

**FEMALE PRINCIPALS' EXPERIENCES OF TEACHER ATTRITION IN
GAUTENG PROVINCE**

by

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The thesis is submitted in accordance with the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy at the University of South Africa.

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.....

Professor P.R. Machaisa

.....

Date

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my late parents, John Ntshimane Motlhake and Anna Keledi Motlhake, who passed on in 2019 and 2020 respectively. As my key mentors, you rallied behind me and my siblings and taught us the significance of education through hardship and ensured we stand on our feet academically.

Thank you, my parents, you are shining stars for you gave us the legacy that we will always cherish and will ensure we pass on from generation to generation.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACE	Advance Certificate in Education
BCEA	Basic Conditions of Employment Act
BEd	Bachelor of Education
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CDE	The Centre for Development and Enterprise
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
EEA	Employment of Educators Act
EFA	Education For All
EI	Emotional Intelligence
EoC	Ethics of Care
FET	Further Education and Training
FP	Foundation Phase
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HOD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resources
HRM&D	Human Resource Management and Development
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IBR	International Business Report
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IP	Intermediate Phase
ISPFTED	Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development

IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
LRA	Labour Relations Act
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa Development
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
PAJA	Promotion of Administrative Justice Act
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures
PERSAL	Government Personnel System
PHDS	Pull Her Down Syndrome
PILIR	Policy and Procedure on Incapacity Leave and Ill-health Retirement
PSCBC	Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SARS	South African Revenue Services
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
TLAA	Tax Laws Amendment Act
UK	United Kingdom
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USA	United States of America

ABSTRACT

Teacher attrition in schools is a common and ongoing phenomenon experienced nationally and internationally. Teacher attrition takes place continuously in schools either voluntarily or involuntarily in the form of retirement, resignation, transfer, dismissal, redeployment, ill-health and death, affecting the teaching and learning process in a negative way. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of female principals on teacher attrition. The study was conducted in the public schools of Tshwane West District of Gauteng Province.

Transformational leadership theory and ethics of care theory underpinned this qualitative study positioned within the constructivist paradigm. A case study design was used to explore the case of teacher attrition. Purposive sampling was used to select the female principals to participate in this study. Data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis. Qualitative content analysis was employed for data analysis.

The study found that teacher attrition affects schools negatively. It disrupts and destabilises the schools, affecting the morale of the teachers as well as affecting learner performance and discipline as it takes place throughout the academic year. The female principals employ various strategies to address the issue of teacher attrition and to motivate for teacher retention. The study recommended that female principals be empowered to enable them to cope with their role of managing teacher attrition.

Key words: Teacher attrition, teacher retention, female leadership, turnover.

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Teacher attrition is a challenging and persistent phenomenon facing schools in various countries locally and internationally. Teachers are an important resource for effective functioning of the school, thus when teachers leave the teaching profession or move from one place to the other, they frequently leave a vacuum that becomes difficult for the principal to manage to ensure that effective teaching and learning continues. According to Akaadom (2014:5), teacher turnover tends to be high in most African countries such as Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia the Central African Republic and South Africa. Teacher attrition is a global challenge and by its very nature, is an extremely complex phenomenon (Pitsoe & Machaisa, 2012:4). Khawary and Ali (2015:3) posit that teacher attrition is comparatively more serious in developing countries and in South Africa, the problem has almost reached a critical stage (Mafukata & Mudau, 2016:2243). This study sought to investigate female principals' experiences of teacher attrition in the Gauteng Province of South Africa. It was guided by the main research question: *How do female principals in Gauteng Province describe their experiences with teacher attrition?*

Several researchers contend that attrition can be very costly (Pitsoe, 2013; Jain, 2013; Bansal, 2014; Bashir & Durrani, 2014; Akaadom, 2014; Chemwei & Koech, 2015). Training and recruitment of teachers takes time and it is an expensive venture (Cobbold & Asamani, 2015:113). Akaadom (2014:4) states that globally, attrition is detrimental to education systems with teacher turnover causing profound strains on schools in that it destabilises administrative, academic and professional standards (Tshabalala & Ncube, 2014:150). According to Jain (2013:1), high levels of turnover can also signal systemic problems. Additionally, high turnover can cause serious loss and difficulty for organisations (Gbenu, Kolawole & Lawal, 2014:1814). Chemwei and Koech (2015:170) declare that excessive turnover creates an unstable work force and increases organisational ineffectiveness.

Muteswa and Ortlepp (2011:15) state that there are many different types of turnover that can affect South African organisations. They group these types into voluntary and

involuntary turnover where voluntary turnover refers to the situation when an employee resigns from his/her employment out of his/her own accord with involuntary departures referring to when employees are dismissed or retrenched because their services are no longer needed. They further indicate that the cause of involuntary turnover may be factors that are beyond the control of the organisation such as legislation, technology and economy and include retirement, dismissals and redundancies. Pitsoe and Machaisa (2012:3) concur that the decision to leave teaching may be influenced by a variety of factors including tension, frustration, anger, and depression at work, as well as school violence, low salaries and arduous work challenges. Attrition seems to be highest among younger teachers (Pitsoe, 2013:312). Employment opportunities and pension considerations act as holding forces for many older teachers (Pitsoe, 2013:312). The more the qualified teachers resign, the more difficult it becomes for the Department of Education to recruit and retain equally efficient new teachers (Poti, Mutsvangwa & Hove, 2014:793). Several studies have been conducted on labour turnover but there have been conflicting results as to what these issues are and how much each contributes to the turnover incident (Ongaki, 2015:705). Tshabalala and Ncube (2014:150) contend that teacher attrition disrupts schooling. Teachers who leave are often experienced veterans who are replaced with inexperienced new hires (Hanyenga, 2014:6).

Statistics show that 5 614 teachers left the system in Gauteng between 2005 and 2008 (Pitsoe, 2013). High teacher attrition forces schools to spend greater amounts of school resources on recruiting, hiring and induction of new teachers (Pitsoe, 2013:315). There are different types of turnover that affect organisations in South Africa, and the focus of this study is how female principals experience these types of turnover. This research was prompted by my experience as a principal for 20 years, eighteen years at a middle school and two years at a primary school where I personally experienced teachers leaving the school and where I also left through resignation. Furthermore, the research was also prompted by the fact that there seems to be a dearth of female principals' voices, in trying to critically scrutinise this interesting and significant issue. Teacher attrition is a theme that warrants research in South Africa, because the year 2014 witnessed a titanic increase in the number of school teachers resigning after the enactment of the Tax Amendment Act. The mass teacher resignations from 2014 (Mafukata & Mudau, 2016:2243) raised concerns among

education patrons. These massive resignations could have significant financial implications on the government and skill retention in the teaching profession. In Gauteng, particularly the Tshwane West District, high teacher attrition has not been a common occurrence but in 2014, 300 teachers resigned while in 2015/2016, 100 teachers resigned.

Fibkins (2012:3) believes that when teachers leave, they cause a gap that cannot be filled in years to come, considering loss of their skills, experience and expertise and that it is difficult to evaluate and enumerate this loss as in the beginning, the issue of losing these teachers is not apparent. Consequently, replacing an experienced teacher who knows the culture of the school, students, parents and community usually does not happen overnight and as a result, has severe consequences for the education community.

Schools face teacher attrition and there are diverse explanations why teachers leave the profession. Numerous issues influence teacher attrition. Research has identified various types for teacher attrition such as resignation, retirement, redeployment, death, dismissals, transfers, ill-health and long leave due to illness and are regarded as attrition types in this study. Although there are several studies that have attempted to develop understanding of the scope and complexity of the issues surrounding teacher attrition, one area that has received scant attention is the voices of female principals in public schools in South Africa.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

There are several reports of why teachers leave the teaching profession. It might be that the job is not what the teacher hoped it would be where teachers might be unhappy with their salaries, unmotivated students, lack of parental support, school violence and long hours of grading and planning that consume one's life all of which may unfortunately force teachers to abandon the paths they have chosen (Farber, 2010:ix). Departure of experienced teachers presents major setbacks for the schools' programmes and the school climate they have worked to create (Fibkins, 2012:15).

This research was prompted by the fact that as a female principal for twenty years, I noted with difficulty the situation in which the principal finds him/herself, as a teacher or teachers leave the school either voluntarily or involuntarily. This becomes a situation

where learners are without a teacher for days on end, and learners, parents, remaining teachers and the Department rely on the principal to find a suitable replacement as soon as possible, yet the principal is unable to do so due to various matters beyond her control. This may result in people thinking that the principal is incompetent. The research was also prompted by the fact that there has been considerable account in the media on teacher attrition, in critically scrutinising this interesting and important matter. It is a theme that is topical in South Africa because the year 2014 saw a titanic increase in the number of school teachers resigning after the enactment of the Tax Laws Amendment Act of 2013 (TLAA). TLAA is the law that harmonises the tax treatment of retirement contributions and annuitisation. Implementation thereof was scheduled for March 1, 2015 but was delayed for a year to March 1, 2016. The TLAA makes changes to the payment of retirement benefits from provident funds. This research was further motivated by the critical, complicated and unresolved legal problems with respect of the Act, to which there is uncertainty to date and the question of whether education reforms could have also contributed to the high resignation in 2014 in Gauteng Province, particularly in the Tshwane West District.

Teacher attrition has harmful effects on the educational quality especially if experienced teachers are the ones leaving the system. This may result in wastage of resources and loss of expertise. This research study explored the experiences of female principals on teacher attrition at both primary and secondary schools in the Tshwane West District, Gauteng Province. The study addresses and highlights the complexities and problematic aspects that female principals face when teachers leave the school yet teaching and learning needs to continue. Several factors are known to influence attrition of the teachers and even though several studies have investigated and reported on these factors, female principals' voices are mostly absent from literature on teacher attrition in South African schools. The purpose of this study was thus to explore the experiences of female principals on teacher attrition in the Tshwane West District of the Gauteng Province.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Teacher attrition has damaging effects on the quality of education especially if those leaving the profession are experienced. It creates instability in schools, making it difficult for the teaching and learning process to continue smoothly. Teacher attrition

disrupts school plans and leaves a vacuum that is difficult to fill. It causes chaos for the principal, learners and affects the effectiveness of the teachers who remain behind. Retaining employees is a primary concern for many organisations (Gbenu *et al.*, 2014:1813). The experience of leadership for the few women who assume leadership positions is wrought with hurdles and one of them is teacher attrition. Teacher attrition makes the principal's job more difficult or even impossible (Fibkins, 2012:15). Teacher turnover causes profound strains in the school system in that it destabilises administrative, academic as well as professional standards in schools (Tshabalala, & Ncube 2014:150).

This study examined the way females, as school principals, encountered teacher attrition in their effort to navigate the environment in both primary and secondary public schools in the Tshwane West District, Gauteng Province to ensure that it is conducive to teaching and learning.

In the light of this problem statement, I posed the following research question: *How do female principals in Gauteng Province describe their experiences with teacher attrition?*

In order to address the main research question, the following sub-questions were formulated:

1. What are the causes of teacher attrition in schools?
2. What is the effect of teacher attrition in schools?
3. What challenges do female principals experience in dealing with teacher attrition?
4. What kind of support do female principals receive in managing teacher attrition?
5. How do female principals perceive their role in handling teacher attrition?
6. What leadership style do female principals display in their attempt to address teacher attrition?
7. What measures do female principals employ to mitigate the challenges caused by teacher attrition?
8. What strategies do female principals explore to retain the teachers?

1.4 THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad aim of this study was to explore the female principals' experiences of teacher attrition in the Gauteng Province.

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- To identify the causes of teacher attrition in schools.
- To establish the effects of teacher attrition in schools.
- To explore the challenges that female principals face in dealing with teacher attrition.
- To understand the kind of support female principals, receive in managing teacher attrition.
- To determine how female principals, perceive their role in handling teacher attrition.
- To identify the leadership style that female principals display in their attempt to address teacher attrition
- To determine the measures that female principals employ to mitigate the challenges of teacher attrition.
- To establish the strategies that female principals explore to retain the teachers.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In this study, the phenomenon under investigation is teacher attrition and consequently the study could be beneficial to several sectors. This research is significant in that it builds on previous studies, which examine female principals' experiences in educational leadership and the contributing narratives have the potential to provide a better understanding and knowledge of teacher attrition and retention in schools. The female principals' accounts individually and collectively, have the potential of contributing to the emerging literature base, which seeks to understand how female principals experience teacher attrition and address the silence that currently exists in the literature. The study thus adds value to theory on educational leadership and supplements the growing body of knowledge related to the field of study.

The findings may be of value to policy makers to gain a greater understanding of teacher attrition to refine existing policies and develop retention strategies within schools. This means that the study would provide recommendations to policy makers on how to effectively support principals on issues regarding teacher attrition and retention, particularly developing strategies for specific contexts in managing teacher attrition. The findings have thus the potential to contribute to the development of guidelines for all principals on teacher attrition matters and retention strategies.

The study may also contribute towards providing solutions on how to reduce the rate of teacher attrition in schools. These findings would have relevance for other principals, both male and female, and possibly for other practitioners in other sectors who could make use of the findings to retain their employees and improve their organisational stability. The findings have the potential to contribute to a better understanding of how female principals navigate their way and the manner in which this is reflected in their behaviour as they manage teacher attrition. The study has the potential to alert society to the status of teacher attrition issues especially in the Gauteng Province. The findings could furthermore stimulate further research in other sectors in the field of labour attrition.

1.6 ENSURING CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

In qualitative studies there is a move towards the use of different terminology to indicate validity and reliability and thus the main term that is used is trustworthiness which is divided into credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Koonin, 2014:258). The notion trustworthiness is key in qualitative research (Babbie & Mouton 2012:276). In order to ensure trustworthiness in this study, I employed the following strategies: transferability, credibility, confirmability and dependability (Kumar, 2014:219; Koonin, 2014:258; Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2013:236). A detailed account of these strategies is provided in Chapter 4.

1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Stake (2010:28) mentions that there are rules that need to be observed to protect participants. Thus, prior to the research, I applied for ethical clearance from the University of South Africa, wrote a letter requesting access to the relevant authorities outlining the purpose of the study and procedures for data collection. I also wrote a

letter with detailed information to the participants inviting them to participate in the research and requesting their consent. All the ethical issues outlined are described in the invitation letter. I informed the potential participants in the invitation letter that their participation in the research project would be voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without any consequences. I informed the participants that their identity would be restricted by allocating pseudonyms. All collected data and tape recordings will remain confidential. My aim was to report all the information as honestly as possible, subscribing to the research culture of respect for human dignity and welfare of the participants. Participants in this research have the opportunity to gain valuable knowledge, skills and experience through their participation.

1.8 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.8.1 Leadership

Leadership, according to Van Deventer (2016:113), relates to mission, direction, inspiration and influence over others to structure and change activities and relationships. In this study, leadership refers to a process of influencing structures and activities with the intention of enhancing relationships to achieve organisational goals.

1.8.2 Attrition

Attrition could be the number of employees quitting their jobs, which includes both voluntary and involuntary separation (Oke, Ajagbe, Ogbari & Adeyeye, 2016:373). In this study, attrition refers to the loss of teachers in a school as a result of retirement, resignation, transfer, redeployment, ill-health, death and dismissal.

1.8.3 Turnover

Oke, Ajagbe, Ogbari and Adeyeye, (2016:371) regard turnover as the degree of departure among personnel that are employed to work for the schools in a particular period. In this study, attrition and turnover are used interchangeably.

1.8.4 Retention

Retention refers to the interventions which the organisation implements to build an atmosphere where employees will be encouraged to stay in their employment for a longer period and thus discouraging skilled employees from leaving the organisation

(Shibiti, 2020:2). in this study, retention refers to a process where teachers are kept at the school for a sustainable period.

1.9 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1, the orientation to the study, gave an overview of the study, which included the introduction, and background of the study, rationale, research problem, research questions, purpose, aim and objectives including definition of key concepts.

Chapter 2, the literature study, reviews the related literature regarding teacher attrition, using the following concepts: women leadership, school leadership, attrition, turnover and retention.

Chapter 3, the theoretical framework, provides the exposition of the theoretical framework that underpins the study.

Chapter 4, the research design and methodology, gives an extensive description of the research approach and the detailed discussion of the research methodology.

Chapter 5 presents the research findings. In this chapter, a detailed discussion of data presentation, analysis and description in relation to reviewed literature and theoretical framework is provided.

Chapter 6 presents the conclusions and recommendations by offering a summary of the findings of the study, recommendations for policy and practice, and further research.

1.10 SUMMARY

The study explored how female principals experience teacher attrition in Gauteng Province. This chapter presented the general overview of the study by delineating a brief background and rationale of the study. It further gave a discourse of the problem statement, research questions, discussion of aim and objectives including significance of the study. The ensuing chapter presents a review of the literature on teacher attrition and retention.

CHAPTER TWO

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This literature review serves to understand the research phenomenon theoretically, conceptualising teacher attrition, teacher retention and female leadership. Thereafter, I frame the literature in the theories of transformational leadership and an ethics of care. Although policy documents and other literature refer to the teacher as educator in this study, I refer to an educator as a teacher.

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of female principals in the public schools of Gauteng Province. I specifically sought to understand how these female principals experience teacher attrition in their attempt to influence the interactions that are taking place at the schools. In order to conduct this research project, it was important to review current literature which was ongoing throughout collection and analysis of data processes, including the synthesis phase of the study. In reviewing literature critically, I explored how female principals perceive their role in the process of teacher attrition. In this light, I critically reviewed the literature on teacher attrition internationally, regionally and locally as well as literature on educational leadership, female leadership, transformational leadership and ethics of care. The review of the literature on teacher attrition, teacher turnover, teacher retention, educational leadership, and female leadership offered an understanding of the background, history and strategies used to manage how female principals need to deal with teacher attrition and retention.

Transformational leadership and ethics of care are the theoretical lenses used to understand anticipated behaviour by the female principals to influence, change and transform individual teachers and to establish a positive working relationship among teachers. Transformational leadership theory was considered pertinent for this study because of the influence that transformational leaders have on their staff members. A transformational leader can understand employees' unique needs, can create a supportive environment and engage in practices that build on employee self-confidence to enhance their performance (Bass, 1985).

Ethics of care is deemed suitable for this study since school leaders should have a passion for caring for teachers they lead. Ethics of care highlights caring as a suitable way to relate to people including how people help others (Noddings, 2005). Leaders should go the extra mile to address, nurture and support the needs of their teachers. The role of caring in a school environment has a more specific aim, which is to establish an environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning because an environment that is caring, enhances productivity, which is the ultimate objective for any educational activity. Female principals can use transformational leadership and ethics of care theories to build a positive, healthy and professionally reliable and sustainable relationship with the teachers (Bass, 1985 & Noddings, 2005). Furthermore, these theories can help female principals build a constant relationship of trust with the teachers, to care, encourage and attend to their unique needs. Transformational leadership and ethics of care theories are selected in this study to understand how female principals experience teacher attrition.

I used different sources of information such as the internet, google, google scholar, dissertations, professional journal articles, and books for the literature search. These sources were accessed through the following databases; Academic Search Premier, Africa Wide, Education Source, Eric and Teacher Reference Centre. In reviewing the literature, pertinent issues were identified and explored.

2.2 TEACHER ATTRITION

Rinke (2014:1) mentions that teaching is a stable profession that is affected by attempts to improve schools, societal changes and moves with organisational systems. Elfers, Plecki and Knaap (2006:95) regard teaching as a profession that is demanding, with a steep learning curve in the early years. Oke *et al.*, (2016:373) regard attrition as a process where some employees leave their jobs, which include both voluntary and involuntary separation. MacDonald (1999:836) chooses to use the term turnover and posits that it refers to the annual rate of teachers leaving their school position. Oke *et al.*, (2016:371) add that employee turnover is the rate of departure of staff engaged in the school for a given period. Teacher attrition is becoming a growing concern and major challenge for education policy makers and researchers globally (Pitsoe & Machaisa, 2012:4) as well as employers, and should be avoided (Bansal, 2014:62). High staff turnover may be an indication of deeper issues and needs to be

prevented (van der Merwe & Conley, 2016:312). Oke *et al.*, (2016:372) indicate that job turnover poses a challenge to both the employee and the employer. It means an employee will lose income that could have accumulated while the employer takes time to replace the employee that has left.

According to Oke *et al.*, (2016:373), the issue of attrition, irrespective of the sector or profession, is overwhelming and in some cases, cannot be prevented. They furthermore indicate that this is because of some teachers retiring, some leaving for personal reasons, some being dismissed from their work while others are encouraged to leave their occupation. This thus reduces the number of teachers in schools and poses a challenge where more teachers leave as opposed to those entering the profession.

2.2.1 Teacher Attrition in the United States of America

According to Easley (2006:241), since the 1990s, teacher attrition has increased at an alarming rate in the United States of America (USA). More than half of the 1990s teacher workforce in the US was expected to retire between 2000 and 2010, and it was projected that US schools would suffer a shortfall of slightly more than 2 million new teachers within that time frame (Easley, 2006:242). The hard-to-fill subjects such as mathematics, science and special education are usually most affected. A national study conducted in 1996 in the US, revealed that 95% of the schools in the districts reported an immediate shortage in the field of mathematics and science. Furthermore, low performing areas, with low income and minority learners were more likely to experience inconsistent staffing on a yearly basis, as well as an influx of inexperienced teachers, in comparison to their counterparts in predominantly white schools.

Rinke (2014:ix) argue that a large amount of research and study has focused on the teacher attrition problem, that various remedies have been suggested and tried, but they have thus far been largely ineffective because the problem persists. Internationally if the rates of teacher attrition continue unchanged, chronic shortages of teachers will continue beyond 2015 and for decades to come (UNESCO, 2013:1). In total, the world will need an extra 3.3 million primary school teachers and 5.1 million lower secondary teachers in classrooms by 2030 to provide all children with basic education (UNESCO, 2013). These figures exclude teachers needed to fill vacancies due to attrition. Farber (2010:153) states that attrition problems voiced by teachers will

never be solved overnight and that many of these challenges can be solved over time or at least improved through careful, focused attention. Taking the time to address these issues would assist in reducing the flood of teacher attrition and sustain teachers throughout their career. Furthermore, stakeholders need to work together to bring about steady, systematic change in schools. Rinke (2014:xiii) mentions that in the US, teaching is the largest occupation termed a “revolving door” where qualified teachers enter the profession and leave after a few years due to being dissatisfied with the workplace conditions found in schools. This situation is found to be far worse in high-need subject areas like mathematics and science and in high-poverty schools where up to 20% of teachers may leave in any given year. The other factor that teachers grapple with is the constant changes that they must deal with including inadequate facilities and supplies, ineffective principals who are less supportive, and colleagues who do not work as a team.

Rinke (2014:xiv) notes that teacher attrition takes place due to either personal characteristics, for example, academic achievement, family or personal responsibilities, preparation pathway or aspects of the workplace context, for example, school leadership, student discipline, professional autonomy. This links with Farber (2010:1) who states that teachers suffer serious health problems, marital issues, and mental illnesses because of the effects of attrition. However, it is not only the teachers who are affected but also the future, the children of the nations also feel the brunt of teacher attrition and burnout but with careful planning and attention, many of these issues can be solved (ibid). Rinke (2014:ix) indicates that thousands of teachers in American public schools leave the teaching profession within the first five years in the profession and this is predominantly experienced in low-income schools and hard-to-staff subjects like mathematics and science. As a result, teacher attrition costs school districts hundreds of millions of dollars yearly in recruitment and training expenses and has a severe impact on learners. Rinke (2014:x) declares that the teaching profession has become far less stable than it was in the 1950s particularly as teachers no longer remain in the classroom for many years and uses the term “exploratory” to characterise today’s environment for new teachers, with many of them coming from different certification programmes with the intention to “explore teaching” and thus a high percentage of them leave the teaching profession within the first five years. For Rinke, the term “exploratory” refers to the way all teachers continue to weigh up their

career options, often within education but sometimes beyond it. Furthermore, the teachers' initial plans to stay or leave the teaching profession are continually modified and shaped by shifting workplace conditions, new opportunities and personal situations.

2.2.2 Teacher Attrition in Africa

A report survey conducted by Education International (EI) in Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia indicates that all these countries have over the years, experienced a shortage of mathematics and science teachers (Sinyolo, 2007). Furthermore, teacher attrition seems to be acute in secluded rural areas. The survey revealed that the average rate of teacher attrition in these six countries is 4% and that most of the attrition is due to retirement, resignations, death and dismissals. The survey indicates that Lesotho and Zambia have a high attrition rate due to AIDS-related illnesses and death and in addition, Zambia has experienced a brain-drain that has contributed to the high level of teacher attrition specifically at secondary school level. The report points out that some of the leading causes of brain-drain are low salaries and poor conditions of service; however, in Kenya, the shortages are less severe because there is a programme that addresses training, recruitment, and retention of mathematics and science teachers where teachers receive additional payment as encouragement.

Available data from Sub-Saharan Africa suggests that the rate of attrition is higher in secondary schools (Sinyolo, 2007). In a series of cases in Anglophone Africa, attrition of secondary school teachers was higher than that of primary school teachers in all countries where separate data were available, as represented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Attrition rates in selected African countries

Country	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
Lesotho	3%	10%
Malawi	5%	10%
Uganda	5%	6%
Zambia	9%	

Country	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
Zanzibar	5%	6%-7%

Source: Mulkeen & Crowe-Taft, 2010

The World Bank Working Paper No. 99, based on country case studies of Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Madagascar, Tanzania, and Uganda, used an extensive literature review to identify current trends, challenges and opportunities in the recruitment, retention, and retraining of secondary school teachers and principals in Sub-Saharan Africa (Mulkeen, Chapman, DeJaeghere & Leu, 2007). The paper reports that the demand for secondary school teachers substantially exceeds the supply in many parts of Africa because of factors such as teacher attrition, bottlenecks in the teacher preparation system and perceived unattractive conditions of service (Mulkeen *et al.*, 2007). The report further reveals that few countries have strong policies or strategies to recruit learners from secondary schools into teaching in secondary schools.

The report indicates that there is a need to incorporate policies that use current resources creatively and more effectively to improve the quality of education in secondary schools. To attain higher standards of secondary school education in Africa, new and more effective approaches to the preparation, deployment and utilisation, compensation and teachers' condition of service supported by more effective school leadership, are necessary. Teacher deployment approaches often contribute to teacher attrition, with the arbitrary posting of teachers to undesirable work locations being a major problem expressed by secondary school teachers because of subject specialisation (Mulkeen *et al.*, 2007). As a result of deployment patterns and inter-school transfers, the impact of teacher shortages tends to fall excessively on schools and the least desired locations. Remote rural schools and schools serving the poorest children suffer greater teacher shortages, longer delays in replacing the teachers and a more significant proportion of unqualified and inexperienced teachers (Mulkeen & Crow-Taft 2010).

Teacher attrition is highest in geographical locations where living conditions are deplorable, harsh or expensive, or where teachers are uncomfortable with local ethnicity, customs or language (Mulkeen *et al.*, 2007). Attrition does not only mean numerical loss but also represents the loss of experienced teachers from the system. It poses serious challenges when those who are leaving the profession are the more

successful or more qualified. Attrition may affect leaving a less capable pool of teachers in the classroom or assuming leadership positions (ibid). It may also lead to demoralisation among remaining teachers (Macdonald, 1999). A further issue is that schools may be unable to replace the teachers who left and are forced to operate at least for a period, with reduced staff. The scale of disruption caused by attrition is enormous. A study conducted in Malawi found that of 188 teachers who began the school year, almost 50% were not teaching the same class nine months later (Mulkeen *et al.*, 2007). Some teachers moved to other schools or had left for training. Others were no longer in their classrooms due to illness or other temporary absences. However, the majority had moved to teaching other classes within the same school. In many cases, this was a 'chain reaction' resulting from the absence of one teacher causing a major reshuffle of the teaching staff. These movements have a disruptive effect on a series of classes, damaging the learner- teacher relationship as well as planning and other activities (ibid).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) indicated that Sub Saharan Africa is about to face major shortage of teachers (Shiferaw, 2014). The shortage could be due to the increase in demand for education because of the increase in school-age population. Thus, the region will need 2.1 million new teaching posts while feeling another 2.6 million vacant positions as many will leave the profession due to attrition from retirement or sickness. A report by UNESCO, which examined the number of teachers that each country needs, found that sub-Saharan Africa needs an additional 6.3 million teachers to attain the universal primary education by 2030 (Maphalala & Mpofu, 2019).

Some countries are working on preventing major shortages of teachers; for example, Ethiopia has been expanding its workforce by an average of 11% per annum since 1999. Cameroon, Namibia and Lesotho have taken strides to increase the number of teachers according to UNESCO's Institute of Statistics 2013 study, Projecting Global Teacher Needs from 2015-2030. Thus, these countries should be able to attain the Millennium Development Goals of universal primary education (Shiferaw, 2014). However, primary schools in countries such as Cote d' Ivoire, Eritrea, Malawi and Nigeria will need more teachers by 2030. Djibouti faces one of the greatest challenges as only 54% of primary school-age children are enrolled and to attain the universal primary education Djibouti will need to recruit about 17% more teachers by 2030 which

is not likely to happen. Reports indicate that due to a lack of resources the country will inevitably face an acute teacher shortage by 2030 (Shiferaw, 2014).

Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for 46% of the global shortage of lower secondary school teachers. Data show that the countries that have started making a serious effort to confront the problem stand a better chance to assure quality and universal education by 2030 (Shiferaw, 2014).

2.2.3 Teacher Attrition in South Africa

Van der Merwe and Conley (2016:312) indicate that in 2006, it was estimated that the total teacher population in South Africa was 400 000 and that South Africa needed to recruit 17 000 to 20 000 teachers per annum, yet the teacher training output was only recorded at around 9 000 newly qualified teachers per year. According to Pitsoe (2013:312), statistics show that the largest number of teachers exiting the system was 5 614 between 2005 and 2008. Pitsoe (2013:317) further indicates that the South Africa teacher attrition statistics are shocking and if not reduced, South Africa will experience increasingly severe teacher shortages.

Government Personnel Salary System (PERSAL) data for state-paid teachers indicates the trend in the national gross attrition rate where in 1997/98, it was at 9.3% dropping to 6.4% in 1999 and declining to 5.5% in 2000/01 before it started to rise again in 2002/03. The rates vary significantly from province to province but are seen in the light of the large numbers of teachers who left the Department during the years of amalgamation and rationalisation, peaking in 1997/98 and 1998/99. The early years of this study were characterised by high numbers of severance packages and dismissals, whereas more recent years have seen rising proportions of mortality, medical retirement and resignation (DoE, 2005). The highest attrition rate in 2002/03 was recorded at 6.5% in the Western Cape, followed by 5.6% in Gauteng and the lowest rates were 2.9% found in Mpumalanga and 3.2% in Limpopo. The data also show that there were two peaks in attrition: one among teachers aged 55 and above, wherein the average of 66% is accounted for by retirement and 18% by resignation. The other peak was amongst teachers aged 25 to 34, where resignations account for 80% of terminations and mortality at 15% (DoE, 2005). Nationally, the rate of teacher attrition is estimated between 5% and 5.5%, in comparative terms, which is in line with

international trends, but in absolute terms, this translates to between 17 000 and 20 000 teachers lost to the system every year (DoE, 2005).

