I've only come across deputy principals not principals.

This is a very important comment, because it confirms ideas that infer that women are given positions close to top, but not actually placed as a head of an institution. According to Mythili (2019), low legitimacy is accorded to women as leaders and this is implied when there are gendered stereotypes, orthodox practices, as well as perceptions of the family, school and society. She further stated that male teachers were promoted to principals in secondary schools, which was above the position of primary school heads to which women teachers were promoted to principals. It could be inferred from this literature that women are not skilled enough to lead secondary schools (Mestry, 2017).

Women are perceived to be incapable of running schools in South Africa because of societies stereotypes (cf. 1.1). Literature proves that there is no difference between male and females or what they are capable of. Rippon (2019) presents studies of the human brain and between the genders there is no significant difference in the brain. However, it is culture that embeds ideas into our brain that determines how we think and act. Mestry (2017) adds that leadership preparation and training are central to school effectiveness and school improvement. Female principals need to upgrade themselves and their qualifications in order to gain more knowledge to become more effective in their positions.

4.5.4.2 Methods implemented by female leaders in schools

Female leaders are definitely making an impact at the schools that they lead. Literature describes women as nurturing, caring and having skills that are unique (cf. 1.2). Mythili, (2019) confirms that popular approaches suggest that women are focused on building relationships with colleagues and they take a more mothering, caring and nurturing approach, especially when it comes to children. This is what literature suggests, but

what exactly is happening in our South African schools today? The nine participants in this study described what female principals are doing currently.

Participant E3,

It's the loving, caring nature of women that comes into play. I feel that learners can become touched by certain caring aspects and behave accordingly. The reward system in school where you give a sweet to the learner who is ill-disciplined and over time, through your love and care those little gifts and rewards can help learners change and discipline can be instilled.

The participant mentioned the traits that women have. These are innate traits that a woman is born with that she uses to her advantage to transform everyone around her.

Participant E3 added,

learners can become touched by certain caring aspects and behave accordingly,

suggesting that she had an effect on the learners through her behaviour. She also mentioned the reward system. At home, mothers adopt the same reward system when their children are good. By her imitating the behaviour used in certain households she reaffirmed the idea that the learner was important and that they would be rewarded if they did something good. Thus, the learner would be motivated to perform better (cf. 2.2.3.2). In his original model, Bass (1985) proposes that transactional leadership has two components, namely management by exception and contingent reward. Teachers can get rewarded by leaders when they do their tasks well. Some teachers can get promotions; others can get gifts or praise. Whatever type of reward they get, it will result in the teacher becoming more motivated and driven to excel (Kauko, Rinne & Takala, 2018). For learners as well, the reward system encourages them to work harder and become more competitive (Duchesne & McMaugh, 2019). The reward system strategy, if implemented correctly without favouritism and bias, can really benefit the female leader to instil trust and motivate the staff and learners to improve.

Participant P1 is a principal at the moment. She responded in detail about the strategies that she was implementing at the moment to take her school forward.

They are visionary and their leadership style changes according to the situation.

Participant SMT1,

Firstly, they give everybody an opportunity. They do their research. They also provide information to their subordinates, conduct workshops, have meetings, share their knowledge and skills and information and I think that that is what has led to school improvement.

Participant P2,

Many methods. To ensure functionality of the school. My principal ensures that there's a full staff compliment. She ensures that teaching and learning is happening every day. She ensures that if teachers are absent syllabus still continues, that classroom and children are taken care of.

Participant SMT2,

Some of the main things that they implemented is allowing the people with specific strengths to lead those individual events.

Participant E2,

A lot. There is a variety of methods that they have used. Discipline, they know how to tackle the learners. Discipline in certain schools is a serious problem and when these principals deal with the problem you can see how these principals eradicate these kinds of problems. They use different methods to do it.

Participant E1,

The change from writing on the chalkboard to white board learning. Interface with learners. Teambuilding with educators. Socialization, providing positive change with educators.

Participant SMT3:

by delegating with people who have skills to provide the best situation or functionality of the school.

Participant P3 added,

I would not know because I have not interacted with them. But I know from what I've seen is that they are engaging with the community, with community leaders. They have been getting the community to be actively involved in their schools. They have been getting the confidence of the teachers, either male or female, there was no discrimination in those parts.

Women tend to behave differently, compared to their male counterparts. They are more understanding and are able to converse and socialise more with their subordinates. This leads to mutual trust within an organisation and the followers feel that the female leader is approachable and working with her becomes easier (cf. 2.2.4). For learners, the female leader is seen as a mother figure, because her approach towards them is kind, nurturing and understanding. They are able to relate to her and achieve learning outcomes that were never thought possible or is higher than expected (cf. 1.1).

4.5.4.3 Suggestions for aspiring future female leaders

According to Wills in Africa Check (2018), there has been a 2% increase in the number of female principals employed in South African schools from 2004 to 2016 (cf. 2). This seems like an insignificant increase in the education system; however, it seems to be a positive change especially for women. Female teachers dominate the teaching profession, according to Minister of Education, Angie Motshega (cf. 2), but they do not reach principal posts. The reason for this problem has been mentioned above. It was imperative for me to find out what suggestions teachers had for females who would like to become principals in the future.

Participant E3,

I think we need to go to the time when discipline was strict. I feel that we are losing our discipline in South African schools so the whole educational process is falling and as a result results are also falling so instill discipline in schools and also model successful leaders and principals from the past. Empower yourself always and develop. In schools I think it's important to develop learners by giving them responsibilities and a sense of purpose.

Participant P1, in agreement with E3, concurred,

Sometimes as a female exercise your authority. Leadership is about how you can lead in a certain situation and if there's a male that shows you respect and kindness you are going to react in the same way. I think you should never be intimidated and think that you should make your mark and change the way the school is led with your femininity. You don't have to get all the qualities of being a masculine leader.

Participant SMT1 said,

Definitely, number 1, they have to develop a thick skin. Be open to criticism. To not be afraid to speak out and I think to work hard and I'm sure that they would succeed.

Participant SMT1 encouraged women not to stay in the box that society placed them in. In the past, girls and women had to be quiet as a sign of respect, but now she was encouraging them to speak out and go for what they want. When she spoke about “developing a thick skin”, it can be inferred that she wanted women to be stronger emotionally and take each challenge head-on.

Participant P2,

Don't be afraid. Sometimes when the posts come up you think twice because you think about your family and the time and the strain that goes with it but if you are capable why not apply?

Participant P2 had a similar suggestion as P1 and SMT1, where she said that women should not be afraid to apply for those leadership positions.

Participant SMT2,

Yes, my advice to them would be that they need to get involved in all aspects of the running of the school, in particular when it comes to the maintenance and labour issues and so on. I think that the weakest point when it comes to a female principal is perhaps when it comes to the maintenance of buildings and furniture etc. It is historically a man's job to know about maintenance and repairs and development of a school and as such when females get to understand it will be a strong point in their advantage.

Here again, Participant SMT2 wanted women to get out of the gender stereotype that

society has placed them in. When it comes to maintenance issues especially, these jobs are done by male teachers only because they have the knowhow, but Participant SMT2 stated that women should learn about these things so they did not have to rely on their male counterparts. Women are sometimes afraid to apply for principal posts because they feel they lack the necessary skills.

Participant E2, in agreement with SMT 2 and P3, stated,

The need to work hard and be dedicated and faithful in their jobs.

She made a suggestion that is valid. Women work so hard towards getting a principal post, and then finally when they get it they are overwhelmed and confused and do not know how to handle the post. She encouraged women to work constantly in order to be successful.

Participant E1, in agreement with P1, stated,

Yes, they should follow their dreams. They must not feel put down by the stigma that males are only allowed to rule those types of leadership roles and a female is as and is equal to a male.

Reaffirming what the other participants said, Participant E1 encouraged women to forget about the stigmas created by society. Women in general need to realise that they are equal to men and should try whatever in their lives to empower themselves.

Participant SMT3, who was in agreement with P2,

To be more authoritative and to put themselves out there.

Participant SMT3 encouraged women to lead with an iron fist. He emphasised that they should be authoritative and make their presence known.

Participant P3, who is in agreement with P2 and SMT3, stated

Yes. Be more out there. Take initiative to work and don't shy away from accepting responsibilities.

Participant P3 also agreed with SMT3, stating that women needed to make their presence known. They needed to step up and take the initiative to do more and do it

well.

Although measures have been put in place by the government of South Africa to close the gender gap, there are far more issues that need to be sorted out before that can happen. One pressing issue is that women need to change their mindsets from what society wants them to be to what they want to be. Many women dream of becoming leaders, but the ideas that society has embedded in their brains are so deep, that they believe that only men should lead schools (cf. 2.5). Women also lack the confidence to lead. They are not assertive enough. When they do become firm and assertive, men become defensive and try to get the women out of her post. There are few mentors that female leaders can turn to in times of crises; thus, women just give up (cf. 2.5).

Data were also collected from the documents that I collected from the schools. This was important to support the data collected from the interviews.

4.6 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Documents were also used by me to collect pertinent information regarding the school leader and how effective they are in the school. I used documents as a source of data. This is known as document analysis. Written documents may allow traces of everyday as on institutional lived to be accessed beyond the single participant's view and report. I was given documents from one of the schools only, but at the other schools these documents were classified as confidential. However, I had a chance to read some of the documents. Photos were also collected to be recorded as evidence to state the particular state of the school during the study.

4.6.1 Minutes of Meeting

At all three schools it was evident that the correct procedures were followed when it came to meetings. Firstly, all the meetings were documented. Staff meetings were chaired by the principal. Other meetings like SGB meetings took place with its full complement, e.g. SGB chairperson, teacher representative, learner representative, principal, treasurer and secretary. All stakeholders were given an opportunity to give their views of how the goals and vision of the organisation could be achieved. Because

each member represented different groups of stakeholders, they were able to give suggestions from different views. Participant P1 stated,

A vision an ideal leader has is not only his or her own vision it is a shared vision. A vision that is built collaboratively (cf. 1.3).

Participant P2 described an ideal leader as

one that is democratic, but should be more of person that others can follow (cf. 1.12.1).

Participant P3, in agreement with Participant P1, stated,

An ideal leader is a person who should have a vision. For me that is most important and be able to see that vision through (cf. 2.2.5).

Blane (2017) describes transformational leaders not as leaders who are not intimidated by smart employees, nor are they overwhelmed by their day-to-day tasks. They recognise that employees need and seek opportunities for growth and thus they create new opportunities.

Hughes and Ferrie (2015:79) present six major attributes that make up a leader's personal portfolio, which will help to contribute to success:

1. Character – Sense of trustworthiness, integrity, empathy, conscientiousness, fairness, self-awareness and self-esteem.
2. Drive – Achievement orientation, desire to win, confidence in one's ability to be successful.
3. Social Skills – Ability to form relationships and work well and through people.
4. Smarts – Intelligence, experience and cognitive ability.
5. Passion – The motivation and desire to create a sense of meaning and purpose, the love of the job and what one believe one's team is capable of achieving.
6. Style – Style is a combination of the above factors that bring certain strengths or limitations to the surface in a particular work or interpersonal approach.

4.6.2 Attendance register

I found this to be important to evaluate the situation regarding the gender distribution

among L1 educators as well as those on the SMT. The number of male teachers versus the number of female teachers will clearly show if the gender gap exists in schools. Female teachers dominate teaching posts in primary schools. The reason for this is that women are seen as incapable of managing a high school. According to Mashiya (2014), men do not work in primary schools because of the persistent cultural and social bias against men working with young children. The attendance register is a live representation of the teachers that are employed by the school.

4.6.3 Photographs

The state of the school clearly shows whether the leader is effective or not. At School A, there were big posters of leaders on the walls. Two of the three posters were of women. This means that females are being elevated at the school (cf. 2.5). A transformational leader often passes on values to their followers. In this case, women are elevated for children to learn how to respect them, thus breaking societal gender stereotypes that women are not successful. This teaches learners that women are successful and that they should be respected. Glazzard and Bligh (2018) state that posters are put up at schools to convey messages to learners. At this school, the mission and vision of the school are clearly stated and clearly visible. This serves as a constant reminder for the staff, learners and parents of what the goals of the schools are. The buildings and gardens are impeccably neat, clean and well maintained. The learners' achievements are neatly pinned on the notice board together with newspaper clippings of what the school has achieved.

Participant P1 stated that,

it is also to realise is not what you know it's what others know and we want the children to bring out their potential and you try to motivate your staff and the staff tries to motivate the learners to bring out the best in each one of them (cf. 2.2.5, Schnackenberg & Simard, 2019).

Participant SMT1 agreed that the principal constantly worked with all stakeholders to ensure that the vision of the school was realised.

She's constantly monitoring everyone in terms of what they do to ensure that it done to the best of their ability (cf. 2.2.5).

Participant E3 is in agreement, stating that the principal focused on strengthening the staff to perform to the best of their ability to create whole-school improvement (Hughes & Ferrie, 2015).

Teambuilding with educators. Socialisation, providing positive change with educators.

School B was also very neat and well maintained. Even though it is a high school, there was not any graffiti present, nor was there any rubbish to be seen anywhere. The achievements of the learners and of the school were also put up on the notice board. As soon as one enters the car park, the new school hall is visible. This hall was built solely by the finances raised through many fundraising activities. This hall will be used to generate more funds that will be used to assist learners in the betterment of education.

Participant P2 stated that her principal went the extra mile to ensure that everything was taken care of on a daily basis.

She ensures that daily things such as electricity is working or resources are there for the children that they could use.

This shows that the principal is working for the betterment of the institution on a whole to ensure that the school is improving (cf. 2). By displaying the achievements of the learners and staff, it shows that she is being effective in her position and that the school is improving.

Participant SMT2 agreed with P2, stating that the principal led in such a way that she changed and adapted so that her leadership styles were aligned with the needs of the learners and the institution to lead to whole-school improvement.

She's changing and adapting to the needs of the learners (cf. 2.2.3).

Baporikar and Sony (2020) confirm this idea, because transformational leaders ensure that continuous improvement takes place.

Participant E2 stated,

She goes the extra mile to make sure that every learner is seen to.

Transformational leaders like these make an extra effort to provide encouragement and

motivation to learners and teachers to empower to work to the best of their ability and achieve what they do not think is possible (Hughes & Ferrie, 2015). For example, the school hall was built, which was a vision that the school had had for many years. It was finally built with the help of staff and learners. More credit must be given to the principal, though, who made sure that enough motivation was given to achieve this (cf. 2.2.2). This hall also will benefit the school because it will bring in revenue that will help the school to buy books and other resources to aid in delivering quality education.

School C was also well maintained and neat. Unlike the other two schools, this school had a security guard at the gate trying to control parents and learners. There were also cameras present. It could be that extra precautions had to be taken because of its location. The school's achievements were also clearly visible. On the notice board were also letters from the principal regarding issues such as school fees and start and end times of the terms.

Participant P3,

Principals can put in measures in place in the school as a head and take his teachers to task when they don't do the work, then the results are the principal's domain. It was proved in the school when the ex-principal became the principal and the results changed because he put in measures, you know, made changes and got teachers working and motivating them.

Principals are all different. When one principal leaves, it is hard for the next principal to lead in the exact same manner. At this school, the principal was recently assigned. The previous principal was such a transformational leader that his influence could be seen in the learners results and the level of motivation among teachers (Sheninger & Murray, 2017). This school excelled at almost everything when that principal was there. He was on the top of everything and he cared about the teachers and learners (cf. 2.1).

Participant SMT3,

No matter how forceful or stern the principal is in the school, it all depends on the learner and parents itself. In the current situation, parents do not play the part of reinforcing skills and knowledge that is presented to them at school level.

I think that from this statement made by Participant SMT3, teaching is losing the battle with learners, maybe because of discipline at this school. It is clear that the principal is stern, but more is needed from parents to assist when it comes to the discipline of the learners (cf. 1.3). *The South African School's Act 84 of 1996* clearly states that discipline needs to be maintained in order for education to flourish. Provisions are put in place by the Act that ensures that ill-discipline in school has to be handled by the appropriate bodies in the stipulated process, ensuring that the action taken against the learner does not violate his/her rights, nor is it too lenient.

During the interview, Participant E3 was in agreement with Participant SMT3, who mentioned many aspects relating to the discipline at school; therefore, one can infer that there is a discipline problem at this school, as they take so many precautions to ensure the safety of the learners and teachers.

Principals play a vital role in the process in which they can also instil discipline in the school ...The reward system in school where you give a sweet to the learner who is ill-disciplined and over time, through your love and care those little gifts and rewards can help learners change and discipline can be instilled ... I think we need to go to the time when discipline was strict. I feel that we are losing our discipline in South African schools so the whole educational process is falling and as a result results are also falling so instil discipline in schools and also model successful leaders and principals from the past (cf. 1.3).

According to Ngoqo, Foncha and Abongdia (2018), discipline problems are escalating in South African schools and is becoming frustrating for teachers and leaders.

4.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the research results were analyzed, interpreted and synthesised. The results were discussed and synthesised and the pertinent issues involving female transformational leaders in schools in the uMgungundlovu District was brought to light. According to Naidoo (2013), research pertaining to female transformational leadership in South Africa is still limited (cf. 2.7). Therefore, it was my intention to elicit and deliver as much information as possible from the population that I chose to study.