Fredericks (2016) indicates that in 2014, the number of learners in South Africa had grown by 2% while the teacher numbers became less by 1.5%. Teacher numbers decreased from 425 090 in 2014 to 418 611 in 2016. In the 2013/2014 academic year, 6 762 teachers joined the system while about 15 901 left the system. Govender (2016) indicates that in South Africa the two models for supply and demand yielded contrasting results where the second model predicted that there could be a shortage of below 20 000 teachers unlike the first model that forecasted that there would be 664 21 teachers in the system by 2020 which means that the country would need 582 556 teachers. The second model predicted that there could be a likelihood of shortfall in four provinces, namely, in the Eastern Cape 3 954, Mpumalanga 7 862, the Northern Cape 4 433 and Gauteng 25 499.

According to the Gauteng Education Member of the Executive Council (MEC), Panyasa Lesufi, a total of 102 teachers were fired in Gauteng Province in 2015, 64 of whom were dismissed due to absconding and 11 for sexual misconduct (Shange, 2016). Lesufi further declared that the Department lost 2 948 teachers over the same period. Almost 3 000 teachers left the system of which 1 671 resigned, 1 236 opted for early retirement and 41 were medically boarded. The MEC ascribed this loss of teachers to the passing of the TLAA which was to be effective from 1 March 2016, and which caused much panic or uncertainty explicitly within the education sector. Lesufi indicated that the proposed changes were intended to remove the differences between pension and provident funds in relation to the tax deductibility and the cash lump sum that could be taken at the time of retirement. The TLAA issue was exacerbated by the high levels of debt that the teachers had acquired that presented an opportune moment for the teachers to regard early retirement or resignation with the aim of cashing in on their pension. This contrasts with Ismael Momoniat, Deputy Director General: Tax and Financial Sector Policy, National Treasury that there has not been any study or survey indicating that state employees were resigning because of the new law on pension and provident funds (Sowetan, Wednesday February 10, 2016)

Miya (2017) states that many teachers who are highly qualified leave the profession in search of greener pastures and this causes shortage of teachers and thus a crisis

for the education system. At present, there is a need of between 25 000 and 30 000 teachers annually yet institutions of higher learning produce between 6 000 to 8 000 a year reaching a high 10 000 on a good year. Angie Motshekga, Minister for Basic Education stated that in South Africa as at the end of February 2021, the natural vacancy rate stood at 5.8% in terms of the actual vacancies at the schools in relation to allocated school posts for 2021 and that there is a shortage of over 24 000 teachers (Businessstech, 2021). The shortage is due to vacant posts that are available in the various provinces: Eastern Cape 3718, Free Sate 842, Gauteng 2 282, Kwa-Zulu Natal 7 274, Limpopo 5 375, Mpumalanga 2 161, North West 1 4 33, Northern Cape 354 and Western Cape 1 117 (ibid).

2.2.4 Causes of Teacher Attrition

Ongaki (2015:705) indicates that several studies have been conducted on labour turnover, but conflicting results as to what these issues are and how much each contributes to the turnover incident are evident. Khawary and Ali (2015:12) add that there is no single factor that causes a teacher to leave; instead, there are multiple factors, which work in various complex combinations. Various factors contribute to teacher attrition such as burnout and retirement. Many teachers retire early as they can no longer cope with the high demands of teaching, as well as the constant changes in education (van der Merwe & Conley, 2016:310). The key reason given for teacher attrition in South Africa is job dissatisfaction, of which the primary sources are the constantly changing policies, increased workloads, poor management and training, poor remuneration and reduction of teachers' leave days (Van der Merwe & Conley, 2016:312). The ever-changing curricula also add to the list of complaints by teachers; for example, Curriculum 2000, Outcomes Based Education (OBE), National Curriculum Statement (NCS), the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) and latterly, the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) since 1994. The problem is further compounded by uncertainty faced by temporary teachers as well as AIDS-related ill-health and deaths (Van der Merwe & Conley, 2016:312). Available data from the Personnel Salary System database at the National Treasury and EMIS database collected through an Annual School Survey, provide four broad categories of reasons for termination of employment that seem to be on the increase. These types seem to contain an increasing number of cases and could spell trouble for the

country's ability to meet educational targets and include resignations, retirement, medical incapacity and death (DoE, 2005).

Often teachers leave for personal reasons such as the desire for a career change or family pressures (Elfers *et al.*, 2006:98), although organisational conditions also contribute to teacher turnover. Teachers may leave due to lack of collegial and administrative support, student misbehaviour and lack of interest in their school work, insufficient salary, lack of teacher autonomy, unreasonable teaching load, lack of professional development opportunities and inadequate allocation of time (Elfers *et al.*, 2006:98). Oke *et al.*, (2016:373) agree that teacher attrition is caused by factors such as poor salary, unfavourable working conditions, lack of collaboration with colleagues, poor leadership and learners' issues. Furthermore, teachers may be forced to leave their jobs due to the principal's weak leadership style. Most often teachers cite disrespect from principals as their reason for leaving. Long, Ajagbe, Nor and Suleiman (2012:290) maintain that the main grounds of turnover at both individual and institutional level comprise work-related stress, job content and managerial support. Oke *et al.*, (2016:372) add that Herzberg's hygiene factors such as working conditions, job security, company policy, relations with colleagues and supervisor may weaken the obligation to work. The characteristics of the school such as working conditions of the schools, student disciplinary issues, and school leadership may motivate teachers to move or leave their jobs, including common reasons such as retirement and child bearing (Elfers *et al.*, 2006:99). There is the likelihood of teachers leaving if they experience dissatisfaction with opportunities for professional development and advancement.

An effort to inspire the redeployment of teachers in South Africa to poorer rural areas, according to Mulkeen *et al.*, (2007), was totally unsuccessful. The predominantly female teaching force was not mobile enough to respond to school staffing needs and when teachers were strongly encouraged to relocate, many teachers teaching key subjects such as mathematics and science left the profession. As a result, there has been a significant drop in the numbers of applications for those choosing to train as teachers in South Africa because teaching was seen as an besieged profession where teacher could be moved at will. Likewise, in Uganda, redeployment of secondary school teachers was unsuccessful because the majority of teachers did not want to relocate. Oke *et al.*, (2016:375) indicate that teachers who are sent to local

communities find it difficult to adjust to such environments hence schools in these areas find it difficult to retain teachers. Furthermore, teachers in rural areas feel alienated and isolated and this results in teachers leaving the profession altogether or moving to other schools. As such, it is a challenge to appoint young teachers to work in such areas.

In this regard, Bansal (2014:63) contends that there are many reasons why employees withdraw from an organisation especially in an economy where skills are relatively scarce, where recruitment is costly or where it takes several months to fill vacant positions. Pitsoe and Machaisa (2012:3) maintain that the decision to leave teaching may be influenced by a variety of factors including tension, frustration, anger, and depression from work, school violence, low salaries and difficult working challenges. Teaching is challenging and ever changing and results in the dissatisfaction that leads to teachers leaving the profession.

2.2.5 Effects of Teacher Attrition

Teacher attrition has harmful effects on educational quality, especially if experienced and relatively skilled teachers are the ones exiting the system. High teacher attrition results in wastage of resources and loss of expertise (Pitsoe, 2013:314). and is costly since the Department spends excessive amounts on recruitment, hiring, orientation, capacitation and skilling of newly appointed teachers (Pitsoe, 2013:315). Akaadom (2014:1) agrees that recruitment and finding replacements requires a large amount of effort, time and substantial costs. Akadoom (2014:2) further indicates that this expense includes direct and indirect costs where the former refers to costs for recruiting, selection and training and the latter to costs that apply to overtime for workers, increased workloads and reduced productivity. Excessive turnover creates an unstable workforce and increases human resource costs and organisational ineffectiveness (Chemwei & Koech, 2015:170). According to Rinke (2014: xi) when teachers leave the teaching profession, it is not only school districts and learners who suffer, but also those teachers who leave, as they often face unanticipated difficulties in transitioning to new careers such as time and expense of further education or training, dealing with many letters of rejection and having to accept positions below their qualifications. Oke *et al.*, (2016:372) argue that teachers lose income that could

have accumulated had they remained working and this could have severe consequences with the teacher being unable to support him/herself and the family.

Teachers are responsible for providing quality public education in South Africa (Poti *et al.*, 2014:792). High staff turnover has become a concern in organisations as it puts additional pressure on the remaining staff (Dadie, 2015:x), where schools are forced to operate under increasing strain (Havenga, 2014:2). Oke *et al.* (2016:375) agree that when workers leave, the turnover increases and it results in an extra load for the remaining staff. High turnover is harmful to an organisation's productivity if it involves the loss of skilled workers (Long *et al.*, 2012:282). High turnover rates lead to decreased performance and decreased consistency, disruption of programme continuity and planning in organisations and it can also signal systemic problems (Jain, 2013:1) and in the education system, teacher attrition disrupts schooling (Tshabalala & Ncube, 2014:150).

Oke *et al.*, (2016:372) suggest that the high rate of teacher attrition impacts negatively on the school's improvement efforts as it disrupts the continuity and stability of teaching and learning. Pitsoe (2013:315) contends that the increasing teacher attrition rate in South African public schools "places the education system at risk of lower teacher quality, greater inequity in student opportunities and increased inefficiency as more funds are diverted to recruiting and training new teachers". Tshabalala and Ncube (2014:150) add that teacher turnover causes profound strains on schools in that it destabilises regulatory, academic as well as professional standards. Oke *et al.*, (2016:372) argue that teacher attrition matters are fruitless because schools and the states cannot achieve their goals and objectives respectively. Ongaki (2015:706) states that teacher attrition makes the teaching environment stormy and overwhelming and that the traditional bureaucratic arrangements are not designed to respond quickly and innovatively to the problems created by these highly unstable conditions.

According to Fibkins (2012:4), the departure of veteran teachers is problematic for the school principal as the loss of teachers with years of experience has a profound effect on the teaching and learning process as well as their contribution to managerial issues such as maintaining the school culture, disciplining troublesome learners and the mentoring of novice and mid-career teachers. It is felt that the ongoing effort to raise achievement levels and test scores of learners suffers major setbacks with the loss of

veteran teachers. This results in schools experiencing a leadership gap, discipline problems, decrease in staff and principal morale and a directionless school climate (ibid) which often changes the tone of the school and has repercussions on learners, parents, teachers and the principals.

Attrition of experienced teachers leaves what Fibkins (2012:20) terms an “experience vacuum” where in such a situation, ordinariness becomes a way of life because learners are taught by teachers who lack experience. Furthermore, the teaching environment becomes a revolving door of new teachers resulting in poor morale among the ever-changing school staff. In such a situation, the school principals face challenges without the support of teachers with managerial and supervisory skills to assist in addressing pressing school problems including parents and community members, who often question the unexpected exit of some experienced teachers. This could result in an increase in behaviour and discipline problems, a decrease in faculty morale, as poorly skilled staff lack support and mentoring, staff attendance may suffer, parents will demand changes and school principals will be targeted for ineffective leadership due to the lack of experienced staff to address the ongoing crises. Attrition can cause personal trauma, ongoing anguish heartache and sleepless nights as it could have a major impact on the effectiveness of the schools that was established over a number of years (Fibkins, 2012:15). The author further stipulates that handling teacher replacement on a continuous basis is a controversial, constraining and disruptive matter, the outcome of which may mean that inexperienced teachers are employed irrespective of their training to take over the role of the experienced

Rinke (2014:xiii) indicates teacher attrition does not only impacts negatively on student achievement and financial costs but also on the young teachers because these teachers spend years exploring a career that they frequently choose to leave, after investing financially in training and preparation, as well as emotionally in a career that at times leaves them frustrated and exhausted. Primarily, those who leave the profession for other fields, find themselves lacking the necessary skills to transition smoothly into another career, which forces them to take interim positions and re-train before they can re-establish the new career path.

Fibkins (2012:17) calls for creative ways to change the situation because teacher attrition is preventing schools from using the resources at hand to tackle the

challenges of the retention of novice teachers and professional growth for mid-career and veteran teachers. Furthermore, schools are at risk of ongoing turmoil if leaders of policy and practice fail to intervene. This epidemic is a flawed process that poses a real danger to learners, parents, teachers and school principals. It is a high-risk scenario that is creating a school environment in which novices lead the school agenda, blinded by inexperience and could result in chaos, disaster, destruction and problem making. In such a situation, the school is at high risk for failure (Fibkins, 2012:116). Unfortunately, the greatest burden will fall on the learners, who are innocent bystanders and defenceless victims solely dependent on both the parents and teachers to make their world safe, peaceful, nourishing and filled with opportunities (ibid).

2.3 THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN TEACHER ATTRITION

It is important that school principals take an active interest in the well-being of teachers to support them in their quest for the provision of quality education. If this is not done, it could lead to ill-health, burnout, job dissatisfaction and ultimately termination. Campbell-Whatley and Lyons (2013b:184) explain that school principals spend a great deal of their time performing personnel-related duties thus general procedures and policies are crucial in ensuring that schools employ teachers that are well and suitably qualified and experienced. The primary function of human resources or the personnel department is to recruit, hire, induct, supervise, evaluate and retain teachers but as teachers are accountable to principals on a day-to-day basis for matters that need prompt attention, principals need to master their role (Van der Merwe & Conley, 2016:313).

According to Campbell-Whatley and Lyons (2013b:196), termination of teachers is the most difficult undertaking, even for the most resilient school principal. They further explain that the principals need to follow basic due process procedures, suggested by the school system, for the termination of any teacher. Principals need to consider whether the teacher is tenured or not since there are different policies and specific laws regulating the termination of tenured and non-tenured teachers and specifications of each contract determine the due process procedures. Above all, principals must observe the correct procedures, protocol and policies. Therefore, school principals

need to be conversant with and pursue the correct procedure to circumvent prosecution.

Prinsloo (2016:271) claims that the school principals, as representatives of the Department of Education, have inherent official responsibilities regarding processes and procedures that he/she has to fulfil at the end of the employment relationship between the Department as an employer and the teacher as an employee. He further postulates that in education, there are policies and practices determined by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) as well as relevant provincial departments and other departments involved, such as the South African Revenue Services (SARS), that the principal must observe. These policies also cover voluntary turnover and retirement (Prinsloo, 2016:271). In addition, the law determines the procedures to end the employment relationship. The legislative framework that regulates termination of the working relationship between the teacher as an employee and the Department as employer for Constitutional Fairness includes, firstly, Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 (LRA) that addresses fair and unfair dismissals and secondly, the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (EEA) that deals with transfers, secondments, retirement, discharge, resignations, incapacity, misconduct and serious misconduct. Thirdly, the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000 (PAJA) handles substantive and procedural fairness and lastly, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 (BCEA) has to do with termination of employment.

The school principal is primarily appointed due to his/her professional knowledge and skills including being able to manage and lead a school (Prinsloo, 2016:250). According to the Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998 section 3(1) (a) and section 3(1) (b), the employer in public schools is the Head of Department with the Education Laws Amendment Bill (1999) section 16A clarifying that the role of the principal is the representative of the provincial Head of Department (HoD) (Prinsloo, 2016:250). The Education Laws Amendment Bill section 16A is an amendment to South African Schools Act of 1996 and specifically relates to the functions and the responsibilities of a principal of a public school. As a result, section 16A(1)(a) determines that “the principal of the public school represents the HoD in the governing body when acting in an official capacity as contemplated in sections 23(1)(b) and 24(1)(j)”. The school principal, as representative of the provincial Department of Education, is responsible to the HoD of Education in a specific province (Prinsloo, 2016:251). In addition, the

school principal is responsible for preparing and submitting a school academic performance report to the HoD, which relates to the minimum outcomes, assessment standards and procedures determined by the Minister of Education. The principal is also required to issue an annual report on the use of available resources (Education Laws Amendment Bill 1999 section 16A(1)(b)(ii)).

The Education Laws Amendment Bill section 16 (A)(2) mandates that the principal must “undertake the professional management of a public school,” and carry out the following duties regarding human resource management (HRM). Section 16A (2)(a)(ii) determines the management role of the principal regarding all the teachers and support staff; section 16A(2)(a)(iv) details implementation of policy and legislation; section 16A(2)(b) requires attention and participation in all meetings of the School Governing Body (SGB); and section 16A(2)(c) stipulates that the principal must provide the SGB with a report on the professional management, meaning human resource management functions, in the school. Of importance for the principal as human resource manager, is the stipulation in section 16A(2)(e) that he/she “assist the Head of Department in handling disciplinary matters about teachers and support staff employed by the Head of Department” (Prinsloo 2016:251). The functions of Human Resource Management and Development (HRM&D) are determined by the law and the principal has the legal responsibility of participating in all the phases of the HR process (Prinsloo, 2016:251).

Concluding the employment relationship is the phase where the contract between the employee and the employer ceases to exist (Prinsloo, 2016:271). Even during this phase, the principal as the delegated representative of the HoD of the provincial Department of Education has certain official responsibilities regarding processes and procedures that he/she must fulfil. There are resourcing policies and practices that relates to the release from organisations and these policies and practices in education are decided upon by the Department including relevant provincial departments and other involved departments like the South African Revenue Services (SARS). The termination of an employment relationship and related procedures are regulated by law.

A leader is considered as someone who offers inspiration by motivating others, encourages team work, provides direction to the staff members, is exemplary and

empowers others by working with them (Van Deventer, 2016:115). The principal's role as leader, directs, motivates, inspires, and corrects while managing the interpersonal relationships, maintaining a balance between task and people and management power. Another role of the principal is to provide information to the learners, teachers and parents. In addition, the principal is tasked with monitoring of formal and informal information, to determine and evaluating reliable official information. Finally, the principal is responsible for distributing information to the school community. The principal as a decision maker, maintains order, takes control and manages conflict, takes charge of learner and staff discipline, crisis management and continuous school improvement.

2.4 TEACHER SUPPLY AND DEMAND IN THE LIGHT OF TEACHER ATTRITION

Pitsoe (2013:309) maintains that the supply and demand of teachers in South Africa is a matter of national concern because of the decline in the number of teachers that various universities are producing, which he ascribes to the fact that teaching is regarded as the last-resort profession. Limited teacher supply increases the likelihood of out-of-field teaching with teachers teaching subjects for which they are not trained (Pitsoe, 2013:315) and contributes towards a shortage of teachers. Mafukata and Mudau (2016:2243) contend that in South Africa, there is a massive shortage of teachers in the critical subjects like as science and mathematics due to teacher retirement and resignations.

The South African Education system is faced with the challenge of producing a sufficient number of teachers who are qualified and competent for the provision of quality teaching for the school phases and subjects (Hofmeyer, 2015:1). Qualified and competent teachers are needed to meet the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (ISPFTED). South Africa does not produce enough teachers to meet the supply and demand as the teacher institutions in the country produce an average of 15 000 new teachers annually, which is less than the total of 25 000 teachers maintain the teacher-learner ratio (Maphalala & Mpofu, 2019). Maphalala and Mpofu, furthermore argue that the number of teachers that leave the profession annually ranges between 18 000 and 22 000.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) indicated that the public education system in South Africa has 410 000 teachers who are employed in nearly 25 000 schools and are responsible for teaching 12.9 million learners across the country (Maphalala & Mpofu, 2019). Furthermore, an International Survey for Teaching and Learning published in July 2019 found the average age of teachers in South Africa to be 43 years and it also found that the 32% of the teachers' ages were 50 and above which means that in the next 10 years there will be a need to replace half of the present teaching workforce.

A comprehensively planned human resource management and development (HRM&D) process is thus crucial for school success (Prinsloo, 2016:245). In fact, such a proposed process could provide the school with needed expertise to effectively manage the school and it has the potential to develop a positive culture for teaching and learning. Schools would prefer to avoid having mediocre and unmotivated staff because they want good results to attract more learners and thus ensure sustainability of the school (Prinsloo, 2016:248). It is vital to provide the school with the best available talent, but this needs planning that is thorough and implementation that is carefully orchestrated. The teachers are regarded as the essential drivers of a good quality education (Maphalala & Mpofu, 2019). The provisioning of staff in education entails that one has to consider the purpose of the Employment of Educators Act 55 of 1998 (Prinsloo, 2016:250). This Act applies to the employment of teachers in public schools, Further Education and Training (FET) institutions, departmental offices and Adult Basic Education Centres. It provides for the employment of teachers by the state, regulates the conditions of service, discipline, retirement and discharge of teachers and related matters.

Research conducted by the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) in 2015 revealed that the teaching force would need to increase from around 426 000 in 2013 to around 456 000 in 2025, an increase of 30 000 teachers over 12 years to meet the expected rise in learner numbers from 12.4 million in 2013 to 13.4 million in 2023 (Hofmeyer, 2015:3). In addition, due to inadequate data and inconsistencies, the projected models used based on data analysed from Annual School Survey (ASS) and Personnel and Salary System (PERSAL) database, provided dissimilar conclusions because the data sources were inconsistent, inaccurate and incomplete (ibid.). Furthermore, the unreliable data prevent planners and policy-makers detecting

problems timeously, developing appropriate strategies, planning effectively and acting on time (Hofmeyer, 2015:5).

Research conducted by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) from 2008 to 2012 found that the number of Foundation Phase (FP) teachers that were graduating in relation to teachers who qualify to teach in other phases is decreasing and the low numbers do not meet the needs of that phase (Hofmeyer, 2015:4). The enrolment of FP learners in 2012 consisted of 33% (400 000) of all school enrolments. The prediction by the researchers shows that the demand by FP teachers will exceed the supply. Furthermore, it appears that while there is an oversupply of teachers in other subjects, there are significant shortages in the key subjects such as languages for all phases, mathematics in the Intermediate Phase (IP) and Senior Phase and mathematical literacy in the Further and Education Training (FET) Phase. In 2012, there were insufficient FP mother tongue new teacher graduates for any language group of learners, which means that there is a dire need of new graduates who are proficient in using indigenous African languages for instruction purpose. Maphalala and Mpofu (2019) argue that South Africa needs to develop a more strategic plan for both scarce and critical skills subjects like science and technology, engineering and mathematics.

As far back as the early 2000s, researchers were aware that South Africa would experience shortages of teachers at two levels. Firstly, there would likely be increasing shortages in rural schools due to the unwillingness of teachers to work in a rural environment. Secondly, there is the possibility of shortages in urban schools with public teachers leaving to explore other career opportunities (DoE, 2005). The short-term solution to address the shortage of teachers would be to consider the qualified experienced teachers who are keen return to the teaching profession (Maphalala & Mpofu, 2019). It is crucial thus for South Africa to train, recruit and retain enough teachers who are suitably qualified for the provision of quality education to the citizens to meet the economic and social needs of the country (Maphalala & Mpofu, 2019) and thus mitigate the implications that escalating teacher attrition could have for education in the future.

2.5 MANAGING ATTRITION THROUGH TEACHER RETENTION

Teacher retention and teacher attrition are dissimilar and together are considered a conflicting phenomenon. Teacher retention is a phenomenon where teachers are encouraged to remain in their employment for a long period while teacher attrition refers to employees leaving their employment. Oke *et al.*, (2016:372) regard employee retention as a process where employees are encouraged to remain with the organisation for a maximum period or the completion of a specific project. Long *et al.* (2012: 290) argue that it is difficult for organisations to keep 'talent' especially when there is an active drive to recruit workers for other establishments or institutions. The primary concern for many organisations is to keep employees (Gbenu *et al.*, 2014:1813) even though hiring, developing and retaining employees is extremely demanding (Campbell-Whatley & Lyons, 2013b:193). Oke *et al.*, (2016:372) argue that there are policies and practices that organisations may use to stop or retain their talent from leaving the institution.

According to Oke *et al.*, (2016:371), teachers as the key managers of knowledge, play an important role in building the human capital base of a country and as a result, their role, which is central to basic education, cannot be underestimated, especially in developing countries. The main engine of any economic growth of any country is through a well-trained and knowledge-driven education workforce (Oke *et al.*, 2016). To retain teachers, teacher attrition and turnover issues need to be managed. It is pertinent to regulate teacher retention in schools for the prevalence of effective teaching and learning. Western nations like the United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (USA) have set up policies to avert losing a significant number of personnel (Oke *et al.*, 2016:371). The most precious resource that institutions can rely on are staff members since they contribute immensely to the performance and success thereof (Oke *et al.*, 2016:372).

Overseeing teacher retention draws attention to the action plan that culminates in employee retention that extensively motivates unity, capacity and the extent of personal dedication (Elfers *et al.*, 2006: 118). Employees may be inspired to remain in their work positions when employers support their progress and advancement because employees would realise that the institution has their welfare at heart (Oke *et al.*, 2016:373), particularly if they support staff in developing their areas of interest to

obtain expertise. Oke *et al.*, (2016:373) maintain that many staff members wish to prolong their stay at their schools to gain experience and take on more responsibility. This implies that staff members gain more experience as they progress in their work and assume greater control and authority (Oke *et al.*, 2016:373). Institutions influence and motivate their workforce by stressing targets and outputs and focusing on developing a positive attitude amongst employees which plays a role in influencing change and imagination in their work.

Pitsoe and Machaisa (2012:1) argue that if teachers are continuously leaving the teaching profession, it will be difficult to achieve the intentions of international policies like Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education For All (EFA), Universal Primary Education (UPE) and New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD). Furthermore, to keep competent teachers, leaders need to formulate and implement plans to ensure people are efficient in performing their work and there is job satisfaction.

Easley (2006:244) believes that retention management that could strengthen staff fulfilment and dedication which includes viewing education as a vehicle for social change, regarding education as important in life, passion for working with children, seeking job security, exploring job opportunities, love for children and regarding teaching as a calling. Furthermore, a supportive administration and collegial teaching body, a sense of effectiveness and a positive influence on students' achievement are also critical elements for teacher retention. Easley (2006) also indicates that staff need to feel honoured and appreciated. This aligns with Long *et al.*, (2016:290) who suggest that to reduce the staff members' thoughts of leaving, institutions should increase the level of managerial support provided to employees, provide advancement opportunities and create a challenging yet less stressful work environment. Fibkins (2012:10) suggests that to increase the performance of the entire teaching staff and to eradicate the chaos that is taking place in schools, innovative ways need to be found to reverse attrition and thereby increasing retention.

2.6 STRATEGIES FOR TEACHER RETENTION

Governments in both developing and developed countries find it difficult to retain teachers in schools (Chemwei & Koech, 2015:171). Similarly, the Department experiences difficulty in recruiting and retaining new teachers when the experienced ones leave the profession (Poti *et al.*, 2014:793). Each time a position is vacated in an organisation, either voluntarily or involuntarily, a new employee must be hired (Chemwei & Koen, 2015:170). To reduce the high rate of teacher attrition in schools, it is necessary for educational leaders to adopt strategies using the relevant policies (Oke *et al.*, 2016:375). School principals are expected to create a favourable employment environment to strengthen the teachers' job fulfilment to prevent them from leaving the schools. According to Van der Merwe and Conley (2016:312), the extent of help provided by the school principal was found to be indisputably associated with teacher retention. Campbell-Whatley and Lyons (2013b:184) suggest that having knowledge of how to support the teachers can assist with teacher retention. Practical options need to be considered to retain highly successful teachers who make up the heart and soul of the school's team (Fibkins, 2012:17). Principals can make many positive changes with just a little planning and forethought to improve the climate, communication, safety and morale in their schools (Farber, 2010:3). Principals should serve as role models for all staff, encouraging them to become committed to the profession as well as lifelong learners, modelling this through their behaviour.

The teachers who receive high administrative support and are satisfied, are less likely to experience dissatisfaction and are accordingly more likely to remain in education system. If school leaders ensure that the working environment is pleasant and conducive to teaching and learning, teachers feel valued when provided with a suitable workspace (Campbell-Whatley & Lyons, 2013b:193), thus the principal might employ constructive expertise to ensure teacher retention such as encouraging the use of team-teaching methodologies, promoting the use of team decision making, and establishing shared responsibilities among teachers. The authors further, maintain that collaborative efforts provide the teachers with the opportunity to solve problems together, cooperate with each other, interact collectively, review intervention strategies, study laws and regulations and provide input on professional development.

Fibkins (2012:1) suggests that experienced teachers are needed as models and mentors for the larger number of novice teachers entering the profession. A loss that can be averted could involve teachers who have developed classroom experience in guiding the beginner teachers through the pitfalls that emerge, not only with the learners in the classroom but also with relationships with peers, administrators, parents and community members. Bush and Middlewood (2013:174) regard an effective school as characterised by a “balanced mix” of younger teachers who are enthusiastic and bringing new ideas, as well as professionals with significant experience, bringing confidence in practice and wisdom from their teaching experience. It is thus important to maintain the balance in the teaching staff.

Van der Merwe and Conley (2016:312-313) suggest various approaches that can be used by the school principal to support novice teachers. These approaches entail providing them with personal and emotional support, task or problem-focused support and critical self-reflection on their teaching practice. Firstly, personal and emotional support is vital and school leaders have an important role to play in supporting novice teachers by creating an enabling environment and assuring novice teachers that it is normal to experience fear. They have to offer them sympathy and perspective, providing advice to help in reducing evitable stress. This support promotes the novice teachers’ personal and professional wellness and ensures the creation of a culture of quality teaching and in the process, improving the likelihood for novices to remain in teaching. Secondly, task or problem-focused support could assist novice teachers in understanding how to approach tasks including solving specific problems that crop up in their teaching. Experienced teachers could be asked to guide and mentor novices in effectively planning and accomplishing their tasks. Thirdly, critical self-reflection on teaching practice is crucial and can begin with newly appointed teachers’ participation in induction and orientation programmes, matching them with experienced teachers through mentoring, creating pleasant working conditions, promoting collegial collaboration, continuous professional development, realistic expectations for and of teachers and providing relevant and appropriate resources (Van der Merwe & Conley, 2016:312-313).

As previously mentioned, effective mentoring is associated with teacher retention (Campbell-Whatley & Lyons, 2013b:194), thus mentoring first year teachers has become standard practice since they usually spend their first year familiarising

themselves with school procedures and getting to know other school divisions and staff. Van der Merwe and Conley (2016:312) suggest that school principals partner novice teachers with mentors and give them time to work together. They may also show an interest in the teacher's work and give them time for attending to administrative duties. Creating a positive school climate is vital to ensure that all novice teachers are welcomed and valued as part of the team and are offered the opportunity of in-service training by observing others in their practice. Most mentor teachers with expertise in teaching techniques, laws, strategies, and interventions can assist a new teacher in adapting to the new environment by supporting them in developing collaborative patterns, teaching and discipline strategies, and curriculum and classroom organisation. Additionally, mentor teachers often have high working ethics, positive attitudes towards their learners, can function collaboratively and productively with other teachers (Campbell-Whatley & Lyons, 2013b:194).