Four themes were identified from the literature as well as the face-to-face interviews and

document analysis. They gave insight to the role of female principals as transformational leaders to improve schools in the uMgungundlovu District, KwaZulu-Natal. The themes and sub-themes are as follows:

THEME 1 – TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Sub-theme 1 – Transformation – A collective ideal

Sub-theme 2 – Perceptions of an ideal leader

Sub-theme 3 – Empowerment of teachers

THEME 2 – BARRIERS AND DISCRIMINATION

Sub-theme 1 – The reality of gender discrimination in South African schools

Sub-theme 2 – Factors resulting in gender discrimination

Sub-theme 3 – Parties responsible for discriminatory practices

THEME 3 – SKILLS VS EFFICIENCY

Sub-theme 1 – Men’s skills vs Women’s skills

Sub-theme 2 – Fruits of labour

Sub-theme 3 – Factors that can improve a female leader’s efficacy

THEME 4 – THE POWER OF FEMININITY

Sub-theme 1 – Representation of female leaders in principal posts

Sub-theme 2 – Methods implemented by female leaders in schools

Sub-theme 3 – Suggestions for aspiring future female leaders

The final chapter of my study will synthesise and consolidate the finding of the study by providing a summary, making recommendations and drawing conclusions.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to determine how the current practices of female principals at schools contribute to the purpose of this chapter is to present the summary, findings and effectiveness of the school. The sub-research questions of the study were:

What is transformational leadership?

Why is there discrimination against females to be leaders at schools?

Which skills and knowledge, does the female principal as transformational leader need in order to lead the school towards improvement?

Which practices by female principals at schools contribute to the effectiveness of the school?

These research sub-questions will be discussed in detail in the research conclusions of this chapter.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 introduced the study by providing information pertaining to the background of the study (cf. 1.2). A brief preliminary literature review (cf. 1.3) was outlined. Research was conducted using empirical evidence. The rationale of the study aimed to document the coping strategies and leadership styles used by female principals in the uMgungundlovu District that have transformed their schools to 21st-century learning institutions (cf. 1.4). The main aim of this study was to determine how the current practices of female principals at schools contribute to the effectiveness of the school. The problem statement was also presented (cf. 1.5). Furthermore, the study aimed to provide insight into the challenges faced by female leaders on a daily basis in their positions that they hold and to make recommendations towards the findings that may

bring about improvement to establish strategies to assist female principals in leadership positions (cf. 1.7.).

Chapter 2 provided a literature study, which created the basis for the creation of the relevant research questions presented in the interview schedule. Literature pertaining to the concept of transformational leadership, trends in South African education focusing on females in leadership positions as well as the impact of South African female leaders in education were studied, analyzed and compared. An introduction to the challenges was given based on recent literature (cf. 2.1). A theoretical framework presented the concept of transformational leadership which focused on Bass's theory of Transformational leadership. Trends in other countries were also explored so that it could be compared to those in South African education (cf. 2.3.). The current state and trends in South African education were discussed in this chapter (cf. 2.5.).

Chapter 3 described the research methodology and strategy used to conduct this study (cf. 3.3.). The research design and research paradigm were explained (cf. 3.2.). A qualitative approach was used in the study (cf. 3.4.). The sample comprised three schools in the uMgungundlovu District in the KwaZulu-Natal Province (cf. 3.6.). The schools were purposefully selected to provide the phenomenon being investigated. Purposeful sampling was used (cf. 1.8.2.). The sample population consisted of nine participants from three different schools (cf. 3.7.). Consent was obtained from all nine participants and their participation was entirely voluntary (cf. 3.11.). Before data were collected from the participants, clearance was obtained from the UNISA Ethics Committee (cf. 1.10.). I used face-to-face interviews and document analysis as an instrument for data collection (cf. 3.9.). I used a hi-tech digital voice recorder to ensure that recorded audio was of the highest quality. Data were transcribed where after themes were identified. The data analysis and presentation were discussed in Chapter 4 of this study. Coding was done manually without using computer software. Trustworthiness and credibility of the study were also discussed (cf. 3.10.).

Instruments for data collection were mentioned as face-to-face interviews and document analysis (cf. 4.1). The four main themes were identified and presented (cf. 4.1) a brief overview of the uMgungundlovu Education District as a study setting was given (cf. 4.2).

The uMgungundlovu Area was introduced with a brief description (cf. 4.3). Data analysis and interpretation were done using data collected from the above-mentioned instruments. They were presented using themes and sub-themes, which were discussed in detail (cf. 4.5.1-4.5.4). Data obtained from document retrieval were also discussed, analyzed and interpreted (cf. 4.6). Minutes of meetings (cf. 4.6.1), attendance registers (cf. 4.6.2) and photographs (cf. 4.6.3) were used for the purpose of this study. A conclusion of the chapter was supplied to conclude this section of this study (cf. 4.7). Quotations from participant transcriptions were used to ensure a guarantee in terms of trustworthiness of the study.

Chapter 5 presents a summary of the main findings of the study. It also shows how the findings of the study are aligned with the main aim, objectives and research questions (cf. 1.6, 3.2). Recommendations are discussed in line with the role of female transformational leaders to improve South African education. In Chapter 1, I aimed to find out if the perceptions of males regarding female leaders have changed. I also explored the challenges that female leaders face on a daily basis in their leadership positions and at the same time I took the opportunity to document the coping strategies that female leaders use in schools to improve and develop schools. Avenues for future research were also identified, followed by the conclusion of this study.

The findings of this study will be presented in the next section.

5.3 THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study will be discussed in order to answer the sub-questions of my study (cf. 1.5).

5.3.1 Sub-question 1: *What is transformational leadership?*

Literature describes transformational leadership as the process that changes and transforms people; hence, a relationship is formed between the leader and the followers (cf. 2.2.1). All nine participants in this study agreed that there is a need for transformation in schools for the purpose of improvement (cf. 4.5.1.2). All nine participants were in agreement that either they or their principals were transformational leaders (cf. 4.5.1.2). The participants from School A and School B mentioned that their

principal was constantly trying to transform the school to achieve its vision by empowering teachers to develop professionally through creating opportunities for them. The participants of School C mentioned that their principal created opportunities; however, change was not constant or continuous; it happened occasionally. The three males from School C still had the old school of thought regarding what an ideal is. Participant SMT3 said that the leader should be the person behind the wheel, so it can be inferred that he wanted this person to take control. He stated,

It was a norm that men are the driving force and leaders.

He mentioned it as if it were a thing of the past, but here he stated that that was what he perceived to be the ideal. Again, it can be inferred that his perceptions of a leader is limited to men only. Participant P3, who is at the same school, also suggested that a leader should be able to delegate duties properly. This differs from what the female principals do, because they focus on empowerment rather than delegation. Participant E3 also spoke about delegation, and that it should be fair and unbiased. The responses from School C suggest that opportunities are created for their staff. However, it does not suggest that professional growth and development are the result; instead, it can be assumed that opportunities are created for task completion as a result of delegation. The principals from School A and School B are female and the principal from School C is male.

Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) provide characteristics, traits and leadership styles of transformational leaders. Two of the three principals in my study are female. According to the data collected from the participants, characteristics, qualities, skills and traits of these female principals are very similar to what Burns and Bass describe. For example, these two principals lead by example. They empower followers to such an extent that they achieved goals they did not think was possible. Tasks are delegated according to the individual growth needs of the individual follower. They value contributions made by individuals. These principals monitor followers. They have a vision for their schools, which is now shared by their followers (cf. 4.5.1.2).

My study claims that these female principals possess more qualities than initially stated in existing literature. My study found that women have an instinct that is similar to a maternal instinct, namely to be protective of their subordinates and learners just as a mother is of her child. Gibbens (2018) explains that when women feel like this, a hormone called oxytocin is released; thus resulting in neuroendocrinological transformations, which result in her behaviour. They make extra effort to ensure that their children or subordinates they are satisfied all the time and if they are not, the women try their best to do so. Hence, they are emotionally sensitive to the needs of the institution, which in turn increases their passion to lead efficiently (cf. 4.5.1.2). This point is important for my study, because it shows that women are unique and thus their leadership style differs from that of men in leadership. Women make more effort to ensure that a school is managed efficiently, which results in whole-school improvement. Participants of School A and School B mentioned that their principals went the extra mile to ensure that even simple things like teacher absenteeism is seen to directly by the principal (cf. 4.5.1.2). The new generation of female leaders are more open with their colleagues. This openness results in relationships built on trust and mutual respect. In contrast to this style, male leaders still lead by using the old style of leadership, which is command and control.

Female leaders currently do not adopt this approach. Instead, they come across as being compassionate, understanding, accommodating, empowering and a catalyst for change (cf. 4.5.1.4; 4.5.3.2). According to Williams (2019), the 'Great Woman' theory leadership describes female leaders as 'collaborative, cooperative, supportive and understanding'. From my study, I also found that female leaders do not try to be better than men; instead, they try to acquire the skills they are lacking to become more efficient in their jobs.