Developing guidelines for effective mentors will assist mentors in understanding their roles and outlining the skills needed to mentor successfully which could foster effective partnerships. The mentor and mentee can collaboratively build individual's professional development goals that can guide the new teacher throughout the first year and the pair may need to meet with the principal on a regular basis to review progress, reflect, and adjust the goals as needed (Campbell-Whatley & Lyons, 2013b:194). The authors further indicate that peer mentoring and peer coaching is another mentoring and professional development approach that is gaining momentum. The primary model involves using experienced teachers who are deemed to be effective teachers to observe and support new teachers and, in some cases, other veteran teachers by assisting with lesson planning, modelling teaching strategies, evaluating lessons, assessing student work and managing student behaviour. Peer mentoring and coaching can promote collegiality and support professional development in a non-threatening manner since this peer coach is usually not part of the formal evaluation system. Fibkins (2012:119) proposes that with mentoring and support, teachers can become good teachers and ensure effective teaching and learning.

Campbell-Whatley and Lyons (2013b:194) also suggest that school principals assist both veteran and novice teachers by sharing their professional visions related to the school and cultivate professional expectations. Important elements are interpersonal

skills and communication with principals continually seeking ways to support the experienced and novice teachers by listening to them and through empowerment. Fibkins (2012:17) indicates that other options for teacher retention might be to include offering alternatives to veteran teachers such as part-time, full-time or flexible positions as consultants, teacher trainers or mentors to motivate them to remain on the staff and ensure the effective running of the school because when veterans exit the school setting, they leave a vacuum and take with them valuable experience, wisdom, mentoring and advising skills service.

Campbell-Whatley and Lyons (2013b:194) suggest e-mentoring as a way of forming a community of novice and veteran teachers which Kirschner and Lai (200:127) term as online communities of practice where teachers engage in a collaborative and supportive environment to share practices and learning from one another. This can be done through emails and WhatsApp groups and apps such as Zoom, and Teams, where the teachers creates a virtual network of professionals that produces a flexible outlet for sharing effective strategies and methodologies. E-mentoring forms a learning community that provides support through networking research trends which can enhance teacher motivation and development. These methods do not just provide one person the opportunity to consult with new teachers, but rather a pool of teachers with expertise. Mentors and mentees can connect in a cost-effective manner that supports group convenience for performing special projects and initiatives. E-mentoring can also help teachers in rural areas, if there is connectivity.

2.7 ATTRITION AND LEADERSHIP

Leadership is the most important factor in the success or failure of organisations. Campbell-Whatley and Lyons (2013a:11) argue that since the 1980s with the implementation of school reform initiatives, much more emphasis has been placed on leadership and the role of leaders in working cooperatively with school stakeholders to increase school effectiveness and student achievement. It is expected of the leader to manage and lead the administrative aspects of the institution. An effective leader helps individual members to achieve their best; sets an example, helps others to improve and do their jobs well. The leader must be mentally positioned, learn what team members need and must be able to provide the members with reasonable

resources, supplies, time, information and knowledge that are critical to the work in which members are engaged (Campbell-Whatley & Lyons, 2013:12)

Leadership is serving others so that they may shine wherein the leader demonstrates respect and affirmation to others (Lentz, 2012:17). A good leader is the architect of the organisation, guide relationships initiates change and model good behaviour (Van Deventer, 2016:11). Pless and Maak (2011:8) state that leadership is always about change which takes place at different levels such as individual, team, organisational or societal levels or a combination thereof. Bush and Glover (2016:213) contend that the context of leadership has changed and this change has brought about variations in the roles of school principals.

Van Deventer (2016:113) states that leadership relates to the mission, direction, inspiration and influence over others to structure and change activities and relationships. The leader creates an environment that supports equality of membership and removal of all predetermined biases and negative beliefs and a safe place for discussion, sharing of ideas without fear of retribution or disregard (Lentz, 2012:15). A leader promotes collaboration where team members work together and understand what is expected of them.

Principals, as leaders, are expected to develop a vision that can be shared by all stakeholders which includes ensuring the best possible resource achievement, allocation, evaluation as well as the security of site and property. Xaba (2012:219) adds that such activities are needed to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is of a high standard, irrespective of the context. Leaders have a specific set of competencies that require more forward thinking. They need to set the direction for the organisation and motivate their employees to remain in their jobs. Leaders need to keep the entity on the course and inspire commitment from dedicated people. A real leader will recognise the importance of earning the respect from the staff and must show competencies such as setting direction or mission, motivating stakeholders, being an effective spokesperson, determining strategies for the future and transforming the organisation (Rubino, 2012:19).

2.7.1 School Leadership

Bush and Glover (2016:211) state that school leadership and management are essential in developing a system that is fully functional, and one that would improve school and learner outcomes. The context for school leadership is firmly influenced by legislation and policy (Bush & Glover, 2016:213). Schools need leaders who are more caring, confident, enthusiastic and are able to establish positive relations with their staff. These leaders need skills such as self-awareness where the leader has a thorough understanding of one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, needs and drives, self-regulation, which is a propensity for reflection, ability to adjust to changes, the power to say no to things that are wrong and motivation, where the leader is driven to achieve being passionate about one's profession and enjoying the leadership challenges. A school leader needs to show empathy by thoughtfully considering others' feelings when interacting with them as well as good social skills, which is moving people in the direction that one desires by their ability to communicate effectively (Rubino, 2016:29).

An effective school leader provides direction, generating a clear sense of movement and identifying new aims, services, and structures (Van Deventer, 2016:115). Principalship is a position that is challenging and continuously changing. Principalship needs the best management and interpersonal skills including having empathy for the teachers (Farber, 2010:133). The attributes for leadership include communication skills, negotiation skills, motivational skills, change management skills, empowerment skills and a vision for the future (Lentz, 2012:187). The principal who is a leader encapsulates the essence of being a servant leader, one who empowers others by working with them and gains acceptance of the followers. He/she encourages teamwork in an environment where teams are regarded as the natural, most effective form of management, but spends time building and supporting a collaborative effort by setting an example (Van Deventer, 2016:115). Principals need to be more caring, confident and establish good relations with staff. (Rubino, 2012:23). Teachers need to know that leaders appreciate their efforts (Campbell-Whatley & Lyons, 2013b:194), which is demonstrated by the principals acknowledging the efforts of their staff, encouraging them and praising them verbally (Campbell-Whatley & Lyons, 2013b:193), offering inspiration with ideas that motivate (Van Deventer, 2016), encouraging and supporting novice teachers, motivating teachers to attend and

participate in workshops and conferences and being available to assist with a difficult student or behaviour problems that teachers may encounter (Campbell-Whatley & Lyons, 2013b:194).

Principals manage and oversee the entire school (Farber, 2010:122) that includes supervision of staff and working with parents and the communities. They deal with a host of issues which could range from students' behaviour problems parents' complaints, overflowing toilets, broken technology, child abuse reporting and late staff meetings, drug use, learner poverty, teenage pregnancy, homelessness and school violence. Principals are pulled in countless directions with some principals handling this role with impressive professionalism, empathy and support, but others not managing quite as well. Even sometimes, the best principals react negatively to the pressures they face which could include pressure from parents, testing pressure, time pressure and disciplinary pressures, each of which are discussed below (Farber, 2010:123-129).

Pressure from parents: Some pressing issues the principals must deal with are the concerns of vocal parents, many of whom complain about staff members. The principal is often put in an awkward position, acting as a mediator between the teacher and the parent. Some parents arrive at school without even having made the necessary arrangement.

Testing pressure: Principals experience constant pressure from the parents, local and national offices to continuously improve the test scores. This pressure is offloaded onto the teachers and can bring in what Farber calls "terror mode" where there is competition among teachers, and there is no teamwork and sharing of ideas which results in isolation and a test-focused environment that alienates the staff and can finally force them to leave the profession.

Disciplinary pressure: Learner discipline is another challenge that teachers experience especially the learner who disrupt the class on a daily basis and the principal is unable to assist the teacher. This situation could make the teacher to feel unsupported.

Van Deventer (2016:118) identified five trust dimensions for school manager-leaders. These are integrity or honesty, competence evident in technical knowledge and interpersonal skills, consistency in handling situations that require reliability,

predictability and good judgement, loyalty that is evident in a willingness to protect others and openness which when combined with truthfulness, creates a sense of safety. Not only the teachers need to be supported, even the principals need support. To assist with growing challenges faced in schools daily, support systems should be put in place for teachers and administrators (Farber, 2010:135). Farber further indicates that principals are drawn in all directions and that it only seems right that they should be given support to help them with their ever changing and challenging positions.

Being a principal can be isolating, overwhelming and stressful. Principals' mentors can provide guidance, support and the wisdom of years of experience to aid new principals in their leadership positions (Farber, 2010:134). Schools need experienced, well-trained administrators who have respectful personalities. They need to be able to interact well with others, contemplate change, make decisions, encourage staff and be able to say "no" to staff and parents when needed (Farber, 2010:129). By having a weekly meeting with a veteran or fellow administrator, principals can share strategies, bounce ideas off each other, and problem solve challenging issues and situations. These meetings can be a lifeline in an overwhelmed administrator's schedule and can help the principal develop more positive relationships with teachers, students, and parents (Farber, 2010:130).

Blakeley (2016:108) states that the complex world in which people live is increasingly viewed as lacking practical, ethical and courageous leadership. Roy (2017:100) adds that for organisations to transform, there is a need for responsible leadership which Van Deventer (2016:118) highlights as a contemporary approach to leadership which includes the concept of trust, widely recognised as an essential quality that plays a pivotal role in effective school leadership.

2.7.2 Responsible Leadership

Blakeley (2016:109) regards responsible leadership as a relationship between leaders and stakeholders that is based on values and driven by principles that are connected through a shared sense of meaning and purpose, which raises staff members to a higher level of motivation and commitment to achieving sustainable organisational goals. Cameron (2011:26) defines responsible leadership as the "art of building and sustaining social and moral relationships between business leaders and different

stakeholders or followers, based on a sense of justice, a sense of recognition, a sense of care and a sense of accountability for a broad range of economic, ecological, social, political and human responsibilities”.

Responsible leadership is a phenomenon that is ethical and relational (Pless & Maak 2011:5; Gustafsson & Hailey, 2016:133). It aims at generating positive outcomes for team members as stakeholders (Pless & Mark 2011:5). Responsible leadership occurs in social processes of interaction with those who affect or are affected by leadership and have a stake in the purpose and vision of the relationship (Gustafsson & Hailey, 2016:133). It requires integrity, compassion, consistency and morality. Furthermore, it necessitates leadership that is considered just, fair and humane. Freeman and Auster (2011:15) add that values are central to the idea of responsible leadership. They further indicate that it is imperative for organisations through their leaders to endorse values such as “responsibility and sustainability” and pay more attention to the effects of their actions on their stakeholders. Responsible leaders establish the right organisational values and embed these values throughout the organisation (Roy 2017:100).

Responsibility is the heart of effective leadership which is an element that is missing from other leadership types such as ethical and courageous leadership (Pless & Maak, 2011:3). As a result, there is a need for a new kind of responsible leaders who are more radical in the changes they seek and who are prepared to reform their self-interest in the context of the wider good (Blakeley, 2016:117). It is believed that more radical leaders facilitate efforts and influence others to bring about a more equitable, just, democratic and sustainable world, by working towards significant changes in institutional power structures and using their transformation and ongoing development of character (Blakeley, 2016:117-118). Pless and Maak (2011:4) contends that responsible leadership responds to both existing gaps in leadership theory and the practical challenges facing leadership. Firstly, it centres attention firmly on matters of responsibility, accountability, appropriate moral decision-making and trust and secondly, being accountable for actions, answerable for decisions and reliable and trusted.

According to Pless and Maak (2011:6), responsible leadership focuses on the responsibility that leaders have for different stakeholder groups. In an interconnected

stakeholder society, an important responsibility for leaders is to build and cultivate ethically healthy relationships. Responsible leadership constitutes an inherently ethical phenomenon (Pless & Maak, 2011:8) but for leaders to qualify as responsible, they must be considered responsible and thus accountable, trustworthy and ethical. Furthermore, a responsible leader is a person of character, with moral reasoning and imagination, makes ethical and principled decisions by considering their influence on others. Responsible leaders use their influence and power to pursue proper and legitimate ends through ways that are justifiable. Responsible leadership is close to the transformational notions of vision, inspiration, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration (Pless & Maak 2011:8). Both transformational and responsible leadership include the notion of change and transformation. However, responsible leaders employ change to achieve a higher social goal. Furthermore, responsible leadership regards role modelling as an important part of positive leadership which focuses on caring and concern for others and where ethics is an inherent component of leadership.

Responsible leadership broadens the scope of operational leadership to include responsibility, accountability, legitimacy and trust (Pless & Maak 2011:6). Gustafsson and Hailey (2016:134) posit that behaving responsibly is seen as a prerequisite for building trust while on the other hand, responsible leaders, through their actions, create relationships where others can trust them. Gustafsson and Hailey (2016:136) believe that responsible leadership and trust are closely intertwined, and that trust exists in and develops through relationships.

Cameron (2011:26) points to the key characteristics of responsible leadership as building public trust, sustaining an unimpeachable reputation, being exemplary and managing with integrity. Furthermore, there is a need to create incentives to encourage respectful collaboration and to ensure adherence to employment standards. Responsible leaders create values for stakeholders, mobilise people and teams, coach and empower employees and make provision for fair and equal employment opportunities. Responsible leaders are driven by a values-based vision of the future where ethical leadership grows and sustains a web of stakeholder connections and maintain their personal and professional integrity and have the drive to realise the vision in and through stakeholder engagement. Responsible leaders make principled decisions using values as a moral compass and promote active

citizenship inside and outside the organisation, being rooted in an ethics of care. Responsible leaders are driven by a desire to serve others, have humility and modesty in supporting others and caring for their interests and needs. They are cooperative, inclusive and empathetic and finally, have a combination of cognitive, emotional and moral qualities. Responsible leaders thus build and cultivate “sustainable relationships with stakeholders to achieve mutually shared objectives based on a vision of the organisation (Pless & Maak, 2011:5). Cameron (2011:32) postulates that responsible leadership involves accountability, dependability, authority and empowerment. Responsibility is a fundamental aspect of leadership (Kempster & Carroll 2016:3), thus attention is needed to enhance awareness, interpretation, clarification and theorising to have an influence on the responsibility of leading.

The above discussion relates to responsible leadership. However, Lumby (2015:29) postulates that research continually confirms that women are under-represented in school leadership and that there is a need to transform the androcentric approaches to leadership. Lumby (ibid) further argues that despite the extensive and rich body of research on school leadership, there are few women school leaders and those who are in the position of female leadership are being caught in what is termed “a web of discrimination”. The education context needs considerable transformation in the execution and responsibilities related to leadership (Kempster & Carroll, 2016:3).

2.7.3 Female Leadership

The predominance of women in the teaching profession is not only a national characteristic but is a feature in every province, both rural and urban. Despite the increasing feminisation of the teaching profession, women are still under-represented in management positions in schools in most of the provinces. Only pre-primary and primary schools are mainly led by women (DoE, 2005:10). Leadership in secondary schools is presently dominated by males (Mulkeen *et al.*, 2007); however, female teachers and principals are critical to the expansion and improvement of the education systems.

Women school leaders’ identities are constructed through the interactions of personal factors and the exigencies of leadership scripts where gender is constructed and deconstructed, done and undone daily (Lumby, 2015:29). Lumby further stipulates that in seeking to form and control an individual identity, a woman cannot avoid confronting

the patriarchal systems that have variously evolved in cultures and religions over time. Msila (2013:463) argues that the theme of female leadership is becoming topical in many countries and that there are many women who are beginning to overcome the societal stereotypes that stress that women cannot succeed in leading organisations. In Msila's study (2013:463), 70 male and 70 female teachers were asked if they would take up school principalship positions. Fifty-three male teachers responded positively while only 29 female teachers out of the 70 responded positively. Msila suggests that this response might have nothing to do with the women's ability to lead but more with how they have been socialised into thinking that leadership is solely a man's position.

In this regard, Faulkner (2015:419) posits that under-representation of women in principalship positions is a global issue experienced in developed and developing countries. Faulkner further speculates that this has a consequent impact on gender equality, which is perpetuated by a patriarchal society. Furthermore, it is difficult to establish, with accuracy, the statistics for women occupying school leadership positions in any country since education departments do not issue figures differentiated by gender or school sector. This aligns with Rogan and Shakeshaft (2011:270) who have noted the absence of reliable and comparable data either nationally or within and across states. Faulkner (2015:420) states that in 2012 statistics for the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) showed that across all the sectors of the school, only 33% of leaders were female. The lack of female leaders is embedded in many factors, the most common of which are the traditional norms and behaviours associated with and often required of females. In addition, these traditional roles and responsibilities are linked to a patriarchal view that regards leadership as being masculine and not suitable for females, thus women who pursue or attain leadership positions are considered as acting in a way that is challenging appropriate gender behaviour.

Research points out that women are under-represented in school management positions although they are in the majority (Batoor, Sajid & Shaheen, 2013:16) which aligns with Msila (2013:463) that the teaching fraternity has many women, but few are leaders in educational institutions. According to Msila (2013:463), over the years studies have shown that society expects effective leaders to be male which means that leadership is associated with males rather than with females. Lumby and Azaola (2014:31) believe that women who wish to take up leadership roles must contend with

stepping outside the acceptable notion of what it is to be a woman to match the leadership prototype, thus eliciting disapproval for transgressing the boundaries of being a woman, particularly in male-dominated space.

Morojele, Chikoko and Ngcobo (2013:199) contend that over the past decade, many sections of the South African government have been working to eradicate the imbalances of the past through affirmative action and various other policies aimed at enhancing human equality and social justice. A Gender Equity Task Team was established in 1998 to redress issues of gender inequity in education. The South African School Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996, the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998, the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 and Gender Equity Act of 1996, paved the way and facilitated the entry of women into a previously male-dominated educational bureaucracy of school management. The Bill of Rights enshrined in the Constitution Act 108 of 1996, assures equal benefits of the law and section 9(1) and states that “Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law” (Moorosi, 2010:548; Morojele *et al.*, 2013:199). Above all, these acts prohibit unfair discrimination in employment and ensure that women are equitably represented at all levels of employment, which gives South African women the opportunity to become school principals (Morojele *et al.*, 2013:199). They further indicate that the White Paper on Education and Training (RSA, 1996) calls for an increase in the number of women in leadership positions to counteract authoritarianism and to ensure that schools are governed in a manner that reflects the ideology of the state.

Moorosi (2010:548) contends that theoretically, women are acknowledged as having the same rights and access to employment and promotion. Nevertheless, the fact is that men and women do not have equal opportunities, and consequently women do not justly gain from equal opportunity interventions. Although there is a constitution and policy framework that advocate for change in the status regarding school leadership, women in leadership positions still experience numerous challenges in comparison to their male counterparts (Morojele *et al.*, 2013; Netshitangani & Msila, 2014). According to Msila (2013:463), many argue that gradually women’s status in the workplace is changing, although at a slow pace while women at times have internalised that they are not ready for leadership and management jobs. Furthermore, the way society experiences gender has made women believe that they are not made

for leadership; that leadership belongs to the men. Batool *et al.*, (2013:17) concur when they state that “top management positions continue to be the men’s domain”.

As previously indicated, women in South Africa remain under-represented in all spheres of life and particularly in educational leadership roles where most of the workforce is female (Lumby & Azaola, 2014:30), which could be as a result of socio-cultural factors (Batool *et al.*, 2013:28). Stereotyping ensues from a deeply anchored socialisation practice which traditionally starts at home, hidden or open, continued through the schooling process and into the workplace and wider community (Faulkner, 2015:419) and is evident in the home and workplace and in the self-limitation of women themselves in achieving against these perceptions. Msila (2013:465) argues that long after apartheid, South Africa has more female primary school principals than female secondary school principals and further states that the glass ceiling has not changed much in other African countries either. The experience of the few women who assume leadership positions is wrought with challenges. Netshitangani and Msila (2014:260) mention that women still operate in a challenging world irrespective of their settings. In many cultures, gender stereotypes have been sustained globally, reinforcing the intention of the glass ceiling. Msila (2013:465) indicates that the three barriers that obstruct women’s advancement into leadership are the concrete wall, the glass ceiling and the labyrinth. Lumby and Azaola (2014:31) argue that women taking up a leadership role may face persistent and prescriptive stereotypes irrespective of their competence. Faulkner (2015:420) postulates that it is difficult to change the stereotypical attitudes as there is a division of traditional labour in patriarchal societies; women are concerned with domestic issues such as child care, and that their place is at home hence many women are used to being subordinate to men because they have been socialised in that way and changing this is difficult. Moorosi (2010:547) indicates that while legislation advocates for equal opportunities for both men and women and workplace policies demand compliance, this may only be actioned at a minimal level in some societies as policies are often deeply unpopular, mistrusted and covertly opposed.

Batool *et al.*, (2013:22) indicate that many of the key problems faced by women, identified in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995, remain unsolved. These problems are persistent poverty, inequality of access to education, health, welfare, and violence. In addition, the impact of armed conflicts, the absence of women

from decision making in the economic sector as well as unequal participation in social structures are further problems. Also highlighted as issues such as insufficient mechanisms to promote the advancement of women, the inadequate recognition of women's rights including the failure to recognise women's contribution to society as well as environmental protection and management. Hindrances that prevent women from attaining leadership positions are standard and explored (Moorosi, 2010; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). Faulkner (2015:419) postulates that owing to tradition and beliefs of the male and female roles, these stumbling blocks are still evident in patriarchal communities and impede the personal and social empowerment of women and consequently, hinder their ability to emerge as effective leaders at every level of their daily lives (Batool *et al.*, 2013:22). Moorosi (2010:560) posits that within a transformation process, communities should be able to change their attitudes towards women.

2.8 SUMMARY

This chapter gave an exposition of the literature on teacher attrition, teacher retention and leadership. Teacher attrition is an international phenomenon that is ongoing and complex in nature. There are different kinds of teacher attrition due to various reasons that are influenced by teachers' dissatisfaction. The role of the principal in terms of teacher attrition was outlined. Teacher attrition has negative effects on the education system because it contributes towards the shortage of the teachers. Teacher supply and demand in relation to teacher attrition was also explored with supply and demand seeming to indicate that an insufficient number of teachers are being trained which contributes towards shortage of teachers in hard to staff subjects like mathematics, physical sciences and languages, including shortage of Foundation Phase teachers. Teacher attrition and teacher retention, contrasting terms and cannot be separated, were discussed and teacher retention strategies were also explored to minimise the impact of teacher attrition. Leadership refers to a process of influencing structures and activities with the intention to enhance relationships to achieve organisational goals. Leadership was also explored where emphasis was put on leadership at school level, responsible leadership and female leadership. Leadership has potential to influence teacher attrition; however, poor leadership can cause teacher attrition while good

leadership has the potential of reducing teacher attrition. A gap was identified through the reviewed literature and this study expects to fill it.

The chapter that follows, Chapter 3, explains the theories that underpin this study.

CHAPTER THREE

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the exposition of literature review on teacher attrition. This chapter provides explanation of the theories that underpin this study. The purpose of this study was to explore the female principals' experiences of teacher attrition. This study is rooted in two theories namely transformational leadership and an ethics of care. Transformational leadership was developed by Burns (1978) from a descriptive research on political leaders and was later expanded by Bass (1985). Ethics of care was developed by Gilligan (1982) and extended by Noddings (2005). The ensuing section presents a definition of theory, function of theory, features of theory, the theoretical framework, the role of the theoretical framework, and then a discussion of transformational leadership theory followed by a discussion on the ethics of care theory, its relevance to the study is followed by the conclusion to the chapter.

3.2 THE DEFINITION OF THEORY

A theory can be defined as "organised set of assumptions, concepts, principles and relationships the researcher uses to explain a phenomenon or some aspects of human experience" (Bezuidenhout, 2014:38). Ngulube, Mathipa and Gumbo (2015:45) regard theory as "a set of concepts used to explain a phenomenon". Theories are constructions created by people and they provide ways to view a phenomenon (Bezuidenhout, 2014:40). This means that the theory is a foundation on which a research study is based (Bezuidenhout, 2014:38). It forms the conceptual and theoretical framework within which data is collected, interpreted and understood and provides the frame or outline by which the researcher organises what he/she knows about the phenomenon.

Theories enable a focused and closer or deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Bezuidenhout, 2014:37). Broadly speaking, a theory is a logical description of concepts, constructs and relationships of specific processes or phenomenon in each discipline. It is thus, also a statement of how and why specific concepts are related. Theories can be compared to binoculars through which one can view a distant object

in the field of interest around us. Binoculars bring images closer and into focus. Studying the literature can aid the researchers to come up with a theory that will underpin their understanding of concepts that are examined. thereby influencing their research beliefs and values (Ngulube *et al.*, 2015:50), integrating the various steps in the research process (Bezuidenhout, 2014:58).

3.3 THE FUNCTION OF THEORY

Bezuidenhout (2014:43) contends that in the research study theories are essential. Theories provide an explanation of why something takes place (Ngulube *et al.*, 2015:54). Theories perform a host of functions, most of which are to organise a range of experiences into smaller categories; to identify and select what concepts or key areas of a phenomenon to study; to explain the relationship among concepts and to allow the researcher to contest social and cultural practices, so the researcher can generate innovative ways of thinking and experiencing. They may promote a previously insignificant concept and may help researcher to see things he/she has not observed before, or ways not considered before. In quantitative studies, theories allow researchers to predict and control aspects of a phenomenon and assist the researcher in identifying variables that could be used to test a hypothesis. Finally, theories explain the relationship between independent and dependent variables (Bezuidenhout, 2014:44).

3.4 THE PURPOSE OF THEORY

According to Ahsbahs and Prediger (2006:54 in Ngulube *et al.*, 2015:52), theories may be descriptive, explanatory and prescriptive depending on the aims of the research process. Explanatory and descriptive theories aim to analyse the social world while prescriptive theories formulate prescriptions on how reality should be. In qualitative research, theories are employed for the initial understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Ngulube *et al.*, 2015:58). The purpose of theory is to provide tools for the interpretation of data, prevent the fragmentation of knowledge by ordering, give focus to the inquiry and provide theoretical explanations and deeper understanding of what is being investigated (Ngulube *et al.*, 2015:52).

3.5 THE ROLE OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It is essential to develop a comprehensive and integrated theoretical framework within which to explore a specific topic, problem and research question (Bezuidenhout, 2014:55). This is done to avoid mistakes and contradictory assumptions that would misrepresent the research findings. The theoretical framework guides research activities by relying on a formal theory (Lester, 2005:458). The entire research process should be informed and guided by the theoretical framework (Ngulube *et al.*, 2015:55). Bezuidenhout (2014:55) and Ngulube *et al.* (2015:54-55) contend that a theoretical framework helps the researcher to shape the research study in a number of ways that include to outline the theoretical scope of the study, specifically, what is and what is not relevant to the study, providing the frame through which a problem under investigation can be understood and serves as a basis for the research plan. It situates the researcher within a scholarly discourse and links the study to the broader body of literature, providing guiding principles and a specific perspective through which the researcher examines the topic. The theoretical framework allows the researcher to narrow the project down to a manageable size, shaping the research questions to focus the study. It offers a plan for data collection guiding the researcher on how to collect, analyse and interpret the data of the study. Finally, the theoretical framework points to the most critical research questions that need to be answered to improve an understanding of a particular phenomenon.

A good theory should be testable, be able to account for most of the available data, predict outcomes of future experiments, be as simple as possible (Rashedi, 2012). Theories lead to theoretical frameworks (Ngulube *et al.*, 2015:45), which according to Lester (2005:458), “is a basic structure of ideas (abstractions and relationships) that serve as the basis for a phenomenon that is to be investigated”. Furthermore, all aspects of the analysis, these abstractions and interrelationships, are then used as the foundation and justification. Lester (2005:458) identified three kinds of research frameworks, namely theoretical, practical and conceptual. In this study, I employed a theoretical framework.

3.6 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Osanloo and Grant (2016:13) regard a theoretical framework as a “blue print” for the whole research. It serves as a guide on which to build and support the study and provides the structure to define how the researcher will approach the whole study philosophically, epistemologically methodologically and analytically. Thus, the theoretical framework consists of selected theory or theories that underpin the researchers’ thinking pertaining to how the researcher understands and plans to research his/her topic including concepts and definitions from the theory relevant to the topic. It is the lens that the researcher employs to view the research study.

A theoretical framework is a specific collection of thoughts and theories that relate to the phenomenon that the researcher chooses to investigate (Bezuidenhout, 2014:55). It is the conceptual starting point and frame of the research study. A theoretical framework is a framed snapshot of a particular topic that the researcher selects and describes in terms of specific and related theories. In using a theoretical framework, the researcher selects and elevates specific theories and their concepts and assumptions from hundreds of theories and brings them into focus because they are relevant to the researcher’s topic (Bezuidenhout, 2014:55).

A theoretical framework is derived from existing theory or theories in the literature that have already being tested and validated by others and considered a generally accepted theory in the scholarly literature (Osanloo & Grant, 2016:16). A theoretical framework frames the outcomes and the findings of the research study and it is the roadmap that researchers use in the expedition of finding patterns in answering research questions, including finding solutions to research problems (Bezuidenhout, 2014:37).

The researcher needs to choose and use the theoretical framework carefully and ensure it fits the purpose for it to inform the investigation (Ngulube, *et al.* 2015:51). In this study transformational leadership theory and ethics of care theory were chosen to inform this study.

3.6.1 Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership is a type of leadership that has been advocated by scholars of leadership theory since the early 1980s (Campbell-Whatley & Lyons, 2013a:10). Burns (1978) introduced the concept of transformational leadership and Bass (1985), building on the work of Burns, further defined this leadership model and helped in getting it widely accepted as a leadership approach in social organisations (Campbell-Whatley & Lyons, 2013a:10). Bass (1985, 1990) extended the concept of transformational leadership to describe those leaders who motivate followers to do more than they originally intended to do by presenting followers with a compelling vision and encouraging them to transcend their interest for those of the group or unit (Belasen & Frank, 2012:193). Burns (1978:20) outlined transformational leadership as a process in which “leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation”.

Transformational leadership is thus seen as the leader’s effect on followers, that they feel trust, admiration, loyalty and respect towards the leader and that they are motivated to do more than they initially expected to do (Krishna, 2011:152). The leader further transforms and motivates followers by making them aware of the importance of task outcomes, inducing them to transcend their self-interest for the sake of the organisation and activating their higher order needs. Belasen and Frank (2012:193) assert that transformational leadership is future-oriented, and it strengthens organisations by inspiring follower commitment and creativity. It is a process that changes and transforms individuals. Lentz (2012:14) regards transformational leadership as a quality that positively motivates and moves good ideas forward. Transformational leadership could significantly change an organisation through its people by raising their consciousness, empowering them and providing the nurturing needed as they produce the desired results (Rubino, 2012:21). According to Pless and Maak (2011:8), leaders influence followers by appointment, dedication or accident and vice versa, which leads to the realisation of individual objectives, which implies a change process and thus transformation.

The key to transformational leadership is to build capacities that allow educational stakeholders to reach their potential for the organisation's improvement and growth (Brower & Balch, 2005:98). Krishna (2011:153) agrees that the foundation of transformational leadership is to enhance the staff members motivation and performance. Transformational leaders enable employees to find meaning and fulfilment in transforming underlying attitudes, values and commitments. This transformation potentially establishes higher goals and greater purpose as members gain independence and autonomy (Lentz, 2012:163). In addition, transformational leaders promote strong beliefs and values of the human potential, they are confident, optimistic and passionate about their work and can instil the same qualities within the organisation. They must be good communicators, share information with subordinates because withholding information causes ill-feelings and concerns that other important matters are not being disclosed. They need to take calculated risks but also need to recognise that they are not perfect and that sometimes there will be errors in what they say and do and that these must be acknowledged so that they can be put aside wherein they can move on to more pressing current issues (Rubino, 2012:29). Transformational leadership is associated with effectiveness, extra effort and satisfaction Krishna (2011:152) and focuses on higher order intrinsic and ultimately moral motives and needs that include esteem, autonomy and self-actualisation (Camphor *et al.*, 2003:14). Transformational leaders can balance a variety of pressures while not losing sight of their values. The main focal point of transformational leadership is on the capabilities and commitment of the organisational members.

The transformational leader initiates and directs the activities of the learning organisation and sees a future based upon the change unit, growing and developing to improve quality and effectiveness (Lentz, 2012:187). The transformational leader recognises potential that all members in the organisation should contribute to the modification and operations of the organisation, have a firm understanding of the change processes, their benefits and the concerns held by employees about change. The leader needs to value each employee and appreciates their ideas, experience and thoughts and sees the relationship between attributes of each stakeholder to the successful implementation of a learning organisation. Transformational leaders and staff members are united in their pursuit of higher-level common goals (Camphor *et*

al., 2003:14). Such leadership occurs when people engage with each other so that leaders and followers raise one another to a higher level of motivation and morality. In such incidences, the leader focuses on arousing awareness and consciousness that elevates the school goals and purposes to the level of shared covenant that binds people together in a moral commitment (Camphor *et al.*, 2003:15). Transformational leaders are designers, teachers, and servants, according to Senge (in Lentz, 2012:14), seeking to raise the consciousness of followers by appealing to ideas and moral values such as liberty, justice, equality, peace and humanitarianism and in turn, they are elevated from their “everyday selves” to their “better selves” (Krishna, 2011:152).

Belasen and Frank (2012:193) maintain that the transformational leader affects the feelings of the subordinate by creating identification with both the leader and work unit. They argue that Burns’ leadership is entirely different from wielding power because it is inseparable from the staff members’ needs. According to Pless and Maak (2011:8), transformational leadership entails the process of building commitment and empowerment among followers to accomplish organisational goals which enhance the follower performance. Lentz (2012:15) states that when transformational leadership is evidenced, the leader and the team naturally experience a process that lasts over time and creates exciting possibilities for individual learners. The transformational leader sees all persons on the team as integral to this process, and input from all is required, necessary and sought after in respectful ways. The assumption is that transformational leadership ensures commitment as both leaders and followers want to achieve,

In the context of the school, transformational leadership focuses on the people involved and their relationships and requires an approach that seeks to transform feelings, attributes, and beliefs. Transformational leaders purposefully try to impact upon the culture of the school to change it (West, Jackson, Harris & Hopkins, 2000:33), by stimulating and inspiring followers to achieve excellent outcomes (Van der Bijl & Prinsloo, 2016:32). Leadership can occur during any everyday activity (Lentz, 2012:50), and is seen throughout the organisational structure, “when one says I have an idea or let’s try this or I think we need to do this to help”. It occurs as the change agent motivates others to risk change and find new ways to do something different and hopefully better. Transformational leaders motivate subordinates to maintain high levels of productivity, through the transformation of attitudes, preconceptions and

values including encouraging commitment from the staff members (Van Deventer & Van der Vyver, 2016:99).

Transformational leadership has potential to bring together all stakeholders in harmonious relationships (Bush, 2007:396) and includes principles such as individual support, organisational values, intellectual stimulation and participative decision-making (Van Deventer & Van der Vyver, 2016:99). In transformational leadership, leaders and followers are united in pursuit of higher-level common goals. Transformational leadership eventually becomes moral because it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspirations of both leader and subordinate (Camphor *et al.*, 2003:14). Transformational leaders translate vision into reality generating excitement and influencing people to transcend their interests for the sake of the group (Camphor *et al.*, 2003:51).

Parry and Bryman (2013:451 cited in Van der Bijl & Prinsloo, 2016:32) see the transformational leadership model in the school context as being made up of three broad categories, which includes setting direction to ensure goal importance congruence, developing people and redesigning the organisation:

Setting direction to ensure goal importance congruence: The most important aspect of transformational leadership is that it assist the staff members to develop a common understanding of the school and its activities, including the goals that support the vision and sense of purpose. These are enhanced by promotion of effective communication and mentoring of organisational performance.

Developing people: The transformational leadership model builds capacities and uses inspirational motivation to influence staff in the school context within which they work. The ability to engage in such school practices depends partly on the leader's insight into what is required to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Redesigning the organisation: Transformational leaders create conditions in their schools that support and sustain the performance of administrators, teachers and learners. This set of practices acknowledges the importance of learning communities as key contributors to teachers' work and students' learning.

Campbell-Whatley and Lyons (2013a:10) argue that transformational leaders are committed to going beyond the call of duty and seek to develop those values and

beliefs in their followers. Moreover, they are committed to the greater good of the organisation and are also committed to providing a high level of service to clients who are served by the organisations they lead. In the context of the school, organisational leaders are highly committed to their work, instilling values and commitments, by being supportive and developing a close working relationship with their teachers and learners. Campbell-Whatley and Lyons (2013a:10) argue that transformational leadership is highly appropriate for and is actively needed today by school leaders.

Leading on from the above discussion on the leaders needed in today's schools, Krishna (2011:153), Belasen and Frank (2012:193-194) and Van der Bijl and Prinsloo (2016:32) have categorised the transformational role into four types or traits:

- *Idealised influence* refers to leaders with high standards of moral and ethical conduct, which are held in high personal regard, who engender loyalty from followers.
- *Inspirational motivation* refers to leaders with a strong vision for the future, based on values and ideas that generate enthusiasm, build confidence and inspire followers using idealised influence and strong language.
- *Intellectual stimulation* refers to leaders who challenge existing organisational norms, who encourage divergent thinking and push followers to develop innovative strategies.
- *Individual consideration* applies to leader behaviour aimed at recognising the unique growth and developmental needs of followers, as well as coaching followers and consulting with them.

The assumption is that transformational leadership ensures subordinates' commitment as both leaders and followers want to achieve, are united in pursuit of higher-level goals and want to steer the school in a specific direction (Van der Bijl & Prinsloo, 2016:32). Leaders can make use of the components of transformational leadership to motivate team members by building the school vision, establishing school goals, providing intellectual stimulation, offering individualised support, modelling best practices and important values, demonstrating high performance expectations, creating a productive school culture and developing a structure to foster participation in decision-making (Bush & Middlewood, 2013:19-20). To sum up, a

transformational leader accomplishes the improvement of the school through foresight and vision (Lentz, 2012:185).

3.6.2 Ethics of Care Theory

A further theory deemed relevant for this study was the ethics of care (EoC). Ethics of care theory, regarded as a normative ethical theory, was developed by feminists such as Carol Gilligan (1982), from the discipline of psychology where empirical data was used to question Kohlberg's (1981) negative assumptions about the moral development of women (Koggel & Orme, 2013:1). Ethics of care is defined as the real interest taken by the educational leader in the well-being of the teachers and learners which manifests in sympathy and commitment (Van der Vyver, Van der Westhuizen & Meyer, 2014:62). Ethics of care, sometimes called feminine ethics, has helped refocus attention on the importance of caring, relationships, emotion, tolerance and humanity (Kerridge, Lowe & McPhee, 2005:20). Ethics of care has a feature of dependence and interdependence and deals with addressing the needs of others in a morally responsible way (Brannelly, 2013:225).

Koggel and Orme (2011:1) assume that ethics of care emphasises the importance of context, interdependence, relationships and responsibilities to concrete others while Steckley and Smith (2013:175) contend that care ethics highlights the importance of listening, interpretation, communication and dialogue. Held (2013:10) adds that ethics of care accentuates the values of empathy, sensitivity, trust and responding to the need of others, understanding the importance and necessity of caring. Furthermore, it cultivates practices such as the building of trust and practices of responding to actual needs. It evaluates the existing practices and understands that caring practices as they exist, are usually in need of vast improvement. These existing care practices generally take place in highly inadequate social and political conditions that need fundamental restructuring to make them less unjust and inequitable. Care ethics accentuates the responsibility to promote and nurture caring in the relationships of others, best done by modelling genuine caring within real relationships (Burnor & Raley 2011:246). Furthermore, one cannot function as an effective carer without having the emotional capacity needed for caring (Burnor & Raley 2011:249).

Caring is an essential attribute in all human relationships and humans, including both teachers and learners, who have a need to feel cared for and cared about (Van

Deventer & Van der Vyver, 2016:93). In a school environment, the caring role has a more specific aim with its overarching goal being to establish an environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning since a caring environment enhances productivity. Teachers and students uniformly work better when they are cared about. Noddings regards caring as a relationship between a caregiver and the cared for as both parties must be involved in the relationship to be labelled as caring (Kroth & Keeler, 2009:512). They further argue that the carer must display both engrossment and motivational displacement. Engrossment reflects an open and non-selective receptivity to the cared for (Noddings, 2005:15). Receptiveness means being fully available to care, see, hear and feel what the other is expressing (Kroth & Keeler, 2009:512). They further contend that motivational displacement refers to the desire on the part of the caregiver to help the other. Displacement occurs as the caregiver's focus shifts from his/her own plans to those of the cared for as he/she relates to a wish to take the initiative to assist the other person in order for them to prosper.

Steckley and Smith (2013:170) regard care as reciprocal since it includes the category of care receiving. This significant development makes visible the person being cared for and his/her appropriate response to that care. Tronto (1993) suggests that care is a disposition and practice (Brannelly, 2013:223). Care as practice considers the full context of caring, and the needs of all parties, considering the concerns of the care receiver as well as the skills of the caregiver and the role of those taking care (Tronto, 1993:118). It is of particular importance that the needs of all involved are identified (Brannelly, 2013:223) as in many cases, the needs of the caregivers and providers are not stated, or care is focused on one party rather than all. 'Caring about' is shaped culturally and individually and so acknowledges the uniqueness and individuality of the care receiver, rather than applying universalistic rules of care. 'Taking care of' recognises the strengths brought to the situation of all involved. Intimate knowledge is required, so that care giving is done well, and is recognised as having happened by the reaction of the care receiver (Brannelly, 2013:224).

Vanlaere and Gastmans (2011:22), Tronto (2013:53), Lloyd (2013:112), Brannelly (2013:224) and Ash (2013:208-209), maintain that care consists of four phases which include attentiveness or caring about which means recognising the need for care, responsibility or taking care of which means taking responsibility to meet the needs, competence or caregiving which refers to the actual physical work of providing care

and responsiveness or care receiving which means the evaluation of how well the care provided had met the caring need. All the four stages need to be integrated to realise the ethics of care (Lloyd, 2013:112) and thus form a whole. Carers are in a much stronger position to be able to be attentive, competently responsive and take responsibility for people if they have entered into caring relationships on the basis which enable them to exercise choice over which elements of care they provide and how (Rummery, 2013:132).

Caring can never involve just one person (Burnor & Raley, 2011: 246). An ethics of care values the participation of all concerned and appreciates the specific and situated context of caring which enables practitioners to better articulate why the outcomes that have been discussed and negotiated need to take place (Brannelly, 2013:226). The moral achievement is that others matter and that the concerns of the people who receive services are paramount in-service provision. Care, based on the ethics of care, enables negotiations that are participative and therefore ensures that potentially marginalised voices are heard and responded to (Brannelly, 2013:227). Citizenship is sustained when practice is based on the principles of ethics of care which encompass the notion of humanness, autonomy, power and control, participation, equality and justice and that others matter (ibid). According to Burnor and Raley (2011:248), sensitivity, compassion and loyalty have the potential to contribute positively towards caring relationships.

Caring leadership in the context of the school, aims firstly at addressing the needs of the people that are cared for (Van Deventer & Van der Vyver, 2016:94). The principal as the leader needs to show concern for the welfare, protection and strengthening of those for whom he/she cares, which is the well-being of the teachers and the learners. Secondly, caring leadership aims at supporting the people within the school, ensuring that the cared for achieve meaningful life of high quality because acting in a caring way towards those within the school, promotes growth and self-actualisation. Thirdly, caring leadership aims at eliminating or reducing the dependence on the side of the cared for, which means that those who are cared for develop independent self-care and self-actualisation.

The ethics of care guides meeting the needs of persons, including needs for peace and security in ways that are liberating, effective, sensitive and responsible (Held,

2013:14). The ethics of care guides principals in listening to others in an attempt to understand their points of view. Care inherently involves attentiveness to others and responding to their needs, and its values prepare principals to do what is required to reduce and undermine trends towards disruption, poor discipline and violence (Held, 2013:20). The duty of care is a moral requirement interwoven with both human need and human agency, which is understood to be the ability to act freely to achieve self-determined ends of personal significance through rational, emotional and relational means (Miller, 2013:44).

Care is designed to foster self-dependence (Miller, 2013:43). Furthermore, the aim of caregivers enacting the duty to care is to help cultivate, maintain or restore agency and self-determination which means that the form of caregiving that the duty of care requires will respectfully acknowledge the abilities of those in need, to set and realise their self-determined ends and life goals. Good care often involves significant emotional attachments between the caregiver and care receiver (Miller, 2013:44). To provide proper care in an institutional context such as a school, requires certain elements of care that go unspoken and that are taken for granted, to be made explicit (Tronto, 2013:52). Furthermore, all forms of caring, either personal or institutional require that attention is paid to purpose, power and particularity (Tronto, 2013:54).

The ethics of care is primarily based on an absolute regard for the quality of life of others and the environment (Van Deventer & Van der Vyver, 2016:90). It beholds acts of cultural enrichment, individuality, loyalty, human potential, human dignity and empowerment. The creation of a caring school community is dependent on the nature of the caring relationship (Van Deventer & Van der Vyver, 2016:99). Miller (2009:48) states that the caring role of the school leader manifests through support and empowerment according to a transformational approach.

In the context of a school, caring can be defined as the real interest taken by the educational leader in the well-being of the teacher and learner, which manifests in sympathy and commitment to the person (Van der Vyver *et al.*, 2014:62). Van Deventer and Van der Vyver (2016:93) identify three broad aims that caring leaders can use as they navigate teacher attrition issues which include addressing the needs of the people that are cared for, supporting the cared for towards a meaningful life of high quality and leading the cared for to independent self-care and self-actualisation.

School leaders should have a passion for caring and should go the extra mile for teachers where they feel comfortable to talk to teachers about their background and current situations (Van Deventer & Van der Vyver, 2016:97). Noddings (2005:27) indicates that caring is the "bedrock of all successful education", and when school leaders demonstrate ethics of care and focus on community building, it, in turn, increases job satisfaction (Kroth & Keeler, 2009:513). Van der Vyver, Van der Westhuizen and Meyer (2013:389) support the view that there are many ways that the principal can employ to create a caring school community. This includes amongst others, allowing people the opportunity to participate in the decision-making processes of the school and encouraging critical discussion between teachers and learners. They further argue that the principal ought to instil a spirit of partisanship on both the teachers and learners as it is an eminent fact that a selfless principal stands a better chance of benefitting the school community. It is against this background that the they can also principal ought to show the ability and willingness to sacrifice personal interest for the interest of the school community.

Caring is an essential attribute in all human relationships. Humans, including learners and teachers, have a need to feel cared for and cared about. Van Deventer and Van der Vyver (2016:93) confirm this view and state that teachers and learners alike work better when they are cared about. The school environment consists of different relationships between the various stakeholders of which the quality thereof should be at the core of the school community (Van Deventer & Van der Vyver, 2016:93). These caring relationships are established and flourish within the context of a caring school community which comprise the principal, teachers and learners and their parents within a community, with the principal as a manager-leader, acting as the caregiver (Van Deventer & Van der Vyver, 2016:93). Providing a caring and safe environment is one of the most important aspects of school leadership, hence the principal's management and leadership functions should include a caring role (Van Deventer & Van der Vyver, 2016:94). The ethics of care should be evident in schools, filtering down from the principal who should be supportive, empathetic, collaborative and approachable, to the learners' needs. Although it is often challenging to offer this kind of support within an already overloaded schedule (Farber, 2010:122), effective principals must have experience and knowledge at the level they are supervising in order to help their staff and understand the grade level demands and curriculum,

understanding the realities of being in the classroom daily (Farber, 2010:130). The caring role in the school environment has a more accurate aim as its overarching goal is to establish an environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning since both teachers and learners are more productive when they work in a caring and friendly environment (Van Deventer & Van der Vyver, 2016:94). The specific aim of establishing a caring environment, which includes a caring and positive school climate that leads to higher levels of productivity and efficacy for each teacher and learner in the school, is to ensure the positive development of the school (ibid).

In working to alleviate teacher attrition, principals can help meet the needs of the teachers in a more caring way (Burnor & Raley, 2011: 249). In the absence of caring leadership from the principal, the emotional well-being of teachers and learners is affected, and levels of involvement, expectation and performance among the teachers become weak (Van Deventer & Van der Vyver, 2016:95). Lack of caring leadership leads to mistrust, manipulation, aggressive and controlling actions, or the use of threatening language from the principal or teachers' side, negative organisational relationships which in turn promote a negative school climate (Van Deventer & Van der Vyver, 2016:95). Negative organisational relationships and environment contribute to lower levels of organisational effectiveness and this leads to lower levels of commitment to the school and its goals (ibid). Eventually teaching and learning at the school is affected in a negative way.

The general advantage of ethics of care is embedded in the fact that people who experience care will learn how to care and in turn show willingness to care for others (Van Deventer & Van der Vyver, 2016:95). Teachers who experience care from the principal and the School Management Team (SMT) would in turn show care to the learners. Van der Vyver (2011:55) regards advantages of caring school leadership as improving interpersonal relationships which result in higher levels of production and commitment in teachers in that it has a positive influence on the teacher's experience of job satisfaction and quality of work life. It also establishes a learning community that includes every person at the school. Furthermore, it enhances work-organisational behaviour, with the implication that teachers work harder and put more effort into their work. A caring principal creates a caring school community where parents and other members of the community work together to the benefit of the school and its learners, as decision making on different levels at the school is based on and directed by the

ethics of care. Moreover, the presence or absence of care affects and determines the quality of teaching and learning at the school.

Caring takes place because of relationships that exist between people. The school community can be regarded as a moral community where people know and care for each other. The school leader is challenged to establish a community where a feeling of “I or we belong” is supported. A caring school community endorses a school climate where trust and understanding form the basis for relationships (Van Deventer & Van der Vyver, 2016:97). This climate must be developed and implemented by the whole school and should be characterised by mutual respect, caring, knowledge of each other’s feelings and “I belong” feeling and the willingness to take responsibility for one’s actions and deeds (Van Deventer & Van der Vyver, 2016:97). School principals should have a passion for caring and should “go the extra mile” for the teachers and learners. In addition, they should feel comfortable to speak to teachers and learners in order to find out about their background and current situations (ibid).

The relevance of ethics of care to teacher attrition widens the definition of welfare to that of well fare, in other words, there is movement beyond an understanding of well-being that relates only to the services provided by the state or by organisations on behalf of the state, to one which includes all relations and interventions that contribute to the well-being, health, safety and security of individuals, communities and nations (Koggel & Orme, 2013:3).

3.7 THE RELEVANCE OF THE THEORIES TO THE STUDY

Transformational leadership theory is considered pertinent for this study because of the effect that transformational leaders have on the staff members. A transformational leader has the capacity to understand employees’ unique needs, can create a supportive environment and engage in practices that build on employee self-confidence to enhance their performance. Transformational leaders need to articulate a clear vision which has the potential to motivate employees to take great responsibility for their work. Transformational leaders believe that their followers have the potential and as a result, these leaders create opportunities for their followers to significantly impact their work which could enhance their level of performance. The characteristics

of this approach make it suitable in that it will enable the female principals to engage in matters relating to teacher attrition in public schools.

Ethics of care is also considered appropriate for this study in that it is normative and deals with what makes the actions right or wrong (Koggel & Orme, 2010:10). It centres on consideration in caring as a fitting way to relate to individuals and how individuals aid others. Caring connections comprise the carer and the cared-for and are fundamental to human existence. Thus, the principal has the obligation to care for the teachers by attending to the issues that relate to teacher attrition. Caring leaders display the attributes such as accessibility, unselfishness, concern for well-being of others, compassion, emotional intelligence, empathy, empowering others, fairness, humility, listening, motivation, recognition, respect, servitude, sensitivity and sincerity, sympathy, showing interest in others and trust (Van Deventer & Van der Vyver, 2016:96-97). Van der Vyver *et al.*, (2013:389) state that to create a caring school community, principals can apply all the characteristics of a caring leader within the school community and promote representative and democratic decision making. They can also encourage critical dialogue between teachers and learners and thus build a shared commitment to and ownership of the school. As the principals recognise and respect the values and shared realities of teachers and learners, they can support teachers and learners within the school community by their ability and willingness to sacrifice personal interests for the benefit of the school community.

Transformational leadership and ethics of care can be employed by female principals to build a relationship of trust with the teachers, to nurture, support and to attend to their unique demands. Transformational leadership and ethics of care theories were thus deemed appropriate for this study to understand how female principals experience teacher attrition.

3.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter, a detailed exposition of the theoretical framework was provided. The study is rooted in both transformational leadership and ethics of care theories. Together, these theories are founded on moral foundations which support the approach which principals use in developing a climate in which individuals are persuaded to care and do things in the right way. Transformational leadership and

ethics of care theories were discussed in this chapter to validate how female principals can use both theories to establish a constant relationship with the teachers and address their individual needs in their effort to handle teacher attrition issues at the school.

The ensuing chapter (Chapter four) presents the research design and methodology.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter focused on and provided the theoretical framework that underpins this study. This chapter gives an exposition of the research approach, research design on which the study is based, and the research methodology embarked upon to answer the research question of: *How do female principals in Gauteng Province describe their experiences with teacher attrition?* This chapter begins with an explanation of the research paradigm and the paradigm underpinning the study. The research approach and the research design deemed most appropriate for this study are then presented with justification for their choice. The chapter subsequently clarifies the population and presents the sampling used for the study. Thereafter, the data collection techniques and data analysis methods are discussed in full. I also discuss issues of trustworthiness, ethics, subjectivity and reflexivity.

4.2 THE PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

The research paradigm is a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality and serve as a lens to interpret reality (Nieuwenhuis, 2016b:52; Maree 20:31) Hammond and Wellington (2013:116) posit that a paradigm refers to the dominant framework in which research takes place and this framework defines how problems are identified (what is to be studied), as well as the epistemological and methodological assumptions behind the research (the nature and value of the knowledge generated). Creswell (2016:40) identifies four types of paradigms from which qualitative researchers might choose namely, post positivism, critical theory, constructivism and participatory.

De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delpont (2011:41) posit that the important point is that all scientific research is conducted within a particular paradigm or way of viewing one's research material and researchers must, therefore, decide in which paradigm they are working. In order to conduct this study, I adopted a social constructivist paradigm, as I had to construct and interpret meaning regarding how female principals experience teacher attrition. The researcher's role as a constructivist is to "understand, explain, and clarify social reality through the eyes of different participants" (Cohen, Manion &

Morrison, 2000:19). Taking the constructivist's stance is understanding that individuals hold different views and the role of the research was to uncover these multiple views (Creswell, 2016:42).

Social constructivism

The basic tenet of constructivism is that reality is socially, culturally and historically constructed (Atwater, 1996; 832; Crotty, 1998:54; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:42). According to social constructivism, reality is constructed through human activity and thus can be discovered by individuals (Amineh & Asl, 2015:13). Thus, research attempts to understand social phenomena from a context specific perspective (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:43) and that individuals develop subjective meanings of their own experience (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014a:29), which gives way to multiple meanings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:43). Adams (2006:245) posits that social construction of knowledge is the product of social interaction, interpretation and thus, understanding and the creation of knowledge cannot be separated from the social environment in which it is created. Therefore, my role as the researcher was to understand the multiple realities from the perspective of participants and the only way to achieve this understanding was for me to become involved in the reality of the participants and to interact with them in meaningful ways. Thus, constructivist researchers often address the "process" of interaction among individuals (Creswell 2013:25; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:43). The role of the constructivist researcher is that of a "passionate participant" who facilitates reconstruction of multi-voices (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:43). Social constructivists believe that, depending on circumstances, culture and experience, people may or may not experience reality in the same way (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014a:29). Furthermore, reality is flexible and subjective and created by human interaction.

The constructivist stance maintains that learning is a process of construction of meaning; it is how people make sense of their experience (Amineh & Asl, 2015:9), drawing on the ability of an individual to construct meaning (Nieuwenhuis, 2016b:60). Constructivism regards the world as capable of seeking to uncover the meaning that human beings invest in social activity (Hammond & Wellington, 2013:120). Furthermore, the belief that reality is socially constructed and as a result, it is assumed that by studying people in their social context or natural environment, there is greater

opportunity for understanding the preconceptions they have of their activities. In this worldview, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work (Creswell, 2013:24). These subjective meanings are often socially and historically negotiated and are formed through interaction with others and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives (Creswell, 2013:25).

Interpretive and constructivist researchers start out with the assumption that access to shared dynamic, changing and individually constructed reality is only through social construction such as language and shared meanings. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008:19). It is also assumed that there are many possible interpretations of the same data, all of which are potentially meaningful. Interpretive studies attempt to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:53). Constructivists value the participants' uniqueness (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014a:35).

Creswell (2016:41) maintains that there are five basic components of a paradigm, namely ontology, epistemology, axiology, methodology and rhetoric, and these are discussed below in relation to the constructivist stance.

Epistemological position. Crotty (1998:10) regards epistemology as a way of understanding what it means to know, Remenyi (2014:63) believes that epistemology refers to the study of the nature of knowledge, including how individuals and society acquire it and Hammond and Wellington (2013:57) posits that epistemology refers to what we believe about how we come to know and understand the world. Epistemology underpins many of the decisions made by researchers including the choice of methodology such as the use of specific data collection approaches and data analysis techniques. To interact with the participants I employed interviews, observation and document analysis to collect data. Constructivists are more likely, to adopt ethnographic or small-scale case studies (du Plooy-Cilliers 2014a:24), hence my use of the instrumental case study.

Ontological position. Ontology is the study of being, existence or reality and includes the assumptions that are made about certain phenomena (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014a:23). It relates to the central question that deals with what reality is and how the researcher knows what is real and asks questions regarding what reality is, what truth is and whether such things as objective truth and reality exist. The researcher

recognises that every individual can only know the world through his/her own experiences or own perspective. The ontological assumptions of interpretivism are that social reality is typified by multiplicity since different people interpret events differently, leaving multiple perspectives of the phenomenon. To understand how people construct meaning within this multiplicity, the researcher must enter the participants' world and observe it from inside through the direct experience of the participants (Nieuwenhuis, 2016b:60). To do this, the constructivist needs to get as close as possible to participants and go out to settings to collect data (Creswell 2013:24).

Metatheoretical position. Metatheory relates to exploring the theoretical lenses that provide direction to the research in a specific field of study. The theory is inseparable from research, and an excellent research study is usually built on a solid theoretical foundation. Theory is used for different purposes such as describing and explaining certain phenomena. Metatheory assists the researcher in looking at the underlying assumptions and implications of specific theories, and it helps to refine the researcher's thinking to come up with additional ways to describe and explain the phenomena (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014a:24). Thus, this study was framed within transformational leadership theory and ethics of care theory.

Methodological position. Methodology includes the research methods that are deemed most appropriate for collecting and analysing data to generate knowledge about the phenomenon being studied (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014a:24). Nieuwenhuis (2016b:51) describes methodology as the bridge that brings the researcher's epistemological standpoint (on ontology and epistemology) and method (perspective and tool) together. Furthermore, the researcher's choice of methods is indicative of how the researcher sees the world and thus his/her ontological and epistemological position (Nieuwenhuis, 2016b:51).

Axiological position. Axiology refers to a study of values and value judgements. In simple terms it refers to ethical issues that needs to be considered when planning a research project. It asks important questions of whether values can be suspended to understand, or whether values mediate and shape what is known (du Plooy-Cilliers 2014a:23). Researchers bring values to the study, and qualitative researchers make their values known in the study (Creswell, 2013:20). Thus, in this

study I considered ethical issues that include anonymity freedom of participation, privacy and confidentiality.

To sum up this section, the study was underpinned by a social constructivist paradigm which provided an interpretivist lens through which I could view the findings emerging from this study. Constructivists' researchers recognise and acknowledge that their background shapes their interpretation, and they thus "position" themselves in the research to recognise their own cultural, social and historical experiences (Creswell 2013:25). Epistemologically, I was aware of my beliefs and how I know and understand the world, as well as my values and biases. Taking Creswell's advice into consideration (2013:20) about conducting a qualitative study, I got closer to the participants and their context forming a bond with them which enabled me to develop and understand the participants' perspectives on teacher attrition. The fundamental principle of constructivism is that reality is socially constructed thus research attempts to understand social phenomena from a context-specific perspective (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:43). In conducting qualitative research, I acknowledged that there is evidence of multiple realities which emerged from the various forms of evidence. The research methodologies I used were sensitive to the specific context (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014a:29). I formulated relevant research questions and inductively developed meaning from the data I collected in the field (Bloomberg & Volpe 2016:43). Thus, I interpreted what I found, and my interpretation was shaped by my own experiences and background. My intention was to make sense of the meanings that others have about the world (Creswell, 2013:25). These multiple realities are reported in the findings where I used the actual words of the different participants to present different perspectives. According to Creswell (2013:22), qualitative research procedures are characterised as inductive, emerging and shaped by the researcher's experience in collecting and analysing data. The research questions for this study were changed during the research process to better reflect the type of questions needed to understand the research problem. During data analysis, I followed a path of analysing data to develop an increasingly detailed knowledge of the phenomenon. According to du Plooy-Cilliers (2014a:28), people can only assign appropriate meaning if they consider the social context in which the act occurs, which was what I did and in addition, I acknowledged my values and biases.

4.3 THE RESEARCH APPROACH: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The qualitative research approach relates to gathering data on naturally occurring phenomena and that most of the data are in the form of words rather than numbers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:31). The researcher must search and explore a variety of methods to achieve deep understanding as a qualitative inquiry means that the research relies primarily on human perceptions and understanding (Stake, 2010:11). Qualitative research is first concerned with understanding the social phenomena from the participants' perspective where the focus is on the meaning of events and actions as expressed by the participants which means eliciting the participant's perspective with interactive strategies to obtain valid data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:347). McMillan and Schumacher (2014:346) believe the researcher becomes "immersed" in the situation and the phenomenon being studied valuing the participants' uniqueness (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014a:35). Descriptions are in the form of words where the researcher makes use of words and images as a primary data source, intended to provide "rich" descriptions that cannot be achieved through numbers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:346; Remenyi, 2014:148).