Zenger and Folkman (2019) reveal that the outcome of their studies confirmed that women often underestimate their skills and abilities. Men, on the other hand, are over-ambitious and over-confident, but the results show that women are more efficient in every hierarchical and functional level in an organisation. So, I would make the assumption that female leaders do not lead to boost their ego; instead, to lead to create

better schools by constant cooperation and socialisation with staff. Lewsey (2018) comments that women do not emulate the attributes the male. Lewis and Malmgren (2019) conducted an experiment where female leaders were injected with testosterone. The findings were that the women became more egocentric and less attuned to the needs of the group, thus disrupting their ability to work together.

Although the female principals at School A and School B do so much, they still have time to empower teachers. Participant SMT1 stated,

She also gives opportunities to others to be empowered and become leaders themselves.

Middleton (2016) also mentions that women leaders have a more intuitive response to trust and openness to change, compared to men; thus, they will do whatever it takes to build trusting relationships with subordinates (cf. 1.3;1.11; 2.1).

Transformational leaders lead with charisma (cf. 2.4). Charisma relates to charm and deception (cf. 2.2.2). On the contrary, the two female principals from School A and School B lead from their hearts. It is more about their character that is displayed in their leadership ability than charisma. The female principals of School A and School B are so determined. Women are driven to succeed. They are calculating and thorough in their planning (Miller, 2019). This is important for leadership, because as stated earlier in this research (cf. 2.4), leaders are goal driven. They motivate their staff to obtain goals so that the vision and mission of the schools can be realised. They do not fool followers into believing in what they want them to believe; instead, they mentor followers through motivation to realize their self-worth (cf. 1.2, 2.5). The two female principals of School A and School B work collaboratively with their followers. They do not create unrealistic goals for them, nor do they create opportunities merely for task completion; instead, they empower teachers by teaching them skills for professional development.

They also empower them by making them leaders within departments; thus, teachers feel empowered and they work autonomously to improve the institution (cf. 2.2.1). I found this to be a crucial part of my study, because I want to create an awareness that female traits that were previously seen as weaknesses are now becoming their strength

(cf. 1.1; 1.2). For example, the principal of School A speaks about her own experience and states that when a teacher experiences problems, sanctions cannot be imposed against that teacher. Instead, she sits down with the teacher and sees how best that teacher can be assisted so that the advancement of the institution is not affected.

Can't stress them out, you can't adopt a strict strategy because they have problems. They may come in late or they are sick or they are absent. You can't just clinically just adopt these sanctions and whatever. you need to sit with them, listen to them, understand them and see together how to help that person. You need to work collaboratively with the learners, the teachers the SGB, the parents, the educators in order to ensure whole school improvement and to get the staff to move forward to get you school to move forward (cf. 4.6.1, 4.5.1.3.1).

5.3.2 Sub-question 2: *Why is there discrimination against female leaders at schools?*

Existing literature blames patriarchy in South Africa for the discrimination towards female leaders in South Africa, stating that leadership positions are reserved for men because men have the ability and skills to lead (cf. 1.4 and 2.7). I find this a poor excuse, because if one looks at the family situation in South Africa, very few households have both biological parents present. Hall and Mokomane (n.d.) confirm that both the 2011 Census and the 2016 Community Survey found that 41% of all households in South Africa were headed by females. The findings of Chapter 4 concur with this notion, where the participants blamed society for this gender stereotype that men are better leaders.

Participant E2,

Probably because of the old orthodox belief where females need to be at home, they not supposed to be working and that's why there is so much of discrimination, it's always where the males are given the upper hand and all the privileges.

Participant SMT 1,

I think that it is the mindset. I think that a lot of the people come from the old school and they believe that men should be in the forefront of leadership, and that women have a

place and that place is at home, so when they look at a woman, they don't see them as equals but rather see them as subordinates, so they don't take them seriously and that's the issue and that's the main reason for discrimination.

Participant P2,

I think it is the other older males are so staunch in the old system where they would prefer not to take any authority or instructions from younger females”.

Participant E1,

I feel that we still have that stigma that leadership should be male dominant so males still feel that females cannot handle discipline with learners or with human resource issues when it comes to managing the school”.

Women are found to be different to men in the way that they function. They appear to be timid, soft, nurturing, caring and compassionate, to name a few example (cf. 1.2; 1.3). Seely (2017) states that women become like this because they are moulded by society to function in a certain way to oppress them and keep them in their place. To date, both women and men perceive women to be weak leaders (cf. 1.3). This is the reason for the gender gap in South Africa. Women themselves lack the confidence to lead; men, on the other hand, come across as being over-confident (Bashevkin, 2018). When women are perceived to be weak, they are not given leadership positions in schools, because they seem incapable of managing learners, especially in high schools. Hence, women get frustrated and tired of applying for jobs as principals. Women are still underrepresented in leadership positions in South Africa (cf. 1.8; 2.5; 4.5.2.2). Participant P1 mentioned that she had applied for many leadership posts but was unsuccessful. She blamed the interview committees for being biased against women and commented,

So, it's happened and when it comes to the Department of Education posts the same thing has happened. They will choose male even though the male is not highly qualified and they don't look at your ability transform, competencies, your skills. They go by the fact that you are male or female”

Rink, Stoker, Ryan, Steffens and Nederveen (2019) also confirm that men are favoured by their gender when it comes to leadership positions. From my own experience as a governing body chairperson, when the interviews were held and leaders appointed, no reports regarding the gender of the successful candidate were required by the Department of Education. Only the name and score of the applicant were recorded. When these applicants apply for posts, they have to rank which post which they want the most. This means that the Department of Education has the final say as to who will be appointed to that post.

5.3.3 Sub-question 3: *Which skills and knowledge does the female principal as a transformational leader need to lead the school towards improvement?*

In my study I found that 89% of the nine participants commented that women and men do not need different skills to lead a school. Women are seen as weak managers and lack authority and as a result they are not able to cope with leadership tasks (cf. 1.1.1). However, two pertinent issues regarding the skills that a woman should have to manage a school and improve it were brought to light.

5.3.3.1 Communication skills

In my study, I noticed from the responses that women are afraid to communicate. Perhaps it could be due to the gender stereotype they could be stuck in, or it could be that they lack the confidence to speak out regarding issues that concern them (cf. 2.5). Bush, Bell and Middleton (2019) state that women have a lack of confidence. The lack of confidence is considered to be internal barrier. They explain that this internal barrier is self-imposed due to the fear of failure or success and of unknown territories. During the interviews, some of the responses were:

Participant E3,

Empower yourself always and develop.

Participant P1,

I think the only time they know that we mean business is when we enforce or force whatever it is to show them. We have to work much harder than a male and you have to

apply sanctions for them to listen to you.

Participant SMT1,

I think that women themselves don't believe in themselves enough. They don't take enough authority. They don't empower themselves. So they allow themselves to be exploited, they allow themselves to be brought down ... In terms of skills I would say not, I think that they need to be more empowered. So I think running the school they need more communication, and also just to familiarize themselves with ... To not be afraid to speak out and I think to work.

Participant P2,

Don't be afraid. Sometimes when the posts come up you think twice because you think about your family and the time and the strain that goes with it but if you are capable why not apply?

Participant SMT 2,

They need to get involved in all aspects of the running of the school.

Participant E2,

They should be given an opportunity not to be bullied or harassed in the position that they hold.

Participant SMT 3,

To be more authoritative and to put themselves out there.

Participant P3,

Women tend to shy away from doing it and its always the male that wants to come forward and do it. They rather sit in the background and not want to take that role. Certain women the fall back and they don't fight for what is right and what they need to do. They just passive in everything.

Women also do not see themselves as leaders. They feel comfortable in positions where they do not take a stand. They are submissive, passive followers. Women need to join professional learning communities so that they can interact with other female

principals, discuss their challenges and learn about strategies that they can implement at their schools in order to be stronger leaders. This information will also empower female leaders and build their confidence to function effectively (cf. 2.6). The male teachers at School C complained that the females at their school did not take a stand. According to these male teachers, the women were also comfortable in their positions and they did not take the initiative to do anything. They lacked the confidence to lead (cf. 4.5.2.1). They also did not have mentors available to teach them how to become effective leaders.

Other women often also do not perceive women to be good leaders because they are not assertive enough to lead. Some of the female participants in my study want females to be assertive and firm in order to be efficient leaders. My study found that women efficiently manage their schools, and in the process they empower and build future female leaders. Tappin and Marinnovic (2017) report that these women belong to Generation X and have been exposed to more equality in their families and in the communities in which they live. Generation X female leaders have higher levels of confidence to bring their 'feminine' qualities to the workplace. They tend to operate with the notion that women are equals and not followers or subordinates. Principals of School A and School B operate as equals to their counterparts. They also promote this idea amongst their staff and learners. The female leaders at School A and School B are also trying to empower females in general to change the mindset of our future society. Spiker (2019) comments that women in leadership positions have a positive multiplier effect because they become role models for other women; hence, it contributes to modify social, cultural and economic attitudes.