Bloomberg and Volpe (2016:41) offer key generic characteristics of qualitative research appropriate for this inquiry. Qualitative research involves an interpretive approach to the world. Qualitative researchers study things and people in their natural settings, attempting to make sense or interpret phenomena regarding the meaning people bring to them. Qualitative research is grounded in a philosophical position that is inherently constructivist in the sense that it is concerned with how the complexities of the social and cultural world are experienced, interpreted and understood in a particular context and at a particular point in time. The intent of qualitative research is to examine a social situation or interaction by allowing the researcher to enter the world of others and to attempt to achieve a holistic understanding. The researcher strives to describe the meaning of the findings from the perspective of the research participants. To achieve this goal, data are gathered directly from the participants. Since description, understanding, interpretation and communication are the primary goals, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis. An underlying assumption of the qualitative research is that rich data that are nested in a real context, can be captured only by way of the interactive process between the

researcher and the research participants. Since understanding is the primary goal, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis. However, the subjective lenses that both the researcher and the research participants together bring to a qualitative study form the context for the findings. Qualitative research involves the collection and study of a variety of empirical materials that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. Qualitative researchers employ a broad range of interconnected and interpretive practices in an endeavour to achieve a better understanding of the subject matter at hand. Design flexibility is a significant hallmark of qualitative methodology. Adjustment and iterativity are two related trademarks. In the qualitative research process, instrumentation can be modified when necessary, to explore new insight and address revised research questions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:41).

Nieuwenhuis (2016b:53) explains that qualitative research uses open, exploratory research questions, which places great emphasis on understanding phenomenon in their right, taking the emic perspective and using unique strategies for enhancing the credibility of the research design and data analysis. The research process takes centre stage in qualitative research which means that researchers are very attentive to all the aspects of the research process including the conceptualisation of the project, the interconnections between each phase of the research process and the effect the research has on the process (Nieuwenhuis, 2016b:53). At the heart of qualitative research lies the extraction of meaning from data, that is, the social meaning people attribute to their experiences, circumstances and situations, as well as the meanings people embed into texts and other objects.

The study was underpinned by a constructivist philosophy that assumes reality as multi-layered, interactive and shared social experience interpreted by individuals, meaning reality is a social construct (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:347) and as such, adopted a qualitative design which focuses on meaning, experience and understanding. According to the constructivist view, there is no true meaning of an event; the event is interpreted by participants and each participant will interpret the event differently (Stake, 2010:66), which means that the multiple interpretations provide depth of understanding. The selected female principals offered various interpretations of their experiences of teacher attrition, and each portrayed more than a single reality.

Understanding the logic behind a research approach allowed my study to be appropriately positioned within an inquiry tradition which laid the foundation for supporting my study's findings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:42). One of the basic tenets of qualitative research is that each research setting is unique in its mix of people and contextual factors. The researcher intends to describe a particular context in-depth, and not generalise to other context or population (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:148). Qualitative researchers work with small samples, as in this study only fourteen female principals participated in the study.

Qualitative research focuses on human action and understanding; thus, interpretation is an important part of any analysis of qualitative material (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008:19). Interpretivist researchers aim to study reality subjectively, and as a result, they use methods that are sensitive to the context, and that will help them to gain an in-depth understanding. These methods include interviews, observations and document analysis with the researcher becoming the primary research instrument with the participants "teaching" the researcher about their lives (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014a:31). This study adopted qualitative methods to develop an understanding of how female principals experience teacher attrition. My goal was to understand the participants' experiences from their point of view. I was interested in how the female principals relate their experience of teacher attrition by focusing on their spoken words and observable behaviour. My purpose as a qualitative researcher was to better understand the complexity of the situation of female principals as they experience teacher attrition which could contribute to setting policy and improving professional practice (Stake, 2010:66). An instrumental case study was thus selected as the research design to guide the research process.

4.4 THE RESEARCH DESIGN: INSTRUMENTAL CASE STUDY

A case study is defined as an in-depth analysis of a single entity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:370) or an in-depth exploration of a bounded system, for example, an activity, event, process or individuals based on extensive data collection (Creswell, 2008:476). Being bounded means being unique according to place, time and participants' characteristics, hence my participants were female principals due to their characteristics (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:370). This aligns with Stake (2003:136) who argues that each case study is a concentrated inquiry into a single case, that is,

they cannot be too broad as they are specific and bounded. The emphasis was to understand the complexity of the case, and in this instance, to know the experiences of female principals on teacher attrition. A case study is an exhaustive description and analysis of a bounded social phenomenon be it a social unit or a system such as a programme, institution, process, event or process (Stake, 2010; Yin, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Lichtman, 2014). A case study is an exploratory form of inquiry that affords significant interaction with research participants, providing an in-depth picture of the unit of study. I explored the bounded system over time using a variety of data collection methods (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:32), involving multiple data sources (Bloomberg & Volpe 2016:46). A key consideration in case study methodology is to ensure that the methods selected by the researcher are aligned with their particular ontological and epistemological beliefs (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:46).

A case study concentrates on experiential knowledge of the case and close attention to the influence of its social, political and other contexts (Stake, 2005:444). As case studies use multiple methods to collect data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:371), this helps to triangulate the data and reinforce the legitimacy of the conclusion drawn (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013:11). Yin (2012:4) contends that a case study favours the collection of data in natural settings. I thus used interviews, observations and document analysis to collect data in the natural setting of the participants to provide depth to the study and triangulate the data. A case study it was felt, would optimise my understanding of the experience of female principals on teacher attrition and offer credibility because multiple data sources meant that I was able to triangulate my descriptions and interpretation of the data on the phenomenon under study (Stake, 2005:443). With case studies, data collection is extensive and varied depending on the question and situation. McMillan and Schumacher (2014:371) distinguish between an intrinsic and instrumental case study. An intrinsic case focuses on the case itself and investigates unusual or unique individuals, groups or events. An instrumental case study examines a particular case to provide insight into a specific issue and to develop a rich and comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon (Stake 2005:445; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:371). An instrumental case study takes a supportive role to deepen the researchers' understanding of a larger issue. An instrumental case study was deemed relevant for this study in that it was felt that it would provide insight into how female principals experience teacher attrition. The case is of secondary interest

and played a supportive role, facilitating my understanding of the experience of female principals on teacher attrition (Nieuwenhuis, 2016c:82), offered an opportunity to look deep into the case, scrutinised its context and made sure the activities are detailed as I pursue its outside interest (Stake, 2003:137). In addition, the use of a case study design allowed me to collect rich data during an intensive but short period (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013:11).

Using a case study research design enabled me to capture or interrogate the real world in all its complexity. It provided me with the means to conduct a small-scale investigation where I explored how fourteen female principals experience teacher attrition. Its flexibility enabled me to explore a variety of contexts and situations from the experiences of these female principals (Atkins & Wallace, 2012:108). The case study approach was useful in that it assisted me in exploring questions that are more complex, providing me with ways of investigating connections, patterns and context and of reflecting on the bigger picture including the detail of the phenomenon (Atkins & Wallace, 2012:108). A case study allowed me the flexibility to go back to my research questions and design to make some changes in the light of my initial experience of collecting or analysing data (Atkins & Wallace 2012:109; Yin 2012:6).

4.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

A population is a group of individuals who have the same characteristics (Creswell, 2012:142) or some common defining characteristics that the researcher can identify and study. Within this population, the researcher then selects a sample to study. A sample refers to a subset of the whole population considered for actual inclusion in the study (Strydom, 2011:224; Bless *et al.*, 2013:162). For this study, I employed purposive sampling, convenience sampling and homogenous sampling.

4.5.1 Purposive Sampling

Non-probability sampling technique was used in this study. In accordance with Pascoe (2014:13), non-probability sampling is a technique in which the researcher select the sample based on his/her judgment rather than random selection. Maree and Pietersen (2016:198) posit that purposive sampling is used in special situations where the sampling is done with a specific purpose in mind. MacMillan and Schumacher (2014:349) regard purposive sampling as “selecting information-rich cases for in-depth

study” when the researcher wants to understand something about the cases without needing or desiring to generalise to all such cases. According to Creswell (2013:156), the researcher selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform the understanding of the research problem and the central phenomenon in the study. In this study, I only targeted female principals because I regarded them as having the relevant information pertaining to attrition in schools.

The logic of purposive sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases, with the objective of yielding insight and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:148). Qualitative studies typically use purposive selection techniques based on particular criteria (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen & Walker, 2014:448). In this type of sample, the qualitative researcher has reasons (purposes) for selecting specific participants, events and processes (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:148). From this perspective, the purposeful selection is a strategy for accessing appropriate data that fits the purpose of the study, the resources available, the questions being asked and the constraints and challenges being faced. Qualitative researchers select purposive samples with the aim of providing maximum insight and understanding about the phenomenon. I used my personal judgement to select prospective participants to offer the in-depth information needed to answer the questions and achieve the aims and objectives of the study.

I used my experience and knowledge to select a sample of participants from the population comprising public schools found in the Tshwane West District, Gauteng Province, that I believed could provide the relevant information about the phenomenon (Ary *et al.*, 2014:456) and offering competing views and fresh perspectives. Thus, I sampled participants and settings that in my judgement provided an accurate picture of actions, perceptions and attitudes in the schools relative to teacher attrition. I employed purposive sampling to select female school principals whom I regarded as information-rich informants to the study. These participants were chosen because they were likely to be knowledgeable and informative about teacher attrition. The strength of this sampling lies in that the few cases studied in-depth yield more insight about the phenomenon. I purposively selected female principals from public schools found in the Tshwane West District, Gauteng Province to explore the case of female principals to understand how they experience teacher attrition in both primary and the secondary schools. I intentionally explored diverse contexts to investigate the differences that

might arise amongst the female principals and to determine if there were commonalities.

4.5.2 Convenience Sampling

Convenience sampling is choosing a sample based on availability, time, location or ease of access. (Ary *et al.*, 2014:459). Strydom (2011:232) adds that the participants are usually those who are the nearest and most easily available. Convenience sampling was used for accessibility, efficacy and practical constraints. Choosing this type of sampling does not mean that my findings are not useful but that I cannot generalise them (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:151). Furthermore, the primary purpose about this study was not to generalise but to better understand how female principals experience teacher attrition. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014:154) convenience sampling is less costly but time-consuming, it is easily administered, it assures a high participation rate.

4.5.3 Homogenous Sampling

This type of sampling refers to where the researcher chooses certain people or sites because they possess the same traits or characteristics (Creswell, 2012:208; Niewenhuis 2016c:96). It is about selecting participants who have defining characteristics, and this means that homogenous samples are chosen to give a detailed picture of a particular phenomenon (Niewenhuis, 2016c:96). In using this sampling strategy, I identified the relevant characteristics and search for sites or individuals who possessed the identified characteristics such as female principals who experienced teacher attrition. However, the participants had to meet the following criteria – they had to be female principals working in public schools in the Tshwane West District, have experienced teacher attrition and finally, had to agree to participate in the study.

4.5.4 Site Selection

This study was conducted in the Tshwane West District of Gauteng Province. The Tshwane West District is one of the fifteen districts of Gauteng Province, situated to the West of Pretoria. The district consists of four circuits and thus I chose female principals from the four circuits. I attained a list of schools from Tshwane West District where I selected schools that are led by female school principals. At first, I identified

20 schools but due to the challenges that I experienced at the schools, I was only able to access 14 schools. I selected schools that were easily accessible and those where the female school principals were prepared to participate. The district is comprised of schools in both rural and urban areas. The selected schools are classified as quintile 3 and 5. Schools that are classified under quintile 3 are no-fee schools while those under quintile 5 schools are fee paying schools. Quintiling of schools is determined by the Minister of Education on a yearly basis to determine the schools that may or may not charge school fees. The schools are ranked from quintile 1 to 5 based on the socio-economic status of the area where the school is situated. The table below shows the profile of the research sites.

Table 4.1: Profiles of the research sites

Pseudonym	Type	Area situated	Quintile	Number of learners
School 1	Primary	Rural	3	1458
School 2	Primary	Rural	3	1502
School 3	Primary	Urban	5	1260
School 4	Primary	Rural	3	992
School 5	Secondary	Urban	5	1035
School 6	Primary	Rural	3	1559
School 7	Primary	Rural	3	924
School 8	Primary	Rural	3	1209
School 9	Primary	Rural	3	531
School 10	Secondary	Urban	5	1480
School 11	Secondary	Urban	5	1100
School 12	Primary	Urban	5	1370
School 13	Secondary	Rural	3	586
School 14	Secondary	Rural	3	1151

4.5.5 Participant Selection

Fourteen female school principals were selected as key informants who could provide information on teacher attrition. Of the fourteen female principals, nine were primary school principals and five secondary school principals. I presumed that as principals they would have the relevant information that could offer more information into the phenomenon under study, which was teacher attrition. The table below, Table 2.1, presents the biographical details of the participants.

Table 4.2: Biographical details of participants

Name of Participant	Age in years	Appointment as principal	Experience as principal	Qualification	PL1 teachers	SMT members	Number of learners
Alice	55	2001	17yrs	BEd Hons	40	8 (1,2,5)	1458
Betty	58	2013	5yrs	BEd Hons	29	8 (1,2,5)	1502
Cathy	61	2015	3yrs	ACE Management	29	7 (1,2,4)	1260
Daisy	52	2016	2yrs	BEd Hons	19	5 (1,1,3)	992
Elsa	60	2011	7yrs	BEd Hons	35	7 (1,2,4)	1035
Fiona	59	1998	20yrs	BEd Hons	33	8 (1,2,5)	1559
Gemma	50	2014	4yrs	BEd Hons	18	5 (1,1,3)	924
Hazel	64	2011	7yrs	BEd Hons	22	6 (1,1,4)	1209
Iris	49	2017	1yr	MEd	17	3 (1,0,2)	531
Judy	51	2017	1yr	Hons degree	33	11(1,2,8)	1480
Kate	45	2017	1yr	Masters	44	10 (1,2,7)	1100
Lora	45	2009	9yrs	BEd Hons	51	11(1,2,8)	1370
Mercy	57	2014	4yrs	BEd Hons	24	6 (1,1,4)	586
Nancy	56	2008	10yrs	BEd Hons	31	9 (1,2,6)	1151

4.6 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering useful information to answer emerging research questions (Creswell, 2013:146). Creswell (2013:147) argues that the most important step in the process is to find the people or places to study and gain access to and establish rapport with the participants so that they provide useful data. Furthermore, a closely interrelated step in the process is to determine a strategy for a purposive sampling of individuals or sites and will intentionally sample a group of people that can best inform the researcher about the research problem under examination.

In conducting qualitative research, I had more choices regarding data collection, and typically, I collected data using more than one source. To obtain this information, I developed protocols or written forms for recording the information and developed some forms for recording the data, such as an interview or observational protocols. Finally, I decided on how to store data so that it could easily be found and protected from damage or loss (Creswell, 2013:147). Data collection in case study research is typically extensive and draws on multiple methods of data collection (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:46). For this study, I used a variety of data collection sources that comprised interviews, observation and document analysis.

4.6.1 Interviews

The interview is an exchange of views between two persons (Bloomberg & Volpe 2016:155) and can be structured, unstructured or semi-structured. The purpose of structured interviews was to check the applicability of the interviewer's ideas and are usually conducted in everyday conversational style, while semi-structured interviews are used to facilitate more focused exploration of a specific topic, using an interview guide (Robinson & Lai, 2006:108). Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013:104) indicate that interviews can provide rich data of the phenomenon, providing much greater depth of understanding, especially when the interviews are semi-structured or loosely structured. Usually, research interviews are conducted on a one-to-one basis, comprising a sole interviewer and a single interviewee (Hobson & Townsend, 2010:224). The one-on-one interview is a data collection process in which the researcher asks questions and records answers from only one participant in the study at a time (Creswell, 2012:218). The research interviews are in-depth to capture

perceptions, attitudes and emotions of the interview participants, aiming to elicit participants' views of their lives, as portrayed in their stories, and so gain access to their experiences, feelings and social worlds. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016:154), interviews may be an overall strategy or only one of the methods employed in a research study and it is selected as the primary method for data collection because it has the potential to elicit rich, thick descriptions from the participants.

Advantages of interviews are that they provide useful information when the researcher cannot directly observe participants, and permit participants to give detailed personal information (Creswell, 2012:218). The interviewer has better control over the types of information received compared to the observer because the interviewer can ask specific questions to elicit information. Much as interviews have their inherent strengths, there are various limitations associated with interviewing and as a result, I was conscious of these weaknesses. Firstly, not all people are equally cooperative, articulate, and perceptive. Secondly, interviews require researcher skill. Thirdly, interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering. They are the results of the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee and the context in which they take place (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:1550). In addition, individual interviews are time-consuming and costly to conduct (Creswell, 2012:218).

Stake (2010:95) maintains that interviews are used to obtain unique information or interpretation held by the person interviewed. It is finding out about an issue that the researcher was unable to observe herself. In this study, I used interviews as the primary data collection method together with other methods because it had the likelihood to bring out substantial information needed to understand the phenomenon under investigation. The interviews aimed at gaining a detailed understanding of the participants' accounts of teacher attrition were semi-structured as they would allow for more flexibility. A semi-structured interview is an interview that is based on a series of issues in which the researcher asks the participants to supply information, comments or remarks on the phenomenon (Remenyi, 2014:171). The semi-structured interviews use an interview schedule to discuss the list of issues about the phenomenon. For the interview, I developed a brief but flexible list of predetermined questions on the topic and this interview schedule assisted in defining the line of inquiry (Nieuwenhuis, 2007c:87).

I used individual face-to-face interviews with each of the female principals (Gibson, 2010:61). In interviewing, the researcher asks open-ended questions so that the participants can best voice their experiences of teacher attrition (Creswell, 2012:218). An open-ended question allows the participants to create the options for responding. I prepared the interview schedule with open-ended questions to guide the interview as these would enable the female principals to comment or tell stories that were constructed around their emic issues regarding their experience of teacher attrition. I was attentive to the responses of the participants to identify emerging lines of inquiry that were directly related to the experience of female principals of teacher attrition, (Nieuwenhuis, 2007c:87). The researcher is able during the interview to ask probing questions to clarify and refine the information and interpretation (Stake, 2010:95). I probed the participants for more information on issues that seemed relevant (Gibson, 2010:62) and to gain more information on issues that seemed logically pertinent (Ibid). Thus, I was able to probe to get clarity of the answers.

Thus, this approach offered me the opportunity to clarify statements and probe for additional information. The researcher often audiotapes the conversations and transcribes the information into words for analysis (Creswell, 2012:218). I recorded the interviews using a tape recorder after permission was granted by the female principals. Even though the interviews were being recorded, I took notes, listened carefully and managed the transition between questions, suggesting prompts and probes to encourage elaboration, observed verbal and non-verbal cues, kept notes and listened carefully (Hamilton & Whittier, 2013:105).

The face-to face interview took between 40-50 minutes, with each of the female school principals being interviewed at their schools except for two. One was interviewed at her home and the other one at a parking lot at a mall. As soon as the interview was completed, I listened to the tape and reviewed my notes (Nieuwenhuis, 2007c:89). Hobson and Townsend (2010:224) point out that data generated by interviews are normally recorded in the form of an interview transcript, a verbatim record of the spoken words translated into written form. I thus, prepared a transcript for each of the participants including records of non-verbal communication involved in the interview for data analysis.

Interviews allowed me to engage with the participants individually; they were flexible in that I used them to gather a range of different types of information. This information included factual data, views, and opinions, personal narratives and histories, which made them useful as a means of answering a wide range of research questions (Atkins & Wallace, 2012:86). Interviews provided an opportunity for dialogue, which allowed me to probe, clarify and to check whether I understood correctly what the participants had said (ibid). Conducting interviews was beneficial in that participants were able to speak openly about their situations and how they react to attrition in their schools. They helped me address a wide range of goals and purposes and provided an opportunity to cover a broader range of issues. The interviews allowed me to discover things I would not find out through observation alone or would not see if I did not ask. I was able to encourage participants to talk which provided me with insight into their thought processes and their value judgements (Atkins & Wallace, 2012:86).

4.6.2 Observation

Observation is a central and fundamental method of qualitative inquiry, which complements other techniques like interviews, document analysis and focus groups it is used to discover and explain complex interactions in natural social settings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:155). Observation is the systematic process of recording the behavioural patterns of participants, objects and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them (Nieuwenhuis, 2007c:84). Put simply, observations are used to observe everyday events (Ferrer, 2015:79). Observation is about seeing, hearing or sensing data relevant to the research (Remenyi, 2014:123). Stake (2010:94) posits that the first responsibility of the observer is to know what is happening, to see it, to hear it, to try to make sense of it and have a good idea of what happened.

Observations differ from interviews in that the researcher obtains a first-hand account of the phenomenon of interest rather than relying on someone's interpretation or perspective (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:155). Ferrer (2015:79) contends that observation encompasses a set of techniques that can be classified in many forms. Furthermore, it uses senses either to describe, analyse or explain from a valid and reliable scientific point of view, a subject, fact or phenomenon based on a participatory or non-participatory structured or unstructured form. With observation, information can

directly be seen by the researcher who at the same time is able to note aspects such as who, what, when, where and why and specifically relating them to the research questions (Stake, 2010:90). I observed the participants' behaviour to understand their beliefs, values and assumptions to make sense of their experience of teacher attrition (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a:85).

Characteristics of observation according to Ferrer (2015:80), are that there is minimal interaction between the researcher and the participant. I used observation as a complementary technique (Ferrer, 2015:87) to gain deeper insight and understanding into female principals' experiences of teacher attrition (Nieuwenhuis, 2007c:84; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:377). I chose to be a non-participant observer so as not to have any influence on the participants (Martella, Nelson, Morgan & Marchand-Martella, 2013:325). Conducting observation in all the schools enabled me to see what was happening regarding teacher attrition in the school setting where I had the full view of the setting available at the time of the observation (Wilson & Fox, 2013:111). The purpose of the observation was to observe the female principals' daily interactions with the teachers, conversations taking place, physical setting and activities taking place. Through observation, I was able to see and listen to what is naturally taking place at the research site. It also facilitated my deep understanding of the context and the participants' behaviour, which allows collection of a more complete set of data.

During observation I recorded data as field notes that were dated, and the context was identified. Field notes aided me in recording contextual issues (such as time, event, participants, location and so on) and detailed information of what actually happened in a given setting. In my recording, I captured the thick description of what took place without any value judgements and my ideas about the meaning of what I had observed (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a:85). After observations, I had a quick discussion with participants and did member checking to verify my understanding of what I had observed with each of the participants (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:86). I took field notes during observation and immediately after the observation, I refined the field notes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016:150.) Observation was analysed by checking if the participants' behaviour and practices matched those of the interviews and document analysis.

According to Ferrer (2015:81), observation is beneficial in that it registers what is seen (reality), real people's behaviour and the events that are observed naturally. It is economical and a fast technique in some of its typologies. Furthermore, there is no effect of fatigue, demotivation or that the order of the questions affects the responses and the investigation results. The disadvantage with observation is that what I could obtain as information was limited; hence, I complemented this data with data from other techniques such as interviews and document analysis (Ferrer, 2015:87). However, observation was relevant to this study as without observation, I would not have understood the participant's motivations, attitudes, emotions and feelings (Ferrer, 2015:81).

4.6.3 Document Analysis

The term document is broadly defined to cover an assortment of written records, visual, data, artefacts and even archival data (Creswell, 2012:223). McMillan and Schumacher (2001:387) state that official documents take many forms such as memos, minutes of meetings, working papers and informal documents such as drafts proposals that provide an internal perspective of the organisation. Documents are also those used for external communication, produced for public consumption such as newsletters, programme brochures, school board reports, public statements and news releases. These documents suggest an official perspective on the topic, issue or process.

A valuable source of information in qualitative research can be documents (Creswell, 2012:223). Documents consist of public and private records that qualitative researchers obtain about a site or participants in the study, and they can include newspapers, minutes of meetings, personal journals and letters (Creswell, 2012:223). These sources provide valuable information in helping researchers understand central phenomena in qualitative studies. Examples of public documents are minutes from meetings, official memos and records in the public domain and archival material in public libraries. Private documents consist of personal journals and diaries, letters, personal notes and jottings that individuals write to themselves (Creswell, 2012:223).

Creswell (2012:223) posits that documents represent an excellent source of text data for the qualitative study. They provide the advantage of being in the language and words of the participants, who have usually given thoughtful attention to them. They

are also ready for analysis without the necessary transcription that is required with observational or interview data. Harber (2010:114) contends that documents are suitable because they are easily obtainable and can be collected within a short space of time compared to the observation and interviews.

I supplemented interviews and observation with gathering and analysing documents produced during everyday events (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:157). I asked for documents that deal with teacher attrition such as resignation letters, forms, departmental directives, policies, regulations, notices, manuals, circulars, minutes, records, legislations and Acts. In order to access the documents, I requested permission from the female principals of the selected schools. I then selected information that was pertinent to the research. I analysed available documents to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the female principals on teacher attrition.

Yin (2003:87) regards the use of documents as an appropriate form of gathering data when constructing case studies because documents corroborate and augment evidence from other sources. De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delpont (2005:317) add that studying documents is of cardinal importance in that the researcher evaluates the authenticity of the documents and that the benefit with document analysis, is that the cost is relatively low. Document analysis is potentially rich in portraying the values and beliefs of participants in the setting (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:157) and in addition, documents can be studied over and over again.

4.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis involves reviewing data while they are being collected and attempting to synthesise and make sense out of what is observed (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010:530). The data analysis process begins with putting in place a plan to manage the large volume of data collected and reducing it in a meaningful way (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:159). The process is completed to identify significant patterns and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data revealed, given the purpose of the study. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007c:99), data analysis tends to be an ongoing and iterative (non-linear) process, implying that data collection, processing and analysis and reporting are intertwined and are not merely some

successive steps. Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013:140) add that it involves to-ing and fro-ing across data, reflecting critically on possible choices during the analysis as patterns or themes and anomalies emerge.

Bless *et al.*, (2013:352-353) identifies different qualitative data analysis strategies namely, grounded theory, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, ethnography and content analysis. In this study, I employed the use of qualitative content analysis to analyse data.

4.7.1 Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data where data is transformed into findings (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:397). It is a non-numerical examination with the purpose of discovering underlying meaning and patterns of relationships (Schurink *et al.*, 2011:399). Its goal is to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study (Hsieh & Shannon, 2015:1278) and is considered a popular way of trying to make sense of data (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013:141). Qualitative data analysis is mainly an inductive process where data is organised into groups and finding patterns and relations among the groups (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:395). It is a comparatively methodical process of coding, categorising and interpreting data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon of interest. Inductive analysis is the process of moving from specific data to categories and patterns. It is characterised by doing analysis during collection of data and after collection of the entire data set. Thus, analysis is an ongoing part of the study.

Qualitative content analysis defines the process of summarising and reporting on written data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011:563). It can be undertaken with any written material and is often used to analyse large quantities of text. Text data may be in verbal, print or electronic form and might have been obtained from narrative responses, open-ended survey questions, interviews, group interviews, observation or print media such as articles, books or manuals (Hsieh & Shannon, 2015:1278). Content analysis is used to systematically analyse the meaning of communications, of which the central interest is the core themes that researchers refer to, the information that they want to pass to their audience (Bless *et al.*, 2013:352). According to Merriam (2009:205), content analysis looks for insights in which situations, settings, styles,

images, meanings and nuances are key topics. With content analysis there is no one meaning, it sustains multiple readings and interpretations. (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:564). Remenyi (2014:33) regards content analysis as a technique used by the researchers to obtain a deeper understanding of data provided by knowledgeable participants. Content analysis entails discerning vital ideas or themes; thus, it is a process of looking at data from different angles with the view of identifying keys in the text that will help to understand and interpret raw data.

I enlisted the use of content analysis as it is an inductive and interactive process that helped me look at the similarities and differences in the text and corroborated or disconfirmed theory. I also took account of nuances of language including sensitivity to social and cultural context (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013:141) within which teacher attrition takes place. I looked for patterns as they are stable indicators of human ways of living and working that render a world “more comprehensible, predictable and tractable” (Saldaña, 2016:6). Saldaña further indicates that patterns become more trustworthy evidence for our findings since they demonstrate habits, salience and importance in people’s daily lives and help confirm our descriptions of peoples five R’s: routine, rituals, rules, roles and relationships. Furthermore, patterns can be characterised by similarity, differences, frequency, sequence and correspondence (Saldaña, 2016:7). The process of content analysis involves simultaneous coding of raw data and construction of categories that capture relevant characteristics of the documents’ content (Merriam, 2009:205).

Nieuwenhuis (2016a:109) postulates that qualitative data analysis is based on the interpretive philosophy that is aimed at examining the meaningful and symbolic context of qualitative data. I employed the interpretive style that enabled me to compare and contrast themes to identify similarities (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:397). This philosophy allowed me to establish how female principals make meaning of their experience of teacher attrition by analysing their perceptions, attitudes, understanding, knowledge, values, feelings and experiences to estimate their construction of the phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis, 2016a:109). Qualitative researchers may organise data by research question and foreshadowed problems or sub-questions, research instrument, themes, concepts and categories used by other researchers, prior knowledge of researcher or personal experience and data themselves (McMillan &

Schumacher, 2014:397). Thus, I organised my data according to themes and sub-themes.

I conducted my analysis manually. Evans (2013:166) contends that doing the analysis manually helps one to maintain a sense of overall control and global viewing of the data. He further indicates that the different ability to cut up various quotations and to sort them according to the different code headings and to view the groupings simultaneously, can provide a valuable perspective to stimulate new interpretation and findings. This retention of the overall view of the data is part of what helped me to hold on to the original version of the events. In qualitative studies, researchers often find it advisable and necessary to go back to the original field notes to verify conclusions, or to the participants to collect additional data and verify it, or to solicit feedback from participants (Nieuwenhuis, 2007c:100). There are several steps that need to be followed in qualitative data analysis (Wang & Park, 2016:212). In this study, the ensuing steps were preparing and organising data, coding the data, establishing categories and themes, analysing and interpreting the data and presenting the findings, each of which are discussed below.

4.7.1.1 Preparing and organising data

Preparing data for analysis is a crucial stage in a qualitative data analysis (Nieuwenhuis, 2016a:114). I collected three kinds of qualitative data from fourteen female principals that included interviews, observation and document analysis. Firstly, I personally transcribed all data verbatim from the audio-tapes into text where I was able to include all the non-verbal cues in the transcripts. Huge amounts of data are overwhelming (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:39; Nieuwenhuis, 2016a:115), but it is important to work through the process of cutting and sorting. In this study, I kept the different data sets in files on the computer, allocated each participant an identifying pseudonym, and divided the data into feasible workable units. I listened to the voice recordings numerous times and read and reread the transcripts (Creswell, 2013:183). I became immersed in the data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008:107), which helped me to get sense of the data.