5.3.3.2 Lack of 'man skills'

Men were placed in leadership positions because they were men and they were perceived as being able to do any job, like, repairing, charming followers, and leading with an iron fist. Participant P1 of my study spoke about procurement and how women had to learn these skills in order to be efficient leaders and improve their schools.

The job of the principal is not only to monitor the curriculum, it's about procurement, it's about tendering, it's about painting, it's about marking the grounds, it's about fixing

toilets, it's about water leaks, repairs and renovations, its endless and in the society that we live in, it's a man's forte. So for me I had to really acquire these skills on what do you do if you need a plumbing job or if you need procurement. At the moment the school is under renovations and we have a total female management but we had to learn about procurement and what is it that you need to repair and renovate an entire block. If you are a wife its generally the job of a man.

If women do not learn these skills, they are perceived as being weak and incapable of managing a school (cf. 1.1;1.2; 1.3). If women learn these skills, they stand a better chance of securing leadership positions and contribute to the improvement and development of schools. Participant SMT2 also mentioned this point, stating,

They need to get involved in all aspects of the running of the school, in particular when it comes to the maintenance and labour issues and so on. I think that the weakest point when it comes to a female principal is perhaps when it comes to the maintenance of buildings and furniture etc. It is historically a man's job to know about maintenance and repairs and development of a school and as such when females get to understand it will be a strong point in their advantage.

In my study I found that the principal of School B had clearly acquired these skills; hence, according to all three participants from her school, she is seen as an effective leader who is on the top of everything. She leads by example and she is actively involved in all aspects in the improvement of the school. This ties up with the qualities of an effective transformational leader discussed in Chapter 2 of my study. (cf. 1.12.1; 2.2.1; 2.2.3) Participant P2 states,

She ensures that daily things such as electricity is working or resources are there for the children that they could use.

5.3.4 Sub-question 4: Which practices by female principals at schools contribute to the effectiveness of the school?

My study found that female leaders are becoming proactive in their approach to leadership. They use many strategies to deal with everyday problems and they get involved with every aspect of the school. They also involve stakeholders to be part of the school to contribute to its improvement.

5.3.4.1 *Feminine qualities*

Women use their feminine qualities to deal with issues like discipline. Learners respond better to females because women have a motherly instinct (cf. 1.1; 1.2).

Participant E3,

It's the loving caring nature of women that comes into play. I feel that learners can become touched by certain caring aspects and behave accordingly. The reward system in school where you give a sweet to the learner who is ill-disciplined and over time, through your love and care those little gifts and rewards can help learners change and discipline can be instilled.

Participant E2,

Discipline, they know how to tackle the learners. Discipline in certain schools is a serious problem and when these principals deal with the problem you can see how these principals eradicate these kinds of problems.

In my study I found that what is seen as a weakness by society is the strength of leadership currently. Previously, schools did not want females as principals, because they were seen to be too sensitive and lacked sternness and authority (cf. 1.1). Society felt comfortable with women sitting at home, caring for their children. Men were regarded as the breadwinners; moreover, men were seen as leaders. Statistics show that women dominate the teaching arena, but only few of those female principals reach leadership positions, especially in high schools (cf. 2.5).

During this study, from document analysis – the photographs to be specific – I found that School A and School B differed a little from School C. It was evident that there was a discipline problem at School C, because all three participants of this school mentioned it. There is a male principal at the school. School A and School B; however, looked different. These schools were beautiful and neat. There were cameras present at all three schools. There was a security guard at School C only. There was also graffiti present at School C. School A and School B were impeccably clean. I would make the assumption that if I compare the discipline of the learners based on the visual evidence, I can infer that the discipline is much better at School A and School B.

I would like to also mention that although it is the ideal perception that a leader should be firm and assertive, this study found that these two principals of School A and School B use their caring, patience, encouragement and positivity to steer the institution towards improvement. Thus, discipline is not a big issue at their schools. This is important, because followers chose to follow the leader because of particular qualities that the leader has. When leaders lead with sincerity and trust, it creates a meaningful relationship and thus this leadership is responsible for causing change in followers and also in the social systems. Thus, learners who see the principal as professional, hardworking, caring and compassionate will also follow her example and behave in that way. This happens at School A and School B; therefore, they experience fewer discipline problems (cf. 2.2.1).

5.3.4.2 Involvement of stakeholders to improve schools

The school functions in the community within which it exists. The learners most often come from the surrounding areas. For a school to function well, the principal needs to take into account the values and norms of the society within which it exists. Parents can contribute to the improvement of the school. When it comes to discipline issues, for example, parents can instil discipline at home if they are in constant contact with the school. The school can also acquire many resources from parents and other stakeholders in the community and thus improve teaching and learning at the school. The two female principals of School A and School B also liaised with the local police department, which comes to school to give motivational talks and to keep an eye on the discipline at their schools. This has also resulted in fewer discipline problems and an improvement in the daily functioning of the school. Participant P1 stated,

For whole school improvement you can't only improve your school from within, you have key stakeholders from outside the school who will come into your school and help you to improve. In order for us to move forward we had to get people from outside to assist us.

Participant P3 commented,

that they are engaging with the community, with community leaders. They have been getting the community to be actively involved in their schools. They have been getting the confidence of the teachers, either male or female, there was no discrimination in

those parts. Those are the things that transform most of the schools that I know of.

Williamson and Blackburn (2020) mention that involving all stakeholders builds greater commitment to change at a school. Women are more consultative in their approach to leadership. Their consultative abilities are very good and are seen to encourage and motivate followers. Teachers get actively involved when there are discussions about ways to improve the school.

5.3.4.3 Creating platforms for professional development

The goal of female principals is improvement at their schools. They share their vision with their staff so it can be a shared vision. This vision is not based on personal gain or to become famous; instead, it is a vision that improves the school and the lives of learners and teachers. The principals create a platform where they give their teachers opportunities to develop.

Participant SMT1,

They give everybody and opportunity. They do their research. They also provide information to their subordinates, conduct workshops, have meetings, share their knowledge and skills and information and I think that that is what has led to school improvement.

Participant P2

ensures that there's a full staff compliment. She ensures that teaching and learning is happening every day. She ensures that if teachers are absent syllabus still continues, that classroom and children are taken care of. She ensures that daily things such as electricity is working or resources are there for the children that they could use. She also ensures that the teachers are consistently developing as well.

Participant SMT 2,

As innovative principals they look at the strengths of each individual and use those strengths to their advantage of the school but by saying to the person 'you are an excellent person in this here so please continue it and develop it and take those that are interested in it and capacitate them and build on that' and as such you will find that each person wants to be the master in what they are doing and they are giving off their best

because they have the trust of the principal in what they are doing.

Participant SMT 3,

By delegating with people who have skills to provide the best situation or functionality of the school.

In my study, I found that the two female principals from School A and School B create platforms for teacher development. The principal is involved in almost everything at the school. This is one of the criticisms of transformational leadership (cf. 2.2.6). I tend to disagree with Tafvelin (2013), who describes transformational leadership as elitist and antidemocratic. When the two female leaders of School A and School B are analyzed, it is true that they are involved in every aspect of the school. However, this is different to what Tafvelin (2013) mentions. These two females are not focused on control; instead, they mentor so that teachers can become leaders themselves in their departments. These two principals also create opportunities for teachers to develop professionally by learning how to do things and how to take initiative to do things. From the minutes of the meeting collected (cf. 4.6.1) it was evident that these principals do not dominate meetings; instead, they give their teachers an opportunity to give their suggestions and take on responsibilities; hence, they motivate teachers to become more autonomous.

5.3.4.4 Technological Advancement

Many female principals introduce more technology at schools. This is because they do not oppose change. They try to adapt to fit into current trends. They want to be a moving school and they want to do it through using technology.

Participant E1 lists what his principal implemented at their school. “the change from writing on the chalkboard to white board learning, interface with learners, teambuilding with educators, socialization, providing positive change with educators”.

Female leaders are concerned with the professional development of teachers. In order for the school to develop and improve, the teachers themselves must develop holistically in order to deliver lessons of a high quality. The trending method now is to use technology to enhance lessons so there is greater cognitive development among

learners.

A principal's main duty as a transformational leader is to transform the school he leads so that it can improve. It is imperative for the principal also to transform, especially by equipping herself with the latest information and latest technology available. Hence, she has to align herself and her practices with the 21st century (cf. 1.3; 2.6). Many learner records have to be captured on the Department of Education databases, and the principal is responsible for managing this process. If she is not familiar with the processing of this information, it will affect the advancement of the school negatively.

Recommendations are offered in the next section based on the data collected from the nine participants.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 Introduction

The main objective of this study was to determine how the current practices of female principals at schools contribute to the effectiveness of the school. Therefore, the findings of the study may assist in bridging the gender gap in South African education.

5.4.2 Recommendation with regard to research objective one

My findings found that female principals use their innate feminine qualities to lead efficiently. They work harder to be accepted by their male counterparts and other female teachers and to change the stigma that female principals are failures.

RECOMMENDATION: Workshops should be offered by the Department of Education to encourage females to apply for leadership positions. Female principals should be acknowledged in publications from the Department of Education focusing on their accomplishments and strategies to change the perception society has of them of being weak and incapable leaders. Many teachers are not even aware that females currently occupy leadership positions (cf. 4.5.4.1).

5.4.3 Recommendation with regard to research objective two

Women face many challenges in their leadership positions. Male staff as well as society do not accept them as leaders, because they are perceived to be weak (cf. 1.1; 1.3). As a result, men are favoured and get leadership positions (cf. 2.5). To date, women are still underrepresented in leadership positions in South African education (cf. 2.3; 2.5; 3.5.2).

RECOMMENDATIONS: In my opinion, I think that not enough is done by the Department of Education in terms of the gender gap that exists in South African education. I want to make the assumption that there are policies in place to ensure gender equality but who ensures that it is done in schools. I recommend that firm policies must be drafted and implemented that will guarantee that schools will do their best to close this gender gap. They also have to be accountable for not complying with these policies. Just as affirmative action is sanctioned on employment, so too should be gender. When it comes to governing bodies, women should also be given an opportunity to be part of governing bodies. This will ensure that men are not favoured to get leadership positions. Interview panels at schools should be trained about gender issues in South Africa. They should also be taught how to elicit information from candidates regarding leadership skills and abilities and also which skills and abilities are needed by leaders to develop and improve schools. Ultimately, governing bodies should be trained to accept women as leaders. This will also help female leaders because the school governing body will become a support system instead of being another challenge for female principals.

5.4.4 Recommendations with regard to research objective three

From my study it is clear that women hardly lack any skills to be effective leaders. Some perceive women as being soft and nurturing, but this is not related to a skill in its entirety. Instead, it is a behaviour that is forced upon her because of gender stereotyping. In this study, the two female principals from School A and School B proved that they are successful and they were able to bring about rapid change in their schools that resulted in improvement, all because they could adapt and learn about their environments.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Female support groups should be created to support female principals to function better at their schools. Female mentors need to share their experiences and strategies so that novice female leaders can use them to improve their schools instead of giving in to the pressures of harassment and failure. Workshops and training sessions should be offered to female staff from post level 1 to learn about issues relating to maintenance and safety in schools. This would mean that when it is time for them to apply for leadership positions, this factor does not stop them from applying. Women often face harassment from male school management members or from male principals. This is done to silence them. I recommend that the Department of Education offers these teachers access to consultants who can hear their issues confidentially and then speak to the person responsible for the offence. In this way, there is anonymity of the complainant so they will not be victimised or further harassed. The manager, on the other hand, can learn how to deal better with staff. Hence, both the teacher and the manager develops professionally; therefore, improving the school with less conflict.

5.4.5 Recommendations with regard to research objective four

Women really strategize to make their schools improve. The improvement of these schools is clearly visible when one enters the school. The schools display the achievements of the school, teachers and learners on its notice boards. It is amazing what schools can achieve when all stakeholders share a vision. They make it happen collectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Reward and punishment systems should be created by women. Women, as literature states, are more caring, sensitive, compassionate and creative. When there are discipline problems at a school, women can use their motherly instinct to teach the learner that their actions were not good. This is what a mother would do at home. Men tend to be more forceful and sterner and they implement the harshest policies. Often, the learner may retaliate and become more disruptive and cause more problems. Likewise, if a learner has excelled in anything at school, they should be praised for that accomplishment. With this reward system, the learner will feel motivated to do better.

Principals must involve all stakeholders as much as possible in the life of the school. This can be done in meetings or by holding one to one sessions or by having subject/functional area group meetings. This consultation process with teachers get them excited and hence they are more likely to embrace change. They that they are part of the change and improvement process and that their opinions and contributions matter.

Plans for improvement must involve families and communities within which the school exists. They might present barriers and challenges, but if a school values their morals and values, then communities start accepting and assisting the school. If the school is to be successful, it must have the support of the learner's families and communities. They are integral partners in nurturing and sustaining the schools vision and mission. The community is represented at the school by an SGB. According to the *South African Schools Act no. 84 of 1996*, Section 20, the governing bodies' responsibility is to support the principal and teachers and promote the best interests of the school. Meetings are usually held at schools to discuss many aspects such as school finance, discipline, infrastructure, etc. The principal does not make unilateral decisions in a school. All decisions made have to involve the schools governing body, the teacher representative and the learner representative. Learners are also seen as stakeholders because they are directly affected by the decisions taken by the school. Thus, the learner representative has to be consulted about any issues affecting them; likewise, if learners at the school need assistance to do something or have a problem, they can take it to a meeting where it will be addressed.

The Department of Education should offer more workshops and training sessions to facilitate professional teacher development. Teachers sometimes do not have the funds to study and upgrade their qualifications. As a result, teachers teach with outdated qualifications and have no intention of upgrading them because it is not required by the Department of Education. Teachers can apply for leadership positions even if they have only three years of tertiary education. I would also recommend that principals who would like to apply for leadership positions should have a management certificate to equip them with the necessary information needed to manage a school effectively.

Although recommendations were made, it was based on the data collected from a small sample.

55 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to 3 out of 550 schools in the uMgungundlovu District. The small size of the sample, typically qualitative research (cf. 3.4.1) is the most obvious limitation of my study. This cannot support the general theory of the role of female principals as transformational leaders to improve schools in the uMgungundlovu District, because investigations at different schools and communities will lead to different findings.

The main aim of the research was to determine how the current practices of female principals at schools contribute to the effectiveness of the school. These findings were reported in detail in Chapter 4. Although no attempt is made to generalize the findings, the problems experienced by female principals could be true for all schools in South Africa.

Another limitation for me was that I could not spend enough time at the schools. If I had more time, I would have been able to obtain much more data to enhance my study.

In spite of these limitations, my study also contributed to improvement of the future improvement of schools and this will be discussed in the next paragraph.

56 CONTRIBUTION AND MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY

The main research question was, 'What should be the transformational leadership role of the female principal to create school improvement?' As mentioned in this study, women leaders face many challenges in their daily management of the school. The participants in this study provided insight into what is really happening at schools. The main outcome in this study is that women are not empowered enough at some schools; thus, they lack confidence to apply for leadership positions and to lead schools efficiently. However, in this study I also had the opportunity to be introduced to two empowered and amazing female principals at School A and School B who are making radical changes, not only at their schools, but also within their communities and the education sector. It is my assumption that if other female principals implement their

strategies of empowerment, their schools will also be successful.

5.6.1 Planning

Principals and stakeholders such as a school's governing body can sit together and prioritise which areas of the school need to be improved and developed the most. It is the principals' duty to assign these tasks as a form of empowerment to teachers who show a keen interest in assisting. My study is about empowering women; therefore, instead of placing all the responsibility on male staff, women can be given these roles, especially in the areas of sport, maintenance, safety and security and mentoring. The aim of this exercise is to stop gender stereotyping. Task coordinators can also plan to meet other coordinators from other schools in the district to share strategies and speak about how to deal with challenges that they face.

5.6.2 Management

The empowered teacher who is assigned to complete certain tasks can form committees comprising various stakeholders. The teacher becomes the link between the principal, teams and stakeholders. The empowered teacher then mentors others who become leaders themselves. The effectiveness of the teams will result in school improvement. The focus of this study was on women. Women were always seen as not having enough skills to manage a school, especially those 'male skills'. To date, it is seen as ludicrous for a woman to be part of the maintenance committee. The transformational leader can ensure that these gender stereotypes are stopped by empowering females in schools. Records about the progress in each committee have to be updated constantly to analyze if the progress is effective or not and if it has resulted in school improvement among teachers and learners.

5.6.3 Implementation

A staff meeting at the beginning of the school year should take place where the staff can be divided into the various committees. A year plan can be drawn up where the process of action can be drafted for implementation. It can be categorised into phases. During the year meetings can take place with all stakeholders to present the outcomes of the implemented actions and to discuss if their actions were successful or not.

5.6.4 Review

After the implementation stage, committees will have meetings to discuss their strategies and constantly monitor if their strategies were successful or not. Strategies can also be amended if it has proven to be unsuccessful. Schools in various districts can meet occasionally to discuss and share successful strategies that were implemented at schools, especially in the areas of the empowerment of female staff and mentoring of female principals and staff. Representatives from these committees can also offer feedback to the Department of Education regarding gender issues facing female staff in general and also when it comes to the recruitment and training process. The rich information of my qualitative study provides information that could be used for further research.