As a qualitative researcher, I employed inductive analysis process to synthesise and make meaning from the data, starting with accurate data and ending with categories and patterns and in this way, more general themes and conclusions emerged from the

data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:395). The inductive approach took an entirely open-minded approach to the data and used themes that emerged from data themselves as tools for analysis (Evans, 2013:163). The purpose of inductive analysis of qualitative data was to allow the research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in the raw data (Nieuwenhuis, 2007c:100). My primary goal was to summarise what I had seen or heard regarding common words, phrases, themes or patterns that helped my understanding and interpretation of that which was emerging (Nieuwenhuis, 2007c:100). I aimed to interpret and make sense of what was in the data, and I was mindful of the research questions that guided the study including the purpose and objectives of the study.

4.7.1.2 Coding of the data

Bezuidenhout and Cronje (2014:235) regard the process of grouping data into categories as coding. They also indicate that coding makes the process of analysis manageable. Furthermore, coding can be applied to all texts including focus group notes, observation, interviews, written texts, visual images and any tangible interpretable artefacts (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014:235). A category is an abstract name that represents the meaning of similar topics and developing categories from topics requires the researcher to look at data in different ways, search for what people mean and to explore all the possible aspects of a category (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:395; Nieuwenhuis, 2016a:109). They further indicate that the process of data analysis in qualitative research is iterative and recursive, meaning going back and forth between different stages of analysis.

Saldaña (2016:4) regards a code in qualitative inquiry as a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing or evocative attributes for a portion of language-based data. These data consist of interview transcripts, observation field notes, and documents. He further indicates that coding is a transition process between data collection and more extensive data analysis. I carefully read through the transcribed data, line by line and divided it into meaningful analytical units and located important segments to code them (Nieuwenhuis, 2007c:105). I marked the segments of data with symbols, descriptive words or unique identifying names, meaning whenever I found a significant portion of the text in a transcript, I assigned a code or label to signify that particular segment. According to Evans (2013:163), coding

is a process by which a text is examined thematically according to certain categories (codes) which are either predetermined or emergent from the data. The categories serve to reduce the total mass of data elicited to focus on what they tell us about the particular themes in which we are interested. Stake (2010:151) states that coding is sorting all data sets according to topics, themes and issues important to the study. It can be structured by the research question, the concept map and by a cluster of developing patches. Coding can start early or be held back until most of the data are collected. The coding process enabled me to quickly retrieve and collect together all the text and other data associated with some thematic idea so that the sorted bits could be examined together, and different cases, compared in that respect. This process is also known as open coding.

I employed inductive content analysis to organise data that includes the use of open coding. Evans (2013:165) define open coding as “analytic process through which concepts are identified, and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data”. The act of open coding allowed me to break raw data from the transcripts and field notes into different fragments which were labelled according to extensive lists of codes (Evans, 2013:165). I began my coding by going through the script line by line, labelling those bits of data that corresponded to the codes which I had previously identified or new ones which emerged as I proceeded. I wrote the codes in the margin with some form of highlighting of the text (Evans, 2013:166). Coding permitted me to organise and group similarly coded data into categories because they shared some characteristics (Saldaña, 2016:10). I pursued this process until all my data was segmented and the initial coding was completed.

I developed my codes by coding the data by directly examining the data (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:107), working inductively to let codes emerge from the data. After the initial coding of my data, I attempted summarising and organising my data. I kept on refining and revisiting my codes. In summarising my results, processes such as enumeration, categorisation and searching for relationships and patterns in data became relevant (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:107).

4.7.1.3 Establishment of categories and themes

The idea is to group data together into chunks and then assign those to broader categories of related meanings (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014:235). This assisted in

structuring the data into codes and themes which could then be applied to all the text. Thus, giving the data some sense of order, I identified whether there were patterns embedded in the text, which led to the development of more categories and subcategories.

I was open to new categories emerging as I moved through the data while also trying to ascertain whether existing categories with their definitions and examples were enough (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013:141). At this point, I tabulated or displayed my categories as I attempted to understand what the data was telling me, I returned to the research questions to renew my focus. I looked at what kind of patterns, themes or anomalies were there and what the implications were for my understanding. Drawing of tentative conclusions began to occur and to verify the validity of my findings, I did member checking with the participants (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013:141).

4.7.1.4 Analysis and interpretation of data

The process of analysis is both deductive and inductive. Interpretation involves explaining the findings based on data from the participants. After development of codes, formulation of themes based on the codes and organising the themes, I attached meaning and significance to the data. In interpreting and analysing data, I searched for emerging patterns, associations, concepts and explanations in the data to construct new meaning and understanding (Nieuwenhuis, 2016a:121). In finding new meaning and understanding, the researcher moves between existing theory and insight from the data to find aspect in the data that corroborates theory and the aspects that may enhance or question existing theory. In doing this, the researcher may bring multiple perspectives from the theory into the study, for example, social constructivism. This is done to achieve triangulation.

As the data were analysed, I began to see patterns and themes and as the coding layout continued to develop, I obtained inter-rater reliability by requesting one of my colleagues to read one of my interview transcripts to test my codes. I discussed and reconciled any discrepancies that resulted from the independent review by my colleague. This was done with each of the transcripts. Such differences led to additional exploration of data. Exploration of such differences in which further

clarification was needed, helped to refine how I stated my findings including the ensuing analysis and recommendations (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:160).

4.7.1.5 Reporting findings

The aim of interpreting data is to draw conclusions and each conclusion must be based on the findings from data and triangulated in terms of the literature review and theoretical framework. (Nieuwenhuis, 2016a:122). In Chapter five, I present the interpretations and reported data by using participants' own words to create the reality of the participants and the phenomenon being investigated. Reporting findings is an explanation of what the participants have said and done. During the report stage, I continued to review the data and reflect on what I had seen and what was happening while in the sense-making stage. I considered how the pieces fitted together and what stood out (Ary *et al.*, 2010:531).

In case study research, the goal is not generalisability but rather transferability, meaning how, if at all and in what way, understanding and knowledge can be applied in similar context and settings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:47). Nieuwenhuis (2016a:123) agrees that with case study research, conclusions cannot be generalised to a broader audience, as it is only applicable to the context of the participants, which means that it is a bounded conclusion. As a result, the findings of this case study cannot be generalised.

4.8 ENSURING CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Lincoln and Guba (1985 cited in Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016: 162) originally put forward an argument for the importance of trustworthiness in qualitative research as a means for reassuring the reader that the study is of significance and value. Bloomberg and Volpe (2016:162) contend that the criteria for evaluating qualitative research focus on how well the researcher has provided evidence that his/her descriptions and analysis represent the reality of the situation of participants. Nieuwenhuis (2016a:123) proposes four criteria to be considered by qualitative researchers in pursuit of a trustworthy study namely credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability.

4.8.1 Credibility

Remenyi (2014:36) regards credibility as a characteristic of research that allows it to be believed and thus gives it value to the academic community. Ary *et al.*, (2014:531) add that credibility refers to the truthfulness of the research findings. Are they believable? Nieuwenhuis (2016:123) mentions that credibility deals with the questions: How congruent are the findings with reality? How do I make sure the reader believes my findings? According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016:162), credibility refers to whether the participants' perceptions match up with the researchers' portrayal of them. That is, has the researcher accurately represented what the participants think, feel and do? Bloomberg and Volpe (2016:162-163) contend that evidence, in support of credibility, takes several forms: it clarifies up-front the bias that the researcher brings to the study. This self-reflection creates an open and honest attitude that resonates well with readers. I continually monitored my subjective perspectives and biases by recording reflective field notes throughout the research process. I discussed how I engaged in repeated and substantial involvement in the field. Prolonged involvement in the field facilitated a more in-depth understanding of how female principals experience teacher attrition, conveying details about the sites and the participants that lend credibility to my account. I checked whether my interpretation of the processes and interaction in the settings were valid. I collected multiple sources of data through interviews, observation and document analysis. The information provided by these different sources were compared through triangulation to corroborate my conclusions. I used various methods to confirm the evidence that I obtained via various means. Triangulation of data collection methods also lends credibility. I presented negative instances and discrepancies in my findings. Searching for variation in the understanding of the phenomenon entails seeking examples that might disconfirm or challenge my expectations or new findings. Real life is composed of different perspectives that do not always coalesce thus discussing contrary information added to the credibility of my account. Furthermore, to ensure that my biases do not influence how participants' perspectives are portrayed, including determining the accuracy of the findings, I enlisted the use of "member checks", which entailed sending the transcribed interviews or summaries of my conclusions to participants for review.

Nieuwenhuis (2016a:123) adds that some strategies to ensure credibility are discussed in the literature. These include adopting well-established research methods,

a research design that fits the research question, theoretical underpinning that is aligned with the research question and approaches. Development of early familiarity with participants and the participating organisations was vital and credibility was ensured through well-defined purposive sampling, detailed data collection methods and triangulation (Nieuwenhuis 2016a:123). I also had regular debriefing sessions with my supervisor. I did member checks, where I emailed the transcripts to the participant for correction of error or fact and for the participants to verify whether I had interpreted what they shared correctly. I also enhanced credibility with the use of thick description of the phenomenon under study. Tracy (2013:235) regards thick description as integration of theoretical knowledge and empirical information and that is associated with the capacity of qualitative research to tap into implicit knowledge. To achieve thick description, I probed the participants for further details.

4.8.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the fact that the findings of the study may apply to situations other than the one in which the research was done (Remenyi, 2014:190). It is the ability to apply findings in similar context or settings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:12). Ary *et al.*, (2014: 534) regard transferability as the degree to which the findings of a qualitative study can be applied to other contexts or groups. Bloomberg and Volpe (2016:164) posit that qualitative researchers do not expect their findings to be generalisable to all other settings, but it is likely that lessons learned in one setting might be useful to others. Ary *et al.*, (2014:535) argue that transferability of a set of findings to another context depends on the similarity or “goodness of fit”. Nieuwenhuis (2016a:124) agrees that transferability refers to the fit or match between the research context and other contexts as judged by the reader. It is about how well the study has made it possible for the readers to decide whether similar processes will fit their settings and communities by understanding in-depth how these processes occurred at the research site. Instead, readers are invited to make connections between elements of a study and their own experience. Thus, to assess transferability as a criterion of trustworthiness, I used various approaches.

Qualitative research is characterised by “thick description” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:164; Nieuwenhuis, 2016a:124). Thick description means that the researcher provides the reader with a full and focused account of the context, participants and

research design for readers to make their own decisions about transferability (Nieuwenhuis, 2016:124), thus, I gave a complete and focused explanation of the participants, the context and research design employed in the study to allow the readers to determine if the research can be transferable to their context. The other strategy was through purposeful sampling, meaning members of a sample were chosen with the purpose of representing a phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis, 2016c:85), that is, women principals who have experienced attrition. I also gave an explicit description of the sampled schools.

4.8.3 Dependability

According to Nieuwenhuis (2016a:124), dependability is demonstrated through the research and its implementation, the operational details of data gathering and the reflexive appraisal of the project. Bloomberg and Volpe (2016:163) posit that dependability refers to whether one can track the process and procedures used to collect and interpret data. It provides detailed and thorough explanations of how the data were collected and analysed, providing what is known as an “audit trail”. An audit trail refers to describing the decisions taken for arriving at judgement during data analysis, it enhances transparency and is an indication of good methodological practice (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:159). The audit trail includes details such as how codes were developed and applied to the data, code definitions and any changes or redefinitions that might have occurred in the process. The audit trail provides the mechanism whereby others can determine how decisions were made and assess the uniqueness of the situation (Ary *et al.*, 2014:536).

I kept the entire records of the investigation process, as recommended by Becker and Bryman (2004:253). I also kept the interview voice recordings, field notes, interview transcripts, resignation letters, resignation forms, transfer forms to signify dependability. I also requested colleagues to code several transcripts to establish inter-rater reliability. This process of checking the consistency between valuers reduces the potential bias of a single researcher collecting and analysing the data. Furthermore, I documented the analysis process for the readers to see the decisions I made, how I went about analysing data and how I arrived at the interpretation (Ary *et al.*, 2014:536).

According to Ary *et al.*, (2014:536), other than the audit trail, there are other strategies to ensure dependability that include replication logic, stepwise replication, triangulation, intrarater and interrater comparisons. In this study, I also employed triangulation which refers to the use of multiple data sources or various methods resulting in similar findings. To enhance reliability, the researcher wants to demonstrate that the methods used are reproducible and consistent, that the approach and procedures used are appropriate for the context and can be documented and that the external evidence can be used to test the conclusions. Replication logic involves conducting the study in multiple locations (Ary *et al.*, 2014:537) different sites, different circuits. Intrarater method is the code-recode strategy where the researcher codes the data, leaves the analysis for a period and then comes back and recodes the data and compares the two sets of coded materials. The interrater or inter-observer agreement method means that a researcher may randomly select a transcript and ask a peer to code it using the coding labels identified by the researcher. The second coder may be free to add other codes he/she might identify. Once the peer has finished coding the transcripts, the results are compared to the original coded transcript to determine whether both coders' labels match.

4.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability deals with the idea of neutrality, the extent to which the research is free of bias in its procedures and its interpretation (Ary *et al.*, 2014:537). Nieuwenhuis (2016a:125) regards confirmability as the degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the participants and not by the researcher bias, motivation or interest. Gall, Gall and Borg (2010:356-359) argue that to increase quality and rigour in the study, the researcher could employ different strategies such as usefulness, participant involvement, member checks, triangulation, contextual completeness, chain of evidence and researcher reflections. Triangulation and implementation of the process of member checking reduces the effect of researcher bias and could be reduced by admitting the biases (Nieuwenhuis, 2016a:125).

The researcher needs to uncover and identify the decision trail for public judgement and illustrate how their data can be traced back to its origin (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:1). I included a written record of documents of the procedures for data collection and analysis (audit trail), which can assist other researchers in checking the

soundness of the study methodology and to use it in subsequent research to replicate or extend the study (Gall *et al.*, 2010:359). I shared the draft interview transcripts and field notes with the participants to ensure that I captured their responses correctly.

A range of data collection strategies was also used to strengthen triangulation. These strategies included the face-to-face interviews observations and analysis of documents (Gall *et al.*, 2010:358). Takhar-Lail and Chitakunye (2015:29) contend that in using multiple methods, researchers overcome some limitations embedded in some data collection methods. This helped me to exploit the benefits of each method, but through that process, injected reflexive practices to ensure that the inner voices of the participants were heard. By adopting multiple methods within the data collection process, researchers are bringing credibility to their work. The use of multiple methods of data collection to achieve triangulation was necessary to obtain an in-depth understanding of how female principals experience teacher attrition (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:154).

4.9 RESEARCH ETHICS

Creswell (2012:24) posits that the researcher needs to engage in ethical practices in all the steps of the research process. Furthermore, ethics should be at the forefront of the researcher's agenda, being a primary consideration, not an afterthought. It was critical to respect the sites in which research took place. Thus, I asked for permission before I could enter the sites, I made sure not to disturb the sites during my study and viewed myself as a 'guest' at the place of study, gaining access to the sites through relevant gatekeepers (Creswell, 2012:24).

In any research study, ethical issues relating to the protection of the participants were of vital concern (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:175) with some unique ethical considerations being considered with qualitative research due to its emergent and flexible design. Ethics issues focus on establishing safeguards that protect the rights of participants and include informed consent, protecting participants from harm and ensuring confidentiality. Furthermore, ethical issues can arise from all phases of the research process: data collection, data analysis and interpretation, and dissemination of the research findings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:161).

Stake (2010:28) mentions that there are rules that need to be observed to protect participants. As a result, to follow these standards I applied for and was granted ethical clearance from the University of South Africa 2018/03/14/06103049/07MC (*cf.* Appendix A). I wrote a letter to the relevant authorities, the Gauteng Department of Education and the District Offices outlining the purpose of the study, procedures for data collection, requesting permission to conduct research (*cf.* Appendices B & C). I also wrote a letter with detailed information to the participants inviting them to take part in the research (*cf.* Appendices D & E). All ethical issues were laid down in the invitation letter. I informed the possible participants in the invitation letter that their participation in the research project was voluntary and that they may withdraw their participation at any time without penalty (Ary *et al.*, 2014:624). I informed the participants that I would keep their identity anonymous to the best of my ability by giving them pseudonyms. I also kept all the data collected and tape recordings confidential (Ary *et al.*, 2014:624). I always observed the principle of trust, and that the research project would never expose participants to any harm or risk. I reported all the information as honestly as possible (Creswell, 2012:24). I subscribed to the research culture of respect for human dignity and welfare of the participants. Participants gained valuable knowledge, skills, and experience by taking part in the research project.

I offered confidentiality and ensured that data supplied by knowledgeable participants, would not be disseminated to anyone else and where possible data was anonymised and it was imperative to honour the promise of confidentiality (Remenyi, 2014:29). It was my responsibility to inform and protect the participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:175), by informing the participants about the nature of the study and formally requesting for their voluntary participation (Yin, 2014:78). The research process involved enlisting voluntary cooperation, and it was my primary premise to inform participants about the study purpose (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:175).

The central issue concerning protecting participants was how the information was treated (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:175-176). Throughout the study, I paid attention to the researcher-participant relationship, which was determined by roles, status and cultural norms (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:161). Informed consent remained a priority throughout my study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:176). I conducted my research in a manner that minimised potential harm to my participants. I ensured that I do not falsify

data, data sources, findings, claims or credentials (Ary *et al.*, 2014:623). Furthermore, I acknowledge the authors when citing them.

4.10 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER: REFLEXIVITY MATTERS

Mortari (2015:2) regards reflexivity as a “process whereby researchers place themselves and their practices under scrutiny, acknowledging the ethical dilemmas that permeate the research process because becoming mindful of one’s own practice gives value to any inquiry”. Hammond and Wellington (2013:129) contend that reflexivity refers to the examination of one’s own beliefs, judgements and practices during the research process and how these may have influenced the research. Finlay (2003:16) maintains that reflexivity can be understood in a multitude of ways according to the aims and functions of the exercise at stake and the theoretical or methodological traditions embraced. Within the interpretive paradigm, there is a strong argument for paying attention to researcher reflexivity and even evoking informant self-reflexivity (Takhar-Lail & Chitakunye, 2015:21). This study was underpinned by the constructivist principles and thus I acknowledge that multiple realities exist in the study.

Reflexivity is used to describe a deeper level of reflection which explores the motives of the researcher as well as his/her values and how these are expressed regarding the subjects of research, methodologies used, and the findings established (Remenyi, 2014:156). Reflexivity emerges as an important and integral part of qualitative research (Takhar-Lail and Chitakunye, 2015:21) thus, there is a need for the researcher to give reflexive accounts of data analysis or to discuss how reflexivity can be operationalised. Reflexivity is used to legitimate and validate research procedures (Mortari, 2015:1). It is about considering how the researcher can ethically get to the root of what the truth is and then doing this in such a way that he/she does not influence the participants (Takhar-Lail & Chitakunye 2015:23). Furthermore, it is crucial that the researcher reflexively monitors his/her behaviour within any given research context with a need to think deeply about how to interpret actions, words and behaviours of participants as well as themselves, to ensure that they do not implicate their research projects. Reflexivity is about understanding the psyche and thought processes of the participants in a study, in terms of how they make their decisions. I thus, went to the various schools to understand the naturalistic settings of the research encounter, to collect data to answer the research questions and I focused on producing authentic

accounts and voices of the participants by using the participants' verbatim codes when presenting data (Takhar-Lail & Chitakunye, 2015:23). I used multiple data collection methods as mentioned in the data collection section, to produce multiple voices and multiple realities and in so doing, the oppressed voices emerged and gave me a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Takhar-Lail & Chitakunye, 2015:25).

Reflexivity requires critical self-reflection of how researchers' social background, assumptions, positioning and behaviour influence the research process and demand acknowledgment of how researchers co-construct their research findings (Finlay & Gough, 2003:ix). By adopting researcher reflexivity, qualitative researchers are more aware of any bias or prejudice that may take place (Takhar-Lail & Chitakunye, 2015:22). Clancy (2013:13) contends that without self-examination there is considerable risk of providing research that is overshadowed by personal characteristics, prejudice and bias. It is a means to gather a richer description and interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation (Takhar-Lail & Chitakunye, 2015:31). Reflexivity helped me to increase the integrity and trustworthiness of my findings (Lichtman 2011:290). Thus, I used reflexivity to continuously monitor and audit the research process (Finlay, 2003:4).

Reflexivity aims at improving an ethical stance towards research (Mortari, 2015:2). Lichtman (2011:293) posits that one issue that concerns authors about reflexivity is the power relations between the researcher and the participants because usually the participants live marginalised lives. Thus, researchers need to lower barriers and let both sides be seen as to who and what they are. I presented myself as a doctoral student who is there to conduct research and I observed the necessary ethical standards described in the data collection section. Lichtman (2011:294) indicates that ethical considerations also include the need to remain aware of and be sensitive to rights, beliefs and cultural differences and gender, be sensitive to the rights beliefs and cultural context of the participants as well as their position within the patriarchal power relations in society and the research relationship.

Lichtman (2011:291) argues that most qualitative researchers attempt to be aware of their role in co-construction of knowledge and try to clarify how their intersubjective elements affect data collection and analysis to enhance the trustworthiness,

transparency, and accountability of their research. Reflexivity is essential for self-awareness because it enables the researcher to see any influences that could affect data collection and analysis thus it is vital to engage in the process of reflexivity to supply a credible and feasible account of participants' description and avoid speculations (Clancy, 2013:12). Reflexivity is linked to the quality and credibility of research, as it requires researchers to be willing and able to acknowledge and consider the many ways in which they can influence their findings (Clancy, 2013:14).

Reflexivity provides an active process by which researchers can take time to understand themselves and their research more fully (Clancy, 2015:16). This is vital particularly in interpretive studies, as it allows a more rigorous approach, adds quality, offers enhanced credibility and limits bias. The researcher is a central figure who actively constructs the collection, selection and interpretation of data (Finlay, 2003:5). Reflexivity helps to situate the research project and enhance understanding of the topic under investigation (Finlay, 2003:1). Reflexivity is a self-critical lens that I used as a source of personal insight for introspection (Finlay & Gough, 2003:ix). I used reflexivity to monitor and audit the research process continuously to increase the trustworthiness of the findings (Finlay, 2003:4). Reflexivity is pivotal in that it limits the risk of producing research that is dominated by personal characteristics, prejudice and bias (Clancy, 2013:13). Furthermore, reflexivity does not see the researcher as a neutral data-collecting machine but allows the researchers to understand their effects on their research, including how these might be minimised where possible. A reflexive approach does not limit the biases but brings them to the forefront, so that rather than attempting to hide or deny issues that arise, researchers can tackle them and adapt interpretations to produce a more credible and realistic version of participants' accounts (Clancy, 2015:15).

Finlay (2003:16) mentions that reflexivity has the potential to assist in examining the impact of the position, perspective and presence of the researcher. Secondly, it promotes productive insight through exploring personal responses and interpersonal dynamics. Thirdly, it opens unconscious motivations and implicit biases in the researcher's approach. Fourthly, it empowers others by opening more radical consciousness. Fifthly, it evaluates the research process, method and outcomes and lastly, it enables public scrutiny of the integrity of the research through offering a methodological record of research decisions. According to Takhar-Lail and Chitakunye

(2015:21) share some insights and demonstrates how factors such as researcher reflexivity, evoking informant reflexivity and co-research, can be a valuable contribution to the qualitative research process by producing authentic voices. Authentic voices refers to the voices of the research participants, ensuring that their real emotions and opinions are conveyed within a naturalistic environment in which they feel comfortable. Furthermore, it is crucial that the researchers build a trusting relationship with the research participants with the view of evoking honest answers. Takhar-Lail and Chitakunye (2015:22) argue that it is these inner voices that provide qualitative researchers with the rich descriptions that they need to construct a real narrative of what is happening within any given research context. Thus, it is imperative that researchers move beyond the obvious and dig deeper into understanding the inner voices of participants as this enables the researchers to understand and interpret the data more accurately. Palaganas, Sanchez, Molintas and Caricativo, (2017:426) posit that reflexivity assists the researchers in distinguishing the changes they have experienced through the enquiry process and how these changes have influenced the enquiry.

I developed interest in the study after I had personally resigned from the Department of Basic Education in 2013. I served the education system for 31 years of which 20 years was spent as a school principal. I personally experienced teacher attrition during the 20 years of leadership. In most instances, it was very difficult to find a replacement on time because either the teachers that are there, are not a perfect fit due to the subjects in which they have specialised or the phase for which they are trained. The other issue was that when a replacement was found, it often happened that the replacement teacher was not as experienced as the one who had resigned. In some instances, the principal is forced to take whichever teacher is available because of time constraints and as a result, the learners miss out on teaching and learning. In all these instances, the principal probably needs to adjust the planning to accommodate the new hire. Even if the teacher has transferred from another school, the new hires need mentoring in order to acclimatise to the new environment and understand the culture of the school. Initially I had negative thoughts about teacher attrition but through this study, I have come to realise that in many cases, teacher attrition is necessary because it creates job opportunities, particularly when old, sick and retiring teachers are replaced. The new hires bring new ideas into the institution and in that

way, the institution improves. This perception has influenced the findings of this study. I believe that this research about teacher attrition and school leadership has the potential to contribute towards an understanding on how female principals feel and how they influence the enactment of policies. The adoption of a reflexive stance was a way of enhancing confidence in my study, establishing my credibility and ensuring that my position is transparent (Takhar-Lail & Chitakunye, 2015:24). My background shaped my approach to the topic on how female principals experience teacher attrition and using a qualitative research approach gave me an exceptional opportunity to explore the self-reflection process regarded as crucial in interpretive research.

4.11 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I gave a detailed account of the paradigm perspective, research approach and research design selected, that would enable the aims of the study to be achieved and provide answers for the research questions. Furthermore, a detailed discussion of the procedures for sampling, was followed by the strategies for the collection of data. The process of data analysis and interpretation was described in detail. Careful attention was paid to measures of trustworthiness, ethical issues, subjectivity and reflexivity, were explored to ensure the research question is adequately answered. The subsequent chapter provides the research findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter explained the research approach, research design and the research methodology used to answer the research question. It discussed the data collection methods and the process of data analysis to reveal the findings which are presented in this chapter.

The chapter reports data gathered from 14 female principals in the Tshwane West District of Gauteng Province. I used multiple data collection strategies that included interviews, observation and document analysis to gather data. The aim of this study was to explore the female principals' experiences of teacher attrition in Gauteng Province. I used the pseudocodes to cover the names of the schools selected for this study and used pseudonyms to mask the participants who took part in this project. This was done to respect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants, as outlined in Chapters one and three. Quotes from the interviews are presented verbatim in italics.

This chapter sets out an account of individual participants that were involved in this study. Of significance is the opinions, views and perceptions of the participants as they were explored and clarified. The chapter begins with a presentation of the description of the sites, a description of the participants, a discussion of findings from the interviews, a discussion of findings from participants' observation, a description and analysis of documents analysed, and it concludes with a chapter summary.

5.2 A DESCRIPTION OF THE SITES

The study was conducted in the Tshwane West district of Gauteng Province in South Africa. Fourteen schools led by female principals were chosen as research sites. Of the fourteen research sites, nine were primary schools and five were secondary schools. All the primary schools served learners from Grades R to 7, whereas the secondary schools operated from Grades 8 to 12. These research sites were conveniently selected from both rural and urban areas. The enrolment of learners for

the each of the research sites varied from 531 to 1559. The number of PL1 teachers differed from 17 to 51 and the number of SMT members fluctuated from three to 11.

5.2.1 Rural Research Sites

Nine rural research sites were selected and consisted of seven primary schools and two secondary schools. All the sites are situated in the North of Pretoria. The pseudocodes given to these schools for anonymity are School 1, School 2, School 4, School 6, School 7, School 8, School 9 for the primary schools and School 13 and School 14 for the secondary schools. The female principals at all these sites are African. These schools are all classified as quintile 3 and are non-fee-paying schools, which means that learners do not pay school fees. All the sites have running water, electricity and are well fenced for security and in addition, have security personnel. It is assumed that schools in rural areas are not well resourced, but the description above indicates that although the schools are situated in the rural area, they do have the basic needs such as running water, electricity and the buildings are secured.

5.2.2 Urban Research Sites

Five urban sites were chosen and comprised two primary schools and three secondary schools. Both primary schools are situated in the North of Pretoria while the one secondary school is situated in the North of Pretoria, the second in Pretoria City and the third one in the West of Pretoria. The pseudocodes given to these sites are School 3 and School 5 for the primary schools and School 10, School 11 and School 12 for secondary schools. All the female principals at these schools are White. All the sites are classified as quintile 5 and are fee-paying schools which means learners at these sites pay school fees. All the sites have good infrastructure except for School 3, a new school that is still developing using a mobile classroom as the administration block. All the sites have security personnel, running water, electricity and they are well fenced.

The importance of profiling the designated schools was to help the readers understand the background and the context in which the female principals operate. From the description of the selected schools above, it can be construed that there is a close resemblance in terms of the environment in which these schools are situated. I assume that the parents of the learners who attend urban schools are financially able

to pay school fees as well as taking part in fundraising ventures, while it is the opposite with the schools in the rural areas.

The schools that are in the rural area are situated in the vicinity where most of the parents are unemployed and thus cannot afford to pay school fees and as a result, the resources are a challenge. In contrast, the schools that are situated in the urban area are built in an affluent area where parents are generally employed and are able to pay schools fees and the schools are well resourced because of the schools' financial capability

5.3 A DESCRIPTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

I gave the participants pseudonyms to protect their identity. I named them, Alice, Betty, Cathy, Daisy, Elsa, Fiona, Gemma, Hazel, Iris, Judy, Kate, Lora, Mercy and Nancy.

Alice is the principal of School 1. She is 55 years of age and was appointed as a principal in 2001, thus she has 17 years' experience as a principal. Alice holds a Bachelor of Education Honours degree (BEd). She describes herself as someone who calls a spade a spade. She further labelled herself as having the ability to turn lemons into lemonade. At the time I was collecting data, she was serving three months' notice. She informed me that she was resigning at the end of June to venture into another field.

Betty is 58 years of age and is the principal of School 2. Like Alice, she has a BEd. In 2013, she was appointed the principal of School 2 and therefore she has been a principal for five years. In fact, Betty's first appointment as a principal was at another school but her school was merged with another. As no school can have two principals, she was advised to apply for another school hence she became the principal of School 2. Betty speaks slowly but at length when she explains something. Betty's office is a mobile classroom and she shares it with three of the administrative staff. As a result, the office space is small and limiting but the office is well arranged.

Cathy is the principal of School 3 and was appointed principal in 2015 meaning she has 3 years' experience as a principal. She has an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) with specialisation in Education Management as a qualification. She is 61 years old and very friendly. She responded cautiously to the questions that I asked. Cathy

said that she has experience and knowledge that she gathered from her previous schools that she shares with her teachers. She explained that most of the teachers come from rural schools and are not exposed to all these other ways of doing things. Although her office is a mobile unit, it is spacious, neat and well arranged.

Daisy is 52 years old and is the principal of School 4. She was appointed in September 2016 but before her appointment she acted as a principal as the previous principal retired in March 2016. She holds a BEd and explained that acting was not easy because many people were interested in applying for the post. The school has an administration block and her office is spacious and well arranged. There is Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) camera in her office thus she can see what is going on around the school while seated in her office.

Elsa is the principal of School 5 and is 60 years old. She holds a BEd and indicated that as this is her last qualification and she does not see any reason to continue with upgrading her qualifications because she is retiring in five years. Her appointment as a principal was in August 2011. Before she came to School 5, she was an acting principal at another school. She indicated that she was seconded to School 5 and then applied for the principal's post and was subsequently appointed. She reported that she found the school very different from the school she came from in terms of discipline. Elsa's previous school had enforced discipline and she at first regretted her move. However, she said that she had reprimanded herself on her thinking and from that day on she had never looked back.

Elsa is very forward and speaks her mind. Even though her office is a mobile classroom, it is spacious, neat and well arranged. She shares her office with her personal assistant. The school has a disciplinary officer whose responsibility is to deal with learner discipline, which means that if a learner needs to be disciplined, he is the one who handles the matter and thus teachers are relieved of the burden of disciplining learners.

Fiona is 51 years old and was appointed principal of School 6 in 1998. She has been a principal for 20 years and has the most experience of all the participants. She holds a BEd and indicated that she became the principal of the school at a young age of 37. She further indicated that in 1998, she was given two promotions within five months. She was appointed to an HOD post for five months and later became the principal, a

position she has been in ever since. Fiona's school is very clean with a beautiful garden. Her school has an administration block and she claims that it was a donation from one of the companies through her efforts.

Fiona's office is neatly arranged. She has fresh flowers on one of the cupboards. She has CCTV camera in the office to enable her to monitor the outside environment. The school is big and some of the classrooms are mobile units with flowers planted in front of them. She reported that she arrives at six o'clock in the morning and that her teachers know that, that is a norm for her to arrive at that time. She said her teachers know that they must call her before the school starts if they are not going to report for work. On the day of my observation, I arrived at 8h00, the school had already settled.

In addition, Fiona is determined to get things done. This is clear in what she has done since her appointment to the position. She stated that when she became the principal of the school, it was a school without infrastructure. The school was fragmented, and learners were hosted in four institutions thus she had to use her car to monitor all the fragments until she decided to do something about it. She confronted her seniors like the department head and moved through these until she was able to meet the-then Minister of Education (MEC). She said at that time it was very rare, especially for a young principal and a female, to take such decisive action. However, she indicated that irrespective of the fragmentation and lack of infrastructure, the school proved a point because when they participated in sports and music competitions, they brought home the trophies.

My observation revealed that the garden and the cleanliness at that school made one to forget that this is a rural school surrounded by Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses. The discipline around the school was well maintained.

Gemma indicated that she is 50 years old, has been a teacher for 25 years and was appointed principal of School 7 in 2014. She has four years' experience as a principal and holds a BEd. Her office space is small, but it is neat and well arranged.

She reported that ever since she took over the principalship, the learner numbers have been increasing with plus-minus 100 learners every year. She further indicated that as the leader, she is happy with the growth of the school, basing her case on the increase in learner enrolment. Gemma specified that most of the teachers at her school are

new and fresh from the institutions such as Technikons and Universities. She referred to them as the *Funza Lushaka* group. *Funza Lushaka* which means educate the nation and is a bursary scheme that was introduced by the government in 2007 with the intention to promote the teaching profession. Bursaries are availed for interested students who wish to pursue a teaching qualification in the fields of scarce subjects like languages, technology, mathematics and science. The recipients of these bursaries are expected to teach at a public school for the same number of years for which they received the bursary.

Gemma specified that she is very concerned about teachers who retire or resign and four to five years down the line, they struggle because they no longer have money. She further indicated that it made her wonder if teachers fail to plan while working. She is of the opinion that teachers need to do personal life development such as building houses, starting businesses, paying up the house bonds and buying cars, while they are still working so that the pension fund can take care of them during retirement.

Hazel is 60 years old and is the principal of School 8. She was appointed in 2011 to become the principal and she holds a BEd. She indicated that she believes that she has a lot of management experience because she was an HOD for 11 years and then a deputy principal for seven years before she became a principal. Hazel is the eldest of all the participants and she confesses that she cannot wait for her retirement because the principalship position is a serious challenge. Although the school is built of brick and mortar, her office is a mobile classroom and she shares it with one of the administrative staff. The office does not have sufficient space, but it is neatly arranged.

It was very difficult to get hold of Hazel to conduct the interview even though I made the necessary arrangements timeously because on the day of the interview I found that the previous night, her school had been broken into and computers were stolen. So, I went back, and we agreed that I would make another appointment because she had to attend to the burglary issue. I scheduled another appointment and unfortunately it also failed because when I arrived at the school, she informed me that she had just received a call from the district, and she had to leave. Hazel is the only participant that I did not get an opportunity to attend the morning briefings with, thus my observation was limited to the four visits that I made to the school that included the day I went to

ask for permission to conduct the research, the two days when my first and second interviews failed to take place and then the day that I was able to interview her. She kept on postponing our observation appointment until my period of data collection had come to an end.

Iris is 49 years old and holds a master's degree in Educational Management (MEd). She explained that she was awarded her master's Cum Laude. She is the principal of School 9. Iris was appointed principal in 2017 but regards herself as having the necessary management experience because she was a deputy principal for 12 years. She reported that she was the deputy principal at a former Model C school and that most of the time she oversaw the school, hence she regards herself as an experienced principal even though she was only appointed principal in 2017.

Iris was one of the most difficult participants to find especially with regards to the interviews. I ended up meeting her at an agreed-upon spot (parking lot) to conduct the interview. She came from one of the principals' meeting on a Friday late afternoon. We found a secluded spot to avoid noise, sat in my car where I then interviewed her.

Judy is the principal of School 10 and she is 51 years old. She was appointed principal in April 2017. She said she was the acting principal for seven years at her previous school. Judy has an Honours degree in History and specified that although she is a principal, she does do some teaching. Judy calls learners by name especially the naughty ones that frequent her office. She said she is proud of herself. Judy further indicated that she arrives at the school at 6h00 and leave at 18h00. Judy's school is a former Model C school thus the school infrastructure is in place. The school has a large administration block and Judy's office is very spacious and well arranged.

Judy is white, and she joked that if she can lose her phone and somebody picks it up, they will think she is a black person because if you look at her WhatsApp every second or third number, is a black person's number because she gets involved with the learners and the parents. She reported that one learner once said to her that she is different from the principal she knows from her previous school in that at her other school, she never saw the principal.

On the day that I conducted observation at Judy's school, she had 100% teacher attendance. She was very happy, and she told the teachers in the staff room that she

wished I could visit the school every day, so they could all come to school. Judy's school is troubled by drugs. On the day of the observation, I found out that she had had to deal with a challenge the previous day where she had to call ambulances to come and take learners to the hospital because they drank a concoction of cough mixture, methylated spirits, sprite and pain killer tablets. Judy realised that this is a new form of drug that learners are using.

Kate is 45 years old and is the principal of School 11. She holds MEd and was appointed principal in October 2017. She acted as a principal from March until September 2017, because her principal accepted a post at another school. Kate's school is a former Model C school and the infrastructure looks good. There is an administration block and her office is spacious and neatly arranged. Kate prides herself on the fact that she is a straightforward person.

Lora is the principal of School 12. She was appointed principal in 2009, where she was the first female principal after several male principals. She holds two honours degrees, one in geography and the other one in education. Lora is 45 years old and was appointed the principal at a time when there were not many female principals. She was sincere when she informed me that she does not dress up formally like her predecessors, she prefers to wear casual clothes and that she cannot change who she is.

Lora is a principal of a former Model C school and thus infrastructure is in place. This is because Former model C schools were normally well resourced and well maintained in comparison to former black schools in rural areas and townships. Judy's office is spacious, neat and well arranged. She boasted that most teachers want to work at her school because of the available resources at the school.

Lora declared that she has 26 class assistants. These are students from different Universities, and at different levels, that is first years and others in their final year, and all have South African Council of Educators (SACE) certificates. The students must be able to teach in both English and Afrikaans. These students get a stipend from the School Governing Body (SGB) and there is thus always an extra hand in the classrooms (40 learners in the class). Lora regards this as playing a role as partners in training the student teachers.

Lora stated that she is worried about the hearsay that some SGB's do not appoint knowledgeable people and they rather appoint people they know. This is often a challenge to manage if the appointed person lacks the knowledge and skills for the job. Furthermore, she gets disturbed to hear that posts are being sold and there are other people who pay to get posts because these lead to wrongful appointments especially the promotional posts. She believes if a person has a conflict of interest, it must be declared so he/she can be excused.

Mercy is the principal of School 13, is 57 years of age and holds BEd. Mercy kept her responses short. My interview with her was the shortest of them all because she kept her responses very short even when I probed.

She accepted my invitation the first day I met her physically at her school but thereafter it was difficult to find time for the interview due to her commitments. She postponed our appointment many times to an extent that I ended up interviewing her at her own house one evening.

Nancy is 57 years old and holds a BEd and was appointed principal of School 14 in 2008. On the day I went to interview her, one of the teachers came and informed her that because the following day was women's day the women have agreed that they are going to put on their headscarves and the teacher came to ask her to do the same and she agreed.

Her school has an administration block and her office is spacious and neatly arranged. Nancy's office overlooks the school entrance thus she can monitor the entrance while seated in her office, as such, she can confront learners who come late.

To sum up, the ages of the female principals that participated in this study ranged from 45 to 64 years and their experience as principals differed from a year to 20 years. These principals had served in various positions before they became principals and thus were regarded as having the necessary experience and understanding regarding education management and teacher attrition issues.

5.4 A DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.4.1 Findings Emerging from Interviews

Eight major themes emerged from the data analysis on female principals' experiences of teacher attrition. The main research question was : *How do female principals in Gauteng Province describe their experiences with teacher attrition?*

The empirical data presented below attempted to answer the following sub-questions that address the main research question:

1. What are the causes of teacher attrition in schools?
2. What is the effect of teacher attrition in schools?
3. What challenges do female principals experience in dealing with teacher attrition?
4. What kind of support do female principals receive in managing teacher attrition?
5. How do female principals perceive their role in handling teacher attrition?
6. What leadership style do female principals display in their attempt to address teacher attrition?
7. What measures do female principals employ to mitigate the challenges caused by teacher attrition?
8. What strategies do female principals explore to retain the teachers?

Each main theme consists of several sub-themes, as listed in Table 5.1 below, and are separately discussed.

Table 5.1: Summary of themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Manifestation of teacher attrition in schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Types of teacher attrition➤ Reasons for teacher attrition➤ Rate of teacher attrition➤ Female principals' views on teacher attrition
2. Female principals' handling of teacher attrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Act as the representative of the Department➤ Recruitment process➤ Creating a conducive working environment
3. Ramifications of teacher attrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Disruption of the school plan➤ Ramifications on learners

Themes	Sub-themes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ramifications on remaining teachers ➤ Loss of experienced teachers and difficulty in finding suitable replacement ➤ Dealing with inexperienced teachers and their capacitation ➤ Notice period, delay in appointments and improper handover
4. Challenges in managing teacher attrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ School leadership a male dominated space ➤ Leadership misconception, power struggle and pull her down syndrome ➤ Mistrust and rejection ➤ Phases, grades and subjects hard hit by teacher attrition ➤ Opportunities of teacher attrition
5. Mitigation of teacher attrition challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sharing learners among classes and distributing subjects to teachers ➤ Juggling teachers and the timetable around ➤ Empowering new teachers and promoting collaborative planning ➤ Use of available systems
6. Retention strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promoting from within ➤ Motivation and support ➤ Developmental programmes ➤ Communication and mutual respect ➤ Caring and showing appreciation ➤ Modelling good practices ➤ Retention barriers and expertise to be retained
7. Leadership and teacher attrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Leadership style and understanding ➤ Setting the vision of the school ➤ Acting in a motherly way and applying <i>ubuntu</i> ➤ Applying open-door policy approach and allowing teacher autonomy ➤ Relationship with the teachers ➤ Having knowledge and adhering to requirements
8. Support received by female principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Guidance with administration of the recruitment process ➤ Keeping database and CVs of unemployed teachers ➤ SGB assistance

5.4.1.1 Theme 1: Manifestation of Teacher Attrition in Schools

Teacher attrition is a global phenomenon which manifests in different ways. Teacher attrition takes place when teachers leave their place of employment either willingly or unwillingly. As Oke *et al.* (2016:373) state, attrition is a process where some employees leave their jobs, which include both voluntary and involuntary separation. Voluntary turnover refers to when an employee decides to resign of his/her own accord and involuntary departure refers to when the employer dismisses or retrenches an employee because his/her services are no longer needed. Khawary and Ali (2015:12) add that there is no single factor that causes a teacher to leave; instead, there are multiple factors, which work in various complex combinations.

In this study, fourteen female principals were interviewed. All the participants had experience of between a year and 20 years as principals and were thus considered conversant with teacher attrition matters in schools. From the interviews held with the participants, it is evident that the participants experienced teacher attrition differently. Theme one consists of sub-themes namely, types of teacher attrition, reasons for teacher attrition, rate of teacher attrition and female principals' views on teacher attrition.

5.4.1.1a Sub-theme: Types of teacher attrition

There are various aspects that contribute towards teachers leaving their work at the different schools. This is confirmed by Muteswa and Orllepp (2011:15) who state that there are many different types of turnover that can affect South African organisations. The cause of involuntary turnover may be factors that are beyond the control of the organisation such as legislation, technology and economy and may also include retirement, dismissals and redundancies. Khawary and Ali (2015:12) add that there is no single factor that causes a teacher to leave; instead, there are multiple factors, which work in various complex combinations. Data aligns with Pitsoe and Machaisa (2012:3) that the decision to leave teaching may be influenced by a variety of factors including tension, frustration, anger and depression at work, as well as school violence, low salaries and arduous work challenges. To a large extent, what is highlighted by literature (Muteswa & Orllepp, 2011:15; Khawary & Ali, 2015:12; Pitsoe

& Machaisa, 2012:3), is that teachers have left the schools due to resignation, ill-health, death, retirement, transfer, redeployment and dismissal.

Resignation

Resignation refers to when the employee terminates his/her employment contract out of his/her own accord. Data revealed that all the participants experienced teachers leaving their employment through resignation, as reported by participants:

Ohh, resignation is the most thing I have experienced. (Iris)

I have experienced teachers leaving the school because they wanted to do what we call withdrawal, they resigned. (Alice)

I experienced resignations because now it's on fashion because people need to cash up their pensions. (Fiona)

In addition, another participant said the following about resignation:

Luckily at my school they are not really leaving the school. So, I am very thankful and privileged. I am thankful for that. (Cathy).

Cathy's response to the question showed that she regards her school as blessed because not many teachers resign and leave the school. She further regards herself and the school as being in a fortunate position regarding staffing. In many cases, teachers resign to cash in or withdraw their pension. This may be influenced by the fact that teachers are in debt and they need additional finances to settle their debts. One other issue might be that teachers are no longer happy in their job. When teachers are unhappy, they are likely to resign and look for something better elsewhere.

The data revealed that some of the teachers left their work because they had financial problems thus, they left their positions to cash in their pension, to attend to their financial challenges or crisis. The finding concurs with Pitsoe (2013:10) that teachers in South Africa resign from their teaching positions due to dissatisfaction with remuneration. As caring leaders, the role of the female principals is to show support by talking to these teachers individually and showing them that they understand their situation even though they want to resign. A transformational leader needs to understand the employees' unique needs and create a supportive environment and

engage in practices that build on the employee self-confidence to enhance their performance. Teachers and learners uniformly work better when there is an attitude of care and support. Teacher resignations could have significant financial implications on the government and skill retention in the teaching profession.

Participants also indicated that teachers resign in order to have access to their pension funds to ensure that they have ready money:

I think the reason is monetary gains. They wanted to cash their pension. I think in this case, you know, educators are pressed for money. That's what I'm thinking because I know of one who just wanted to get the pension fund, so that she can beautify her house and thereafter she went back to teaching. (Mercy)

Yes, monetary problems because all of them went back to the system except for one. But all of them raising monetary challenges. They wanted to have cash to do all these, whatever they were experiencing. It was just voluntarily. I think you know that system of teachers leaving the system for financial gain and coming back to the system also. (Gemma)

Alice explained what happened with many teachers:

It is because they wanted to get their money and come back to the system, so all of them those who resigned, and they are back in the different schools, teaching.

The data revealed that teachers resign from their teaching position so that they withdraw their pension funds to finance specific projects and address their financial challenges. This contrasts with Pitsoe (2013:312) who argued that pension considerations act as holding forces for many older teachers. Once they have received their money, they go back to the teaching profession and take up a further position. The question one may ask is, do these returning teachers have the passion to work or is it because they are now financially strapped and need to work.

Ill-health and death

Ill-health and death are some of the factors that influence teacher attrition. It has been reported that some teachers experience ill-health for a short period while others for longer periods. Regarding short sick leave, one participant had this to say:

Let me start with those who start by being sick. Then the person will be sick for a week, and then you know you have a hope because you can't substitute such a teacher. Then you just substitute internally, just say okay mam so and so, Mr. so and so will be coming in but mam so and so this week she is not in then according to the doctor's note it's up to maybe Friday. Then you are expecting the teacher to come back on Monday, come Monday, no, another extension of another week. Then you are just waiting, what about the learners. Because you cannot, even you take teachers to say no substitute this class, substitute, it's just a monitoring it's not substitution per se where they are going to teach those classes. (Nancy).

The data revealed that in some instances, the teacher is sick for a short period but keep on extending the short sick leave. In such cases where the teacher extends the short sick leave period, it becomes a challenge for the female principal in terms of how to manage the learners who are being deprived of teaching and learning and it has an effect on other teachers who need to step in as substitutes. However, this is in a monitoring role. It seems the principal has no guidelines or no directives from the Department on how to handle such issues. The female principal needs to develop a context-specific strategy to ensure that learners are attended to and taught, and in such cases, the participants need to use their discretion. These short sick leave periods frustrate the participants and disrupt the smooth running of the school as the participant must make ad-hoc plans for teaching and learning to continue uninterrupted.

In addition to the teachers who take short sick leave, some teachers become sick for an extended time, as indicated by the participants below:

ohh, the last one was in 2018, she was sick for a long time. (Nancy)

the latest one that left, was ill, ehh, you know he was frequently absent because she was on PILIR (long leave). (Judy)

But at this point in time, we have a teacher who has been on sick leave since 2016 (PILIR). Ehhm thus far that's the most worrying also had quite a number of teachers who went on sick leave, long period, sick leave. Five so far. (Betty)

She came to our school in 2015, and ever since, she has been on and off, on and off and in and out of the hospital. (Fiona)

The data revealed that it is not only short and long sick leaves that is a cause for concern for the participants. When teachers have to be medically boarded due to ill-health, the Department processes the paperwork, which takes time, causing a delay that makes it difficult to find a replacement.

I have a teacher who has been sick for a long time. I am waiting for the approval letter from the province. Letter from Gauteng province to release the teacher. So, everything, paperwork, was done but the only problem is that the province is very slow in doing things, it takes long for them to solve some other problems. So, all in all, we believe they will send that as soon as possible but I've been waiting. (Hazel)

The data showed that it is not only the Department that delays the process of appointments but also the doctors of the teachers who are sick, as they take time to complete the necessary forms needed to start the process of appointing another teacher or a substitute teacher.

In the case of long sick leave, we experience delays because doctors are giving us a hard time in getting those forms and without that form, you cannot appoint a teacher. You need to have those forms for you to submit to the District office. It's then that they can allow you to appoint but it depends on an individual doctor, medical doctor as to how they interact with those forms. (Fiona)

It is apparent from the data that teachers' health is one of the issues that bothers female principals especially if a teacher continuously takes short sick leave or extends the sick leave. In such cases, the female principal is challenged in finding a substitute at short notice and for a specific period. In many cases, short-term substitution is done internally, but learners suffer because of continuous absenteeism. Teachers are required to furnish the school with a medical certificate to explain their absence and the expected time frame; however, in some cases, the period of sick leave is extended.

When teachers are medically boarded because of ill-health, the Department has to process the paperwork, this takes time, causing another delay that makes it difficult to find a replacement.

From the participants' responses above, it is not only the short sick leave that is frustrating the female principal but long sick leave as well especially when the ill-health continues for a really long period. This is made worse when several teachers are sick at the same time. It is evident that when teachers are sick, it becomes a challenge because continuous absences are difficult to manage properly. The participants need to develop creative strategies to ensure there is a teacher in every class. This often results in making temporary arrangements where other teachers must step in and substitute, which lowers the morale of those who come to school on a regular basis as it disturbs their daily plans. Participants experience frustration because of the absenteeism caused by teachers who are sick for a long time. This frustration is exacerbated by the doctors who take time to process the teacher's sick notes or filling in the forms that need to be submitted to the Department to start the process of finding a substitute when a teacher can no longer render his/her services to due ill-health.

In some cases, teachers who are sick and have been on extended sick leave do not recover and pass on. This is reported by the participants below:

I had two teachers who passed on, they were both not well. (Fiona)

I lost two teachers in the same month on consecutive days. And all of them it was death. (Iris)

I experienced only one death case. A female teacher. She got sick just for a short time and she passed on. (Nancy)

The data showed that some teachers do not report for duty because they are sick and not all the teachers who are sick get well and return to work. Some pass on. Although participants reported on teachers who were sick and others who had passed on, they did not disclose the kind of illness, nor did they disclose the cause of the teachers' death. Responses from the participants align with literature (Pitsoe & Machaisa, 2012:3) where one reason for teacher attrition is sickness or ill-health.

Iris was able to disclose the cause of the passing of two teachers at her school:

All of them was death through stress. Uhhh, it was hectic. Uhhh, I didn't take it well. So, it was a difficult moment, to lose such people and then finding out afterwards that it was ehh financial stress-related.

Iris's comment revealed that she found the situation of two of her staff members who had passed on difficult to cope and her reaction is indicative that she cares about the well-being of the teachers working under her leadership. This relates to Van der Vyver *et al.*, (2014:62) that a caring leader shows real interest in the well-being of the teachers and learners which manifests in sympathy and commitment.

The data revealed that some teachers leave teaching because they are not well, and their health is at risk. However, it becomes a challenge for the participants to ensure that the school is fully staffed, especially with continuous absence if the teacher keeps on extending short sick leave or is sick for a longer period. Van der Merwe and Conley (2016:313) point that it is important that school principals take an active interest in the well-being of teachers to support them in their quest for the provision of quality education. In many cases, the stress of the job and workload, could lead to ill-health, burnout, job dissatisfaction and ultimately termination and in some instances, the teacher dies due to ill-health. The findings concur with Van der Merwe and Conley (2016:312) that some teachers leave because of ill-health and death.

Retirement

According to Oke *et al.*, (2016:373), teachers generally retire and stop teaching when they reach the retirement age. Normal retirement in the education system in South Africa takes place in the year that a teacher turns 65, but teachers can retire as early as 55 years of age.

The data revealed that participants had teachers who left the schools due to retirement.

those were the only three who left the school through pension (retirement), (Daisy).

I think retirements are two. (Gemma).

[Laughing]. *Those who went on pension I can safely say about four.* (Mercy)

It is apparent from the above evidence that teachers retire because they have reached the retirement age of 65 years. There is nothing the participants can do except to let the teacher leave because the Department does not allow teacher to serve beyond retirement age. The finding aligns with literature (RSA,1998), that compulsory retirement age is 65 years. Optional retirement age is from 55 years and thus teachers may take early retirement at that age. The data presented above also showed that there were no teachers who took early retirement.

Transfer and redeployment

Transfer and redeployment are some of the factors that influence teacher attrition. Transfer tends to be a voluntary action which is sought by the teachers. This is what participants said:

Ehhmmm, teachers that left the school through transfer, actually, two teachers got cross transfers, the first one is staying next to the school where she went to. (Elsa)

Ja, I just experienced one teacher who left on transfer, [silence] whom maybe ehhh, had a challenge with her peers, they did not see eye to eye and then I advised her not to resign, I then sat down with her and advised her to do a cross transfer and she agreed and left. (Fiona)

Fiona showed her caring nature by advising one of her teachers, who seemed to be unhappy, not to resign but to consider taking a cross transfer. This meant cross transferring with another teacher who was working in a school close to where Fiona's teacher lived, so this transfer would be a convenient one for her.

The participants' comments above are indicative that teachers move from one school to the other for various reasons. If the environment under which the teachers are working is not conducive enough or toxic for the individual teacher, the teacher may feel uncomfortable and may choose to leave. The finding is confirmed by Lumadi (2014:171) that a work environment in which the employees experience happiness has potential to motivate the teachers to remain in their positions but then the opposite is true.

In some instances, teachers leave their employment due to factors that are beyond their control, but which are within the control of the employer. One of these factors is redeployment. Redeployment refers to when the teachers are moved from their schools because their services are needed somewhere else or it may occur as a result of reduction in learner numbers and the teacher is then considered additional (in excess) at his/her school or the needs of another school require a teacher with another set of competencies.

Judy had a teacher who was moved to another schools through redeployment. She explained that:

So, we actually sat with her personally and put her in excess. She was currently put to another school where there is a need for her subject.

The above statement indicates that the participants are responsible for identifying the teachers who can be redeployed to other schools. This is done by looking at the needs of the school and then identifying a teacher in excess according to the needs of the school. Those that are identified generally do not fit the needs of the school. In this case, it was interesting to note that the teacher was consulted at the time she was identified as in excess.

Elsa shared her experience of identifying or declaring a teacher in excess. She pointed out that it was not easy and that it was an unpleasant experience. In addition, she indicated that what made it more difficult is that it was only one teacher who was in excess. Elsa realised that redeployment makes teachers feel insecure about their jobs. Elsa explained that identifying only one person out of the whole staff for deployment was difficult and something she did not relish doing:

I only experienced it once, while I have been here at this school, to declare a teacher in excess, that to me was very difficult. I lost a teacher once at this school through redeployment. It was 2011 beginning of 2012. We had to lose one teacher and that is so difficult because if you must start to think of your teachers who do you want to declare in excess. So, it's not a nice experience. But that was the first and the last time I had to declare somebody in excess I did not appreciate that, but you know you have your SMT support to say it wasn't my decision alone we collectively came to decide that this is the teacher.

Elsa justified her decision as it was made in consultation with the SMT:

The teacher was frequently absent from the school as well, so maybe she wasn't happy at the school. So maybe for her it was an opportunity to move away from the school.

Elsa's decision was one not taken lightly but she was aware that the teacher's absence from work may have meant that the teacher was unhappy at the school. Thus, she thought that declaring the teacher in excess might give the said teacher an opportunity to start afresh.

Iris indicated that initially redeployment was a major concern in schools:

Ohhh, R&R (redeployment), that one uhh, now is not that rife, at first when the system started it was a crisis, but now, recently is rare. So, R&R is no longer now a thorny thing. (Iris)

The data indicated that some teachers make requests for transfers to move from one school to the other for their own reasons while others are redeployed by the Department due to operational reasons. Participants had differing views about redeployment. One participant mentioned that redeployment in the beginning was a cause for concern and something the teachers dreaded but lately it is an infrequent phenomenon. Some participants indicated that redeployment was not a nice phenomenon to experience, which is the case with the teachers who are identified in excess. In the case cited above, the teacher identified in excess did leave the school, which contrasts with what happened in the past where redeployment of teachers had failed, and experienced teachers opted for voluntary severance packages and left the teaching profession (Mosoge, 2012:183).

Dismissal/discharge

Only one participant reported having a teacher who was dismissed due to incapacity. This is how Judy explained the situation:

ehh, so since my appointment last year we had ehhe, one teacher who had a disciplinary hearing, ehhe, he was not performing and as a principal, what can I say, the expectations of the Department and my own, I would like the school to

become the best school in this area. So ehh, we are looking at teacher performance, so we had a hearing and he was dismissed after a hearing.

Judy, as the principal is responsible for the quality and effectiveness of the school, had reason to dismiss a teacher due to incapacity. Dismissing a teacher in this manner must follow set procedures and there are protocols that need to be observed, as Judy further mentioned:

Ehh, there is a few that I would like to leave, ehh, that we are working on because for me as a principal, I want the best teacher in the class. I did not appoint them, I inherited them. They are struggling with discipline, we have done intervention. They are Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), so I also involved the district, ehh but you know how the district works. It's you know hearing, development, another hearing so it's going to take time, but I have currently four people that I actually would like to leave but, that is a process.

The female principal's statements above show that it is not easy to dismiss a teacher who cannot perform his/her duties. Campbell-Whatley and Lyons (2013:196) state that termination of teachers is the most difficult undertaking, even for the most resilient school principal. Participants need to follow the correct procedures where the teacher needs to be supported for development and only if the capacitation has failed, can a teacher be dismissed or discharged from his/her duties due to incapacity. Thus, it takes time before a teacher who cannot perform can be dismissed and, in the process, the learners suffer. The transformational leader enhances the work of the teacher by providing a range of professional and development opportunities (Day & Sammons, 2016:19). It is the responsibility of the female principal to take the necessary steps and give individual support to such a teacher for development and only regard dismissal as the last resort.

Overall, it is evident from the above discussions that teacher attrition is influenced by a variety of factors such as resignation, death, retirement, ill-health, transfer, redeployment and dismissal. This may be influenced by the fact that the teachers are unhappy due to issues that are related to their work. As per the responses of the participants, resignation of teachers seems to be on the increase as many teachers resign to cash in or withdraw their pension money. Participants' responses referred to absences from school where sick leave causes staffing challenges in the school. This

related to both short-term and long-term sick leave especially when the ill-health of teachers resulted in extension of leave and when several teachers reported in as sick at the same time. Both short and long-term sick leave cause absence that disturbs the teaching and learning process. In some cases, teachers who have experienced ill-health die and leave a staffing gap. It also became apparent that teachers had to retire at the retirement age of 65 years, as per Departmental policy. The data also indicated that some teachers put in requests for transfers to move from one school to the other for their own reasons while others are redeployed by the Department due to operational reasons. Likewise, participants indicated that at times, they facilitated the process of redeployment to make unhappy teachers move to other schools where they might be more comfortable. Finally, data indicated that some teachers are dismissed for various reasons. In this case too, it takes time before a teacher who does not perform can be dismissed and, in the process, it is the learners who suffer, which interferes with teaching and learning.

It is, therefore, clear that teacher attrition is an ongoing process, it is unavoidable and cannot be prevented. Attrition does not take place in education only, it happens in other professions as well, thus it is important for the female principals to discourage teachers from leaving their work because when teachers stay, it enhances stability that is needed at the school to improve on school efficiency and maintain effectiveness in teaching and learning.

5.4.1.1b Sub-theme: Reasons for teacher attrition

There are numerous reasons that cause teachers to leave their workplaces or jobs. There is an inclination for teachers to move from one school to the other or to move from one district to the other or even leave the country due to their personal needs. Some teachers request the Department to release them because they need to work closer to their homes and not be burdened with major daily commutes. The participants reported varying reasons why teachers have left the schools, and these have been categorised as personal, financial, work position, policy-related issues and institutional matters.