5.7 AVENUES FOR FUTHER RESEARCH

This study confirms that there are future prospects for research in connection with the role of female transformational leaders to improve schools in South Africa. The first avenue for further research would be to analyze the impact that female leaders have on the South African education system in a mixed research study. The second avenue is to conduct research among all schools in the uMgungundlovu District to provide insights of the accomplishments of female leaders in South African education. The third avenue could be to provide insights pertaining to the recruitment process of principals at school. The aim of this study could provide reasons why the gender gap is not closing as fast in education compared to other employment sectors in South Africa. The fourth avenue could be to explore how effective support groups for female principals are in South Africa. The fifth avenue for further research would be to determine if the female principals in South Africa have the necessary facilities available to contribute to her success as a leader.

5.8 CONCLUSION

The main aim of this study was to determine how the current practices of female principals at schools contribute to the effectiveness of the school.

The study revealed the following solutions to address the challenges facing females in South African education:

- Workshops should be held to encourage females to apply for leadership positions.
- Stricter policies to ensure zero tolerance for gender discrimination.
- Support groups to be created to assist female principals.
- Reward and punishment systems to be drafted by females.
- All stakeholders should be involved in the improvement of the school.
- Training to be offered to facilitate professional teacher development.

This section brings the study to a close. Recommendations have been made which were drawn from conclusions made. This study provides pertinent information and enlightenment regarding the challenges that female principals face in their positions. This study also highlights their remarkable abilities to function as leaders; thus, it provides opportunities for further research into gender issues in education, especially the strengths of females as leaders, which is an under-researched area. My study demonstrated that the empowerment of female staff at schools by transformational leaders will encourage greater autonomy in the learning and teaching process. Transformational leaders have the ability to empower females so much that they will be confident enough to deal with challenges and for them to become transformational leaders themselves to transform and improve schools. Although the reality in South Africa is that women are underrepresented in education, the two female principals in this study have proven to be successful in their schools thereby improving it and providing hope for aspiring future female leaders. Hopefully, in the near future, the mindset of society changes giving women equal opportunities for advancement in their lives.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LETTER TO THE KWAZULU NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY



LETTER TO THE UNGUNGUNDLOVU DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Z Alli
26 Bennett Avenue
Lincoln Meade
PIETERMARITZBURG
3201
Mobile No.: 082 7777 474
E-mail address: zaheeralli115@gmail.com
2019

The Head of Department
Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Education
247 Burger Street
PIETERMARITZBURG
3201

Permission to conduct research in the Kwa-Zulu Natal DoE
institutions

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Zaheer Alli, and I am a Master of Education student at the University of South Africa. I request permission to conduct research in the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal DoE institutions, specifically schools in Ungungundlovu District. I am conducting research on Education



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Management under the supervision of Dr PK Triegaardt. This study will meet the requirements of the Research Ethics Committee of the UNISA.

My dissertation topic is: The role of female principals as transformational leaders to improve schools in the Ungungundlovu district, KwaZulu-Natal

The aims of the research project are:

- describe and define the concept of transformational leadership;
- explain why are there discrimination against female leaders in schools,
- explore the knowledge that the female transformational leader requires to lead efficiently and
- determine how the current practices of female principals in quintile 5 schools contribute to the effectiveness of the school.

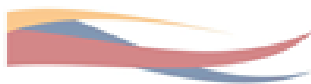
I will be using qualitative research approach. In this particular case, the qualitative approach will be used to collect data from the participants (principal, members of the school management team and post level 1 educators) in the form of interviews that will be conducted. The participants will be from two secondary schools and one primary school. The qualitative study could increase the understanding and gaining of an insight into the role that female transformational leaders play in schools in the Ungungundlovu District.

Schools identified to take part in the research are:

Howick Secondary School

Silver Heights Secondary School

Union Park Primary School



The following steps will be taken to ensure a high standard of professionalism:

- Interviews will be conducted after hours to ensure that teaching and learning is not interrupted.
- The study involves taking part in face-to-face interviews and if you agree, I would like to digitally record (voice) the discussion to ensure accuracy when transcribing the content.
- Principals, members of management, post level 1 educators and schools will not be identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
- Upon completion of the research, a full report will be submitted to the research office of the Department.
- Participation is strictly voluntary and participants may withdraw without any consequences.

Thank you for your support.

Z. Ali (MED student)



Dr P K Triegaardt

Supervisor



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**APPENDIX B: REPLY FROM THE KWAZULU NATAL DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION HEAD OF DEPARTMENT (UMGUNGUNDLOVU DISTRICT)
GRANTING PERMISSION**



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 392 1063/51

Ref: 214/8/4011

Mr Zaheer Ali
25 Bennett Avenue
Lincoln Meade
PIETERMARITZBURG
3201

Dear Mr Ali

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"THE ROLE OF FEMALE PRINCIPALS AS TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS TO IMPROVE SCHOOLS IN THE UMGUNGUNDLOVU DISTRICT, KWAZULU-NATAL"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 13 January 2020 to 10 January 2022.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

UMGUNGUNDLOVU DISTRICT

Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 10 January 2020

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Postal Address: Private Bag X9137 • Pietermaritzburg • 3200 • Republic of South Africa
Physical Address: 247 Burger Street • Anton Lembede Building • Pietermaritzburg • 3201
Tel.: +27 33 392 1063 • Fax.: +27 033 392 1203 • Email: Phindile.Duma@kzndoe.gov.za • Web: www.kzndoe.gov.za
Facebook: KZNDOE... Twitter: @DfE_KZN... Instagram: kzn_education... Youtube: kzndoe

Championing Quality Education - Creating and Securing a Brighter Future

APPENDIX C: LETTER TO THE CIRCUIT MANAGER



LETTER TO THE CIRCUIT MANAGER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Z Alli
26 Bennett Avenue
Lincoln Meade
PIETERMARITZBURG
3201
Mobile No.: 082 7777 474
E-mail address: zaheeralli115@gmail.com

Request for permission to conduct research at school A, B and C

Title of research study: The role of female principals as transformational leaders to improve schools in the Ungungundlovu district, KwaZulu-Natal

Date:

Education-Ungungundlovu District Office
166 Jabu Ndlovu Street
PIETERMARITZBURG
3201

Dear Sir/Madam

I, Zaheer Alli, am doing research under the supervision of Dr P.K. Triegaardt, a lecturer in the Department of Education Management and



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Leadership, towards a Master of Education degree at the University of South Africa.

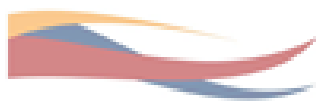
We are inviting three selected schools in your circuit to participate in a study entitled "The role of female principals as transformational leaders to improve schools in the Umgungundlovu district."

The aims of the research project are:

- describe and define the concept of transformational leadership;
- explain why there is discrimination against female leaders in schools,
- explore the knowledge that the female transformational leader requires to lead efficiently and
- determine how the current practices of female principals in quintile 5 schools contribute to the effectiveness of the school.

As previously mentioned, the study will entail research at three selected schools in the Umgungundlovu District. At each of the three selected schools, I would like to interview the principal, a member of management and one post level 1 educator. The study will also entail the following steps in order to ensure a high level of professionalism:

- Each interview with the individual participants will be approximately 45 minutes
- The study involves taking part in face-to-face interviews and if you agree, I would like to digitally record (voice) the discussion to ensure accuracy when transcribing the content.
- Interviews will be conducted after school hours so that the normal teaching and learning process is not interrupted.
- Each school as well as each participant will be assigned an alpha-numeric pseudonym. This will be done to secure and to ensure anonymity. Hence, each participant will not be identifiable in any way from the results of the research.



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- Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and participants may withdraw without any consequence.

The benefits of this study will include a thorough investigation into the transformational leadership styles of female leaders, the challenges they face that contribute to females being marginalised in leadership positions in education as well as how female leaders are improving their schools. As a researcher, I will develop concepts and arrive at conclusions based on the relationships, patterns and themes that will be identified in the collected data from the individual interviews.

No risks are involved in this study. Furthermore, no injury is anticipated and in the case of emotional harm. Additionally, there will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participating in the research.

The feedback procedure will entail the following: after I complete the interviews and processing data, I will hand-deliver a copy of the individual transcripts to each participant in order for them to verify the accuracy of the details. Thus, they will be allowed to give their views on the interpretations of their interview. Each participant will therefore be given the golden opportunity to vindicate the trustworthiness and credibility of their expressions in this study which deals with the role of female principals as transformational leaders to improve schools in the Ungungundlovu district

Thank you for your support, I kindly await your response in connection with my request.

Yours sincerely

Z Alli

UNISA Med student



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. K. Triegaardt'.

Dr P K Triegaardt

Supervisor

University of South Africa
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APPENDIX D: CONSENT LETTER TO PRINCIPALS



Z All
26 Bennett Avenue
Lincoln Meade
PIETERMARITZBURG
3201
Mobile No.: 082 7777 474
E-mail address: zaheerall115@gmail.com
2019

Title of research study: The role of female principals as transformational leaders to improve schools in the Ungungundlovu district, KwaZulu-Natal

Dear Sir/Madam

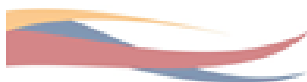
I, Zaheer All, am doing research under the supervision of Dr P.K. Triegaardt, a lecturer in the Department of Education Management and Leadership, towards a Master of Education degree at the University of South Africa.

I would like to request your school to participate in a study entitled "The role of female principals as transformational leaders to Improve schools in the Ungungundlovu district, Kwa-Zulu Natal"

The aims of the research project are:

- describe and define the concept of transformational leadership;
- explain why are there discrimination against female leaders in schools,
- explore the knowledge that the female transformational leader requires to lead efficiently and
- determine how the current practices of female principals in quintile 5 schools contribute to the effectiveness of the school.

As previously mentioned, the study will entail research at three selected schools in the Ungungundlovu District. At each of the three selected schools, I would like to interview the principal, a member of management and one post level 1 educator.



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The study will also entail the following steps in order to ensure a high level of professionalism:

- Each interview with the individual participants will be approximately 45 minutes
- The study involves taking part in face-to-face interviews and if you agree, I would like to digitally record (voice) the discussion to ensure accuracy when transcribing the content.
- Interviews will be conducted after school hours so that the normal teaching and learning process is not interrupted.
- Each school as well as each participant will be assigned an alpha-numeric pseudonym. This will be done to secure and to ensure anonymity. Hence, each participant will not be identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
- Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and participants may withdraw without any consequence.

The benefits of this study will include a thorough investigation into the transformational leadership styles of female leaders, the challenges they face that contribute to females being marginalised in leadership positions in education as well as how female leaders are improving their schools. As a researcher, I will develop concepts and arrive at conclusions based on the relationships, patterns and themes that will be identified in the collected data from the individual interviews.

No risks are involved in this study. Furthermore, no injury is anticipated and in the case of emotional harm. Additionally, there will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participating in the research.

The feedback procedure will entail the following: after I complete the interviews and processing data, I will hand-deliver a copy of the individual transcripts to each participant in order for them to verify the accuracy of the details. Thus, they will be allowed to give their views on the interpretations of their interview. Each participant will therefore be given the golden opportunity to vindicate the trustworthiness and credibility of their expressions in this study which deals with the role of female principals as transformational leaders to improve schools in the Ungungundlovu district.



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Thank you for your support, I kindly await your response in connection with my request.

Yours sincerely



Z ALLI

Dr P K Trilegaardt

UNISA Med student

Supervisor



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APPENDIX E: CONSENT LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS



Zaheer Alli

26 Bennett Avenue

Lincoln Meade

PIETERMARITZBURG

3201

Mobile No.: 082 7777 474

E-mail address: zaheeralli115@gmail.com

2019

Dear Participant

My name is Zaheer Alli and I am doing research under supervision of Dr P K Triegaardt, a lecturer in the Department of Education Management and Leadership towards a master of Education degree at the University of South Africa. We are therefore inviting you to participate in a study entitled "The role of female principals as transformational leaders to improve schools in the Ungungundlovu district, Kwa-Zulu Natal."

The aims of the research project are:

- describe and define the concept of transformational leadership;
- explain why are there discrimination against female leaders in schools,
- explore the knowledge that the female transformational leader requires to lead efficiently and
- determine how the current practices of female principals in quintile 5 schools contribute to the effectiveness of the school.

The study is expected to collect important information that could benefit schools in South Africa as a whole using the example of the schools from the Ungungundlovu District. This will be done by means of a thorough



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investigation into the challenges and complexities associated with the role of female transformational leaders in the Ungungundlovu District. I will develop concepts and arrive at conclusions based on the relationships, patterns and themes that will be identified in the collected data from individual interviews.

Three schools in the Ungungundlovu District have been selected for this study. As a teacher at one of these schools, you are being invited to participate in this study because you have the best experience in engaging with the Principal in the school concerned. At each of the three selected schools, I will interview the principal, one teacher and one member of management.

The interviews with all the participants will be conducted after school hours so that the normal teaching and learning process is not interrupted. I plan to spend one afternoon at your school doing all these digitally recorded interviews. Each interview will have duration of approximately 45 minutes. This means that I will be able to interview the principal, one teacher and one member of management on the same day and the day after I will move onto the next school. On the third day I will interview the last three participants of the third school. And lastly, as the study involves taking part in face-to-face interviews and if you agree, I would like to digitally record (voice) the discussion to ensure accuracy when transcribing the content.

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you decide to take part, you will be given an information sheet to keep and you will be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.



The potential benefits of this study will include a thorough investigation into the challenges and complexities associated with the role of female transformational leaders in the Ungungundlovu District. As a researcher, I will develop concepts and arrive at conclusions based on the relationships, patterns and themes that will be identified in the collected data from the individual interviews.

No negative consequences or risks will be encountered if you participate in this study. Furthermore, no injury is anticipated. Additionally, there will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the study.

You have a right to insist that your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from me, will know about your involvement in this research. This means that your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. To ensure anonymity, your answers will be given an alpha-numeric pseudonym code and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conferencing proceedings. As an example of this, your assigned alpha-numeric code will be E1, E2 or E3.

I will store hard copies of your answers for a period of five years in a locked filing cabinet in my private study in my house for future research or academic purposes. Electronic information will be stored on my password-protected laptop computer. I will be the only one who knows the password. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. In the future, if it is deemed necessary for the information to be destroyed, hard copies will be shredded and any electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the laptop computer through the use of a relevant software program.



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As previously mentioned, there will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Participation in this study is purely voluntary with no cost to you as a participant.

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. You can have a copy of the approval letter from me if you wish so.

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings or should you require any further information or want to contact me about any aspect of this study, please contact Zaheer Alli on mobile number 082 7777 474 or via email zaheeralli115@gmail.com.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Dr P.K. Triegaardt on his mobile number +971 50 935 8073 or via email paul.triegaardt@gmail.com.

Thank you for your support. I kindly await your response in connection with my request.

Yours sincerely

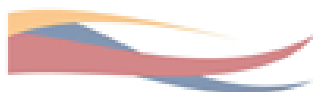


Z ALLI

UNISA Med student

Dr P.K. Triegaardt

Supervisor



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Consent:

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and I am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/ or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidentially unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the voice recording of the interviews

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (Please print) Participant Signature Date

Zaheer Alli

Researcher's name and
Surname (please print)

Researcher's signature

Date



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APPENDIX F INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



INTERVIEW QUESTION(S) ATTACHED

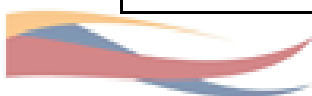
Main Research question

What is the role of female principals as transformational leaders to improve schools in the Ungungundlovu District, Kwa-Zulu Natal?

Sub questions	Example questions	Responses by participants
What is transformational leadership?	<p>Do you agree that we should all be able to transform in some way?</p> <p>Can you please describe what you think an ideal leader is like?</p> <p>Do you consider your principal/yourself (if principal) to be a transformational leader? Would you be able to elaborate on the answer, for example, if you said no, please provide a reason for your answer and if you answered yes, likewise.</p>	
Why is there discrimination against females to be leaders in schools?	Is there any sort of discrimination occurring in our South African school currently regarding female	



	<p>principals?</p> <p>What do you think are the reasons for discrimination against female leaders in South African schools?</p> <p>In your opinion, do you think this is fair for the female leader? Why or why not? Explain</p> <p>Do you think that women are to blame for this discrimination? Explain.</p> <p>Do you have any suggestions for the Department of Education to eradicate discrimination against female leaders in education?</p>	
<p>Which skills and knowledge, does the female principal as transformational leader need, in order to lead the school towards improvement?</p>	<p>Does/ Do your principal/ you (if principal) have the necessary skills to efficiently run the school? Please elaborate.</p> <p>Do women need more skills than men to run a school? Please provide a reason for your answer.</p> <p>Do you think the matric pass rate is a reflection of how effective the principal is? Please explain.</p> <p>Based on your experience</p>	



	<p>how can female leaders function better in their position?</p>	
<p>Which practices by female principals in schools contribute to the effectiveness of the school?</p>	<p>Do you know any female principals in schools that you consider to be a transformational leader? Only answer yes or no. Please do not give any names.</p> <p>What strategies have they implemented to ensure whole school improvement?</p> <p>Do you have any suggestions for female teachers who would like to be principals in the future?</p>	