Personal reasons

Personal reasons are when a teacher decides to terminate his/her services of his/her own accord, which aligns with Oke *et al.*, (2016:373), who acknowledges that some teachers leave for personal reasons. In some instances, teachers leave and move to another school or in other cases, they leave the teaching profession completely. Data revealed that some teachers left their employment due to family matters. The participants' comments below offer an explanation of personal reasons for leaving a school:

Ms T left because she accepted a post closer to home. Ehh, Ms G also relocated. Ehhmm, who's the other teacher, Ms M ja, she also relocated, that's the three (3) that has left us due to relocation because they wanted to work nearer home (Kate)

Ehh, we have one staff member who left because her husband lost his job in Gauteng and he relocated to Limpopo and had a very small child, so she was teaching and staying here in a flat, and only going home on weekends. So, it was strenuous for the mother, she had a small child. Ehh, she was in tears, she didn't want to go but she got a post there at a private school and for us it was actually a loss. She didn't want to but circumstances with the family economic- wise she, had to be with her family. And the second one had two small children and the other one had learning barriers, then she resigned, to go and take more time for the child. So, she is now currently out of education, in a private job like from 7 to 1 (13h00) whatever, to give her more time. (Judy)

The data conveyed that teachers are sometimes compelled by personal circumstances to leave their work and to look for employment elsewhere. Other teachers leave their jobs because they are working far from home and from their families and thus when an opportunity presents itself for the teacher to find work closer to home, he/she leaves their present employment. Rinke (2014:x) posits that teachers' initial plans to stay or leave the teaching profession are continually modified and shaped by shifting workplace conditions, new opportunities and personal situations.

Fiona raised an interesting point about reasons given for leaving:

They will always hide, but in the street, they will say hey, we needed cash, we needed money. Ja, but on paper they won't say it.

Fiona indicated that most often than not, teachers do not reveal the true reasons for their leaving, they keep it a secret because they do not want to make it public and official that they need to leave due to financial constraints.

The discussion above is in line with Rinke (2014: xiv) who argues that teacher attrition takes place due to either personal characteristics that include academic achievement, family or personal responsibilities. A transformational leader can understand employees' unique needs by creating a supportive environment and engaging in practices that build on employee self-confidence to enhance their performance. The female principal as a transformational leader can support the teachers by assisting them in building their self-confidence in focusing on their other strong attributes rather than giving up or losing hope.

Financial reasons

The data also revealed that some teachers left their work to take up other jobs outside the school system, pursuing greener pastures while others left the country and took up positions in other countries that provided them with better salaries, for example in Abu-Dhabi and China:

Oh well, eh, the one teacher got a teaching position I think at Abu-Dhabi. A few years ago, I had someone who relocated to China to go and teach there. The prospects of doing the same job overseas is better. They get paid better. So, that was one of the reasons. (Lora)

Kate had a teacher who left to join an independent school:

Ehhmm, Ms M went to a private school because she felt, she would be paid better there.

Elsa shared her experience where a teacher left her permanent post for an SGB post at another school due to better salary:

She accepted the SGB post there and the salary is good. Ja.

The data revealed that teachers left in search for greener pastures, taking the opportunity of earning a better salary. When a teacher receives an improved salary, he/she is in a better position to take care of his/her family which has the potential of bettering or improving one's standard of living. Some teachers left their work to take on work outside the borders of South Africa and thus migrated to other countries. This is supported by Vester (2018:iii) that teachers are attracted to Middle East countries such as Abu-Dhabi because of high salaries.

Work position

Work position refers to promotion and permanent positions. Data revealed that some teachers left because they were appointed to higher positions than the positions they occupied at the schools where they were serving.

The second part where I enjoyed it, was when my teachers leave the school because they will be handing letters of promotion. I've got teachers who were promoted to principalship, managers in the district, (Alice)

[silence]. One is my senior as I speak to you, in the district, because of promotion. (Fiona)

[Silence] Actually I had three teachers who got promotion, for me that was kind of, I felt good when my teachers leave the school because of promotional posts. It means they have developed at the school, not necessarily because of me, but they were equipped in our school to be able to become HODs at other schools and Mr K even became a principal and he said it was because of me, you know things that I taught him. So, for me that was nice. (Elsa)

The data also indicated that some teachers were employed on a temporary basis and then had to leave the school to take up permanent employment elsewhere:

I have two SGB employed people (teachers) who left, you know SGB employed people (teachers) leave when they get permanent posts. (Elsa)

It is evident from the participants' responses above that teachers leave the schools because of their work positions that include being appointed to permanent position or a promotion post. It seems that the participants were pleased when teachers received promotion posts, even if it means leaving their current school. This seems to be

attributed by the fact that female principals feel that they had played a role in developing and empowering the teachers who were promoted. However, when a teacher is promoted and leaves the school, it leaves a vacant position that needs to be filled. In the other scenario, teachers who are appointed on a temporary position leave when they get an opportunity to be appointed to a permanent position, which is a favourable move for the teacher as a permanent position has benefits such as medical aid, housing allowance, bonus to mention a few while the temporary position lacks any benefits.

Policy-related issues

Policy-related issues that emerged from data cover the pension fund during divorce and uncertainty regarding TLAA. Policy regulates how things need to be done and different policies relate to teachers and their employment relationship with the Department. Some of these policies are interdepartmental; for example, the issue of pension fund as stated below by Cathy. A teacher, who was about to divorce, decided to resign because she wanted to protect the 50% of her pension that would have gone to her husband because she was married in community of property. Cathy explained what happened:

I think the main reason is that she got divorced and she was married in community of property, so what happens is when you divorce, your husband is entitled for 50% of your pension. So, the challenge is, they pay that 50% immediately when the divorce is settled to the other party and it becomes a loan against your pension and so now her pension is not increasing because then it's a loan against your pension and there is lot of interest. So, she is actually not gaining a lot of pension and that was the reason. That's the main reason. Ja it was personal.

Daisy had another example to share:

For example, one of them what she said to me is that she was about to divorce, and the husband was not working, the husband wanted the 50% clean slate, so she said let me rather resign before the divorce in order to retain my 100% of pension.

The above narratives from Cathy and Daisy are indicative of how policy issues can influence the teacher's decision to stay or leave his/her work. In these cases, the teachers left their jobs because of the policy on pension when one divorces, so that they could protect their finances.

Mercy shared teachers' doubts about pension funds that might have also contributed to teacher attrition:

So, I think it is uncertainty about the pension funds and at the same time, teachers being pressurised because they don't have money.

Betty added to this discussion:

I tried to discourage her from going because she was a new teacher at our school and she was very good but the reason for leaving was that her children were persuading her to leave because there was this uncertainty about the government pension and was afraid of that and she decided to leave. She was just about to reach 55 so I tried to encourage her to say no can't you just wait until you are 55 so you can get all your benefits and all that, but she had already made up her mind.

The data revealed that policy matters have the potential to contribute to teacher attrition. The issue of the pension fund when teachers divorce as well as doubts caused by TLAA have contributed towards teacher attrition. It is evident from the above statements that the issue of TLAA brought uncertainty to the teachers which has prompted them to leave the system with the thought of securing their hard-earned pension. This finding is in contrast to Momoniat (2016) who maintains that there has not been any survey or study that shows the TLAA as the cause for state employees' resignation.

Caring leaders should feel comfortable to speak to teachers to find out about their background and current situations (Van Deventer & Van der Vyver, 2016:97) and guide them on certain decisions regarding their need to leave the profession.

Institutional matters

The context under which the teachers find themselves in the work environment has the potential to influence their decision to stay or leave their work. Teachers face many

difficulties in their working environment which include pressure from work, relationships with colleagues, lack of resources, learner discipline and school leadership. As a result, these problems may end up having a daily influence on the teachers' working conditions. The participants reported on the work pressure which is a factor in attrition:

ehh, the pressure, the work pressure. Then they decided to leave the system because they can't cope with the current system. (Iris)

Only one who was just honest, I think, to say, you know mam, the way the system keeps on changing, it has a lot of challenges, lot of paperwork. Most of them were frustrated especially, this other one, you know she said it, clear to say I am frustrated, I can't cope anymore, there is too much work, especially, paper work. If you are not strong, you will leave, truly speaking. There is more of paperwork rather than teaching. (Gemma)

So, I think its somehow a myth to think that the computers make paperwork less. I think the amount of administration that comes into teaching position play a role in teachers feeling there is just too much that I have to do, and they just decide to leave because they are emotionally drained, and admin just ask too much. There is just too much that is expected of them. (Kate).

In some instances, teachers leave the school because of poor relationships with colleagues. Healthy environment hinders the employee from leaving his or her job (Shibiti, 2019:2). In some cases, problems could be worked out but, in many cases, it is in the best interest of the teacher to leave:

[silence] whom maybe ehhe, had a challenge with her peers, they did not see eye to eye and then I advised her not to resign. I then sat down with her and advised her to do a cross transfer and she agreed and left. (Fiona)

What causes teachers to withdraw from the system is the conflicts that are at the schools, because immediately there are stresses that are brought in the school yard, they will cause conflict among one another. So, conflict that are in schools are causing teachers to withdraw. Most of the teachers left the schools because of the fights inside the schools. (Alice)

In certain instances, lack of resources influences teachers to leave their jobs as they find it difficult to fulfil their role as effective teachers:

there are things especially the resources, they are not enough. (Iris)

Lack of resources frustrates teachers and lowers their morale as they feel they cannot accomplish what they set out to do in the classroom.

The other factor identified by some participants is that of the leadership style of the principal.

Then again as managers, sometimes we put pressure; we do not allow educators, to come up with their ideas. We always use authoritative eh, leadership and that closes doors for educators, and they feel left out. (Iris)

Nna (Sesotho word meaning "I") normally I say the leadership style. Let's talk about leadership style. (Gemma)

The participants' responses above indicate that the way the principal leads has an influence on the teacher's decision to stay or leave the school. The leadership of the principal remains the key driving force and enhances the school's efficiency and development (Day & Sammons, 2016:39). If the principal displays poor leadership, then the teachers may feel demotivated and thus chose to leave the school. In order to motivate the teachers to stay in their respective jobs, the principal needs to create a conducive working environment where the teachers have a say in the running of the school. The principal needs to allow the teachers to offer inputs and be part of the decision-making processes of the school. In a school where the teachers are not involved in the activities of the school, the teachers may feel left out and this can influence the teachers in leaving. Thus, the leadership style of the principal is of paramount importance in the teachers' decision to leave or stay at the school. A transformational leader develops structures to foster participation in decisions, create a productive school culture, model good practices, build the school vision and offer individual support (Bush & Middlewood, 2013:19) and research has found that generally female principals' leadership style is nurturing, motivating and mentoring (Muzvidziwa, 2015:36). Female principals' leadership behaviour has a substantial effect on the educational activities at the school including effective functioning of the

school. The demands expected of the female principals regarding administration activities at the school is inclined to make this task very compound and problematic.

Another issue that is of concern is the learner discipline:

A child (learner) can even stand in front of you (the teacher) and slap you or talk the way they want, and you are not supposed to react. (Fiona)

the learners have become more difficult. (Kate)

Learner discipline is another matter that make teachers to leave the system. Even if you can put the code of conduct in place, and tie it up, it's just paperwork, they won't adhere to it. (Iris)

The data revealed that learner discipline is one of the issues that prompts teachers to leave the school or even the profession. Even with certain systems put in place such as the Code of Conduct, learners do not adhere to the rules. The learners are reported to be disrespectful, often fight with the teachers and talk back and this discourages the teachers as there is no retribution. In such situations, teachers are hard pressed to continue doing their work with passion.

In general, the data suggests that institutional matters in this study encompass workload, relationships with colleagues, lack of resources, principal's leadership style and learner discipline. The findings are in line with Rinke (2014:xiv) who argues that some teachers leave their place of employment due workplace context such as school leadership and student discipline. The data also revealed that teaching is fraught with administration duties that makes working life challenging for the teachers. In addition, the climate of the institution also contributes towards the teachers' satisfaction with the working environment. Furthermore, the principal's leadership style plays a major role in influencing the teachers' decision to leave or to stay in their employment, which concurs with Oke *et al.*, (2016:373) who contend that teachers may be forced to leave their jobs due to the principal's poor leadership style. A caring leader can explore various ways to create a caring school community such as promoting representative and democratic decision making, encouraging discussions that has the potential to build shared commitment and ownership of the school, support teachers and learners, within the school community, and show ability and willingness to sacrifice personal interest for the benefit of the school community (van der Vyver *et al.*, 2013:389).

5.4.1.1c Sub-theme: Rate of teacher attrition

The data revealed that the number of teachers leaving the schools differs from one school to the next. Participants reported an attrition rate varying from one to ten.

Ehh, ten teachers left the school during my principalship. (Nancy)

Since I was a principal ehh, only one teacher left. (Cathy)

Okay, let me see, ehh to date I lost seven teachers. (Gemma)

The above statements show that the number of teachers who have left the schools varied with the attrition rate at some schools being low while at other schools the attrition rate was a lot higher. This differing attrition rate could be the result of the different contexts as some schools are situated in the rural areas with a lack resources, while others are situated in the urban areas and are generally well-resourced.

The data also revealed that in some instances, teachers leave at the same time and it becomes difficult for the participants to manage the simultaneous exit.

a month ago (June 2018), [silence] I lost two teachers in the same month. (Iris)

Ehhh, two resigned last year 2017 and one terminated this year (2018), March, end of the term. (Mercy)

well, the, mhh, basically [sigh], all five in the first and the second term of this year (2018). (Judy)

Judy's sigh is indicative that it was really an upset for her to lose five teachers in one year. Losing one teacher is a challenge but having five teachers leave the school is a major setback.

What seems to emerge from the data is that in reality, teachers do leave the schools and move on for a number of reasons. The number of teachers leaving the schools differ from one school to the next. However, where numbers of teachers simultaneously leave the school, this exodus becomes a challenge for the female principal. Oke *et al.*, (2016:372) contends that a high rate of teacher attrition impacts negatively on the school's improvement efforts as it disrupts the continuity and stability of teaching and learning. If teacher attrition is not properly managed, it could cause a

major shortage of teachers and affect education in South African schools. Pitsoe (2013:317) reported that South African teacher attrition statistics were “shocking” and if not reduced, South Africa would experience increasingly severe teacher shortages.

5.4.1.1d Sub-theme: Female principals’ views on teacher attrition

The data indicated that teacher attrition is not an easy matter to deal with and that it is a concern to the participants as principal is the first to know when there is a teacher who intends to leave. The participants reported that attrition becomes a predicament which the school needs to face:

Teacher attrition is a problem even at my school just like at other schools (Alice)

Generally, yes, it is a huge problem. (Judy)

Mam, teachers leaving the system is the biggest problem ever. When teachers leave mam, it’s a big problem. It’s a big, big, big one, [emphatically]. (Nancy)

The data revealed that teacher attrition occurs constantly and happens every year in most schools and seems impossible to avoid:

Mam, I have experienced teacher attrition tremendously so. Most of my teachers here, they are, they are not staying around. (Nancy)

Teacher attrition, it’s a constant eh, thing that happens. I think like the eh [silence], that’s a reality okay. Eh, it is a problem, but it is not something that we can stop. (Lora)

In addition, data revealed that attrition is experienced in all the types of professions. Kate explained that:

I think eh, that’s something that will come in in any kind of profession these days. Especially with young people, they don’t have necessarily long-term plans for one career.

In contrast, some participants had differing views:

I must say teacher attrition, it’s not really a problem. Eh, no it’s not a problem, this is the first time now in the four years that I have a teacher who left. (Cathy)

Teacher attrition no, not at this school where I am currently at. (Judy)

Losing a teacher is an unpleasant experience which places a huge responsibility on the female principal. The participants' responses indicated recruiting and staffing the school raised serious challenges, and at times the process was frustrating, and is a situation that drains one emotionally:

At first you become frustrated as a principal because you have now to check, the teachers that you have to employ to replace those and then with CVs alone you cannot even get the answers that you want. (Gemma)

Ehhmmm, it impacts very negatively to the school, to you as the principal emotionally it drains you, because as a principal you have to go and recruit. (Iris)

mam, it becomes very, very, [emphatically] and it becomes a nightmare. Very hectic and it's a real nightmare. [Very emphatic] (Nancy)

The participants seemed to partially blame themselves for teachers leaving their schools. However, the situation resulted in Betty doing some self-introspection which helped her realise that she was the cause:

You know it made me to reflect on myself because at first, I thought I was the cause that she left the school but at the same time I consoled myself to say but she was not here for a long time, so whatever it was that she may have experienced was not due to my own doing.

Participants had differing views about the teachers leaving their various schools. Some regarded it is a challenge because it occurs frequently and continuously. Others did not view it that way as they said that they were compelled to take stock on their leadership styles, which assisted them in changing their negative leadership tendencies. Schools were all situated in different context and as a result, participants' experiences regarding teacher attrition differed. The findings are in line with Oke et al., (2016:373) that the issue of attrition irrespective of the sector or profession, can be overwhelming and in many cases, it cannot be prevented.

The findings indicated that there are various types of teacher attrition that influence teachers to leave their work, some of which are voluntary like resignation and transfer and others are involuntary such as death, ill-health, retirement, redeployment and

dismissal. The reasons cited by the individual teachers on leaving the school are classified as personal matters, financial issues, work position, policy related matters and institutional matters. The study found that TLAA contributed to teacher attrition because the teachers were unsure about the security of their pensions. The study found that divorce also causes teacher attrition because the teachers want to save 50% of the pension fund that they might lose to their partner when separating. Teachers also leave their positions for greener pastures, where they sometimes migrate to countries outside the borders of South Africa, for financial gain to be able to meet their financial obligations. Teacher migration has a negative effect on the output of the education system and compromises the developmental objectives of the whole country (Mlambo & Adetiba, 2020:152). The attrition rate differs from one school to the next with some experiencing low attrition rates while others experience high attrition rates which could be as a result of context in either urban or rural schools. High rate of teacher attrition leads to a shortage of teachers and Pitsoe, (2013:317) contends that South Africa will experience severe teacher shortages if teacher attrition is not reduced.

The findings also showed that the participants had different views regarding teacher attrition. The participants of the schools with low attrition rate did not regard teacher attrition as a challenge while participants of schools with high attrition rate regarded teacher attrition as a serious challenge that take place on a continuous basis and thus disturbs the smooth running of the schools. Transformational leaders foster organisational stability and safeguard the teachers against disturbances from their work (Day & Sammons, 2016: 19). Teacher attrition reduces the number of teachers in schools and poses a challenge where more teachers leave as opposed to those entering the profession. The high rate of teacher attrition influences the education system of the country as it has potential to hinder the fulfilment of the EFA and UPE commitments (Pitsoe, 2013:309). It is imperative for female principals to vigorously take an interest in the teachers' well-being by supporting them in their pursuit for providing quality education because failure to do this, could lead to burnout, ill-health, job dissatisfaction and finally, termination (Van der Merwe & Conley, 2016:313).

5.4.1.2 Theme 2: Female principals' handling of teacher attrition

Female principals are responsible for dealing with teacher attrition when teachers leave the schools. The law determines the procedures to end the employment relationship with termination of teachers being regulated by policies and procedures that are determined by the Department. Prinsloo (2016:271) postulates that in education, there are policies and practices determined by the Department as well as relevant provincial departments and other departments involved such as the South African Revenue Services (SARS) that the female principals need to observe at the end of the employment contract. These policies also cover voluntary turnover and retirement. This theme consists of the following subthemes: acting as the representative of the Department, recruitment process and creating a conducive working environment.

5.2.1.2a Sub-theme: Act as the representative of the Department

The data revealed that female principals have a responsibility to perform when the teachers terminate their employment. The female principals act as the representative of the Department and advises the teachers on the correct procedures to be followed when they end their employment contract. However, in some cases, the principals enter into a discussion with the teacher to find out the reasons for wanting to leave and then try to persuade the teacher to stay on:

I am here as the representative of the Department, so as a principal I must try by all means to prevent attrition. So, as the principal, I have to show some way of trying to retain this teacher. (Betty)

Ehh, as the principal to make sure that I handle teacher attrition properly, I must make sure that I reduce the rate at which it (teacher attrition) is taking place, by motivating other teachers to change their mind. (Alice)

The female principals need to ensure that the teachers submit the relevant documents as required by the Department:

Mhhmmm, my role is to like make sure that their forms are, to make sure that I help them and give them advice on the steps that they need to take. Writing the

resignation letters, fill in the forms, and this form. This is what you are supposed to do, just to advise them on what ehh, to do. (Mercy)

When a teacher leaves, an official part of it is to make sure that all those documents have been completed. So that was the challenge to make sure the documents completed are correct and we submit them. (Cathy)

However, Cathy lamented about lack of knowledge when it comes to assisting the teachers with the relevant documents that need to be completed. This might be because Cathy has only had 3 years' experience as a principal and she still has to learn more about her responsibilities:

Which ehh, I don't think we always have all the knowledge of what they need, remember the Department is also expecting us also to be HR officers, but we do not have training in that. (Cathy)

It is evident from the participants' statements above that the participants seem to understand that their role is to be representatives of the Department and that their responsibility is to see to it that they follow the correct procedures when the teachers terminate their employment. This is in line with Prinsloo (2016:271), who claims that school principals, as representatives of the Department of Education, have inherent official responsibilities regarding processes and procedures that he/she has to fulfil at the end of the employment relationship. Even during this phase, the principal as the delegated representative of the HOD of the provincial Department of Education has certain official responsibilities regarding processes and procedures that he/she must fulfil (Prinsloo, 2016:271). In some instances, the female principals try to discourage teachers from leaving their employment as a way of trying to reduce teacher attrition and maintain the smooth running of their schools. A transformational leader allows employees to find meaning and fulfilment by changing their underlying values, attitudes and commitments. It seems that female principals' knowledge regarding administration of matters relating to teachers' exit from the system differs. It is important to address the issue of participants' lack of knowledge regarding their responsibilities when it comes to the necessary information on relevant documents to be completed when teachers terminate their services.

5.2.1.2b Sub-theme: Recruitment process

The data revealed that when teachers terminate their services, they leave a gap that needs to be filled. There are protocols put in place by the Department that the female principal must follow to replace the teacher. Once the principals are notified that a teacher is leaving, they need to put plans into place and as a result, the participants must initiate and embark on a recruitment process. The female principal is responsible for the administration of the recruitment process, a process which needs careful planning:

You must really, plan properly, I think if you know that a teacher is leaving. Plan properly so that you can get the best teacher for the job and not at the end just take a teacher to get a teacher. (Elsa)

The female principals are responsible for the administration of the recruitment process and thus must initiate the process:

Hmm, as a principal you have to go and recruit. (Iris)

Ehh, first of all ehmm, suddenly you must eh, advertise the post. (Lora)

Ehh, getting the best replacement by advertising widely and conducting interviews where I make sure the teachers are competent in the subject, they teach. (Judy)

The data revealed that as soon as the teacher informs the female principal of his/her intention to leave, the female principal informs the Department to begin the process of finding another teacher. The principals need to master their role (Van der Merwe & Conley, 2016:313), to follow the correct procedures put in place by the Department and find a replacement on time.

There are processes that have been put in place by the Department, you just don't start to look for a teacher on your own. You have to approach the district office officials, to request for a post as if it is not in existence. Preparing documents to apply for the post and waiting for approval by the district, while

days are going, hours are passing, and the learners are on their own in the classroom. (Alice)

So, we fill in the request form and indicate the relevant specification for the post once you receive approval letter then you can advertise the post. (Kate)

Well, what we do is we let them (District) know either by resignation form, pension, the PILIR or whatever. They do administration part of the things, but it is left to us to find a replacement teacher. (Judy)

Female principals are aware of the importance of replacing the teachers quickly:

I would act immediately due to the timeframes that we have. (Gemma)

The findings reveal that the female principal act immediately by informing the Department when a teacher indicates his/her intention to leave; however, there are invariably district delays:

But also, the district is holding us ransom because they will be saying you don't have to employ before we approve. So, we still have to wait for the district to approve. Those are some of the challenges that we experience. (Betty)

The data revealed that it is important for the female principal to plan properly and start with the recruitment process when the teacher leaves or as soon as the participants know that the teacher is leaving to ensure firstly, that there is a teacher in class and secondly, that the replacement is suitably qualified and experienced. The participants must ensure there is a replacement as soon as possible for sustainability on teaching and learning. This process of recruiting the relevant teacher is stressful and requires the female principals to follow the necessary protocols put in place by the Department, that include the submission of forms and relevant documentation to the Department through the District. There do however, seem to be delays in the recruitment process due to Departmental protocols that need to be followed which thus delays the replacement of the relevant teacher. This finding is in line with Elyashiv (2019:160), who maintains that it is not always easy to replace the teachers.

5.2.1.2c Sub-theme: Creating a conducive working environment

The environment under which the teachers work needs to be conducive to enable the teachers to render their services without any hindrances. A conducive working environment has the potential to ensure job satisfaction and thus reduce attrition. A favourable environment has the potential of encouraging teachers to remain in their positions but if the teachers experience the opposite, then they are bound to decide otherwise. Here are participants' comments about the working environment:

Mam, it's to make the working environment conducive so that people are happy, and they need to get a meaning of coming to work. The, you know, coming to work must be meaningful to them. (Gemma)

Eehhmm, we try to create a school where people would want to work. Disciplined school, ehh, ehh, where they get lot of assistance from School Management Team. A school where you can, when you have an initiative, go with it. We create an environment that they could say yes, I can go out to that school and live out my dream. (Lora)

I think it's very important for any teacher to come to the school in the morning and feel safe at the school. Feel happy at the school. I don't want anybody to come to the school and feel like I don't want to be here today. Therefore, for me I must try and find out what is it that makes teacher happy to be at the school, that's what I would like to have for each teacher to make them all happy to let them, when they come to me and say I've got this problem, I must try to help them solve that problem. Especially my good ones, so that I can keep them, and they come to school every day. But one teacher, she is going through a rough patch, so I make sure I talk to her, I send her WhatsApp to encourage her, ja. Every morning in our morning briefing, we start with something positive. (Elsa)

We participate in different activities, and we work as a team. In some of the decisions ehhe, I want the buy in of the teachers. I think they feel valued, they feel important to supported and be happy, but if we try that environment of whatever we do, there is buy in, there is consultation, ehh I think it make teachers to be positive and even to work harder and when they feel appreciated. I think

they enjoy coming to work where there is neatness, where there is cooperation.
(Daisy)

The data showed that the participants understood that they have a duty to make the environment conducive for teaching and learning and one in which the teachers are motivated to work. In order for teachers and learners to feel safe at the school, safety policies and procedures need to be in place and safety issues attended to. In addition, the environment needs to be kept clean. This concurs with Van Deventer and van der Vyver (2016:94) that providing a caring and safe environment is one of the most important aspects of school leadership and acting in a caring way towards others, promotes growth and self-actualisation. The female principals ensure that they keep the school environment clean. When the school environment is clean and well maintained it makes the teachers and learners proud of the school, encouraging them to be invested in it. According to Young (2018:20), to retain dedicated and effective teachers, the principal must provide a clean and safe workplace. Participants seem to believe that they are responsible for the teachers' well-being, offering them support, and having systems in place that will alleviate the pressure from the teachers. Principals should ensure that they attend to teachers' concerns to promote harmony to keep the teachers at the school and they need to show that they value and care for the teachers as that will encourage them to stay in their jobs. The participants are of the opinion that they need to promote collaboration and teamwork among the staff. The caring role in the school environment has a more precise aim which is to establish an environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning since both teachers and learners are more productive when they work in a caring and friendly environment (Van Deventer & van der Vyver, 2016:94). The data demonstrated that ensuring there is a conducive working environment for the teachers is very important because it contributes towards making teachers want to remain in their positions at the school.

The findings revealed that female principals understand their role as representatives of the Department being responsible for dealing with administration of the process when teachers terminate their employment contracts with Department. There are policies and procedures that regulate the termination of the employment contract between the teachers and the employer which is the Department. Thus, the participants as the representative of the Department oversee this process and ensure

that the correct procedures, as determined by law to end the employment relationship of the teachers, are followed and all the information regarding the correct forms is submitted to the Department via the District. The findings also revealed that not all the participants have the necessary knowledge regarding their responsibility in this regard especially those principals who are still new in the position. When the teachers leave, there is a vacant position that needs to be filled. As a result, the participants embark on a recruitment process to replace the teachers, planning properly and as quickly as possible to ensure that there is a teacher in class. Participants regarded this process as involved and at times, complex because finding a suitable replacement is not easy. This finding aligns with Elyashiv (2019:160) that in certain instances it is obligatory for the principals to hire teachers who are not qualified. They viewed the recruitment process as stressful and frustrating due to the protocols put forth by the Department. The findings also demonstrated that the female principals create a conducive working environment by ensuring the school is safe, clean and well maintained. The teachers can pride themselves on a clean and well-maintained environment because in such an environment, the teachers experience satisfaction, and this has the potential to encourage the teachers to stay in their work which aligns with Shibiti (2019:1) who argues that maintaining a safe and a healthy working environment has the potential of preventing employees leaving their employment and thus reducing teacher attrition.

5.4.1.3 Theme 3: Ramifications of teacher attrition

The data revealed that teacher attrition has a negative influence on the school. Teacher attrition affects the school in a negative way in that it causes loss of teaching time and it results in a decline in performance and decline in learner discipline. This theme consists of the following subthemes: disruption of the school plan, ramifications on learners, ramification on stayers, loss of experienced teachers and difficulty in finding suitable replacement, dealing with inexperienced teachers and their capacitation, notice period, delay in appointment and improper handover.

5.4.1.3a Sub-theme: Disruption of the school plan

The female principals confirmed there are plans at the school for the effective running of all the activities of the school. However, teacher attrition disrupts schooling and destabilises regulatory, academic as well as professional standards (Tshabalala & Ncube, 2014:150). The data revealed that teacher attrition impacts heavily on these

school plans because it causes unsteadiness and disturbs the smooth running of the school thus disrupting the planning that the female principals put in place. Teacher attrition forces the female principals to go back to the drawing board to reallocate subjects and classes to other teachers or even to reorganise the timetable to accommodate the newly appointed teacher. This is apparent from the following participants' responses:

The first thing is the management plan, you have planned for the year, and you have planned for the term, and immediately the teacher leaves it brings you back to the drawing table as to who are you going to get as a replacement, you have to start all over again with your plans. (Alice).

it impacts very negative to the entire school. (Iris).

you must rearrange, you change the timetable so that, that one who has experience in Grade eight must shift to Grade 12, the one in Grade 10 shift to grade ehh, you know just reshuffling, serious reshuffling so that your school Therefore, it affects a lot; it affects a lot to the smooth running of the school. (Nancy)

Teacher attrition causes a major disturbance at the schools with high turnover leading to decreased consistency, disruption of programme continuity and planning in organisations (Jain, 2013:1). It disturbs the smooth running of the school because the female principal has to start afresh with the plans including rearrangement of the timetable. Teachers are reshuffled to ensure learners do not lose out on teaching and learning. The finding concurs with Oke *et al.*, (2016:372) that high rate of teacher attrition impacts negatively on school's improvement efforts as it disrupts the continuity and stability of teaching and learning.

5.4.1.3b Sub-theme: Ramifications on learners

The female principals, as the leaders at the school, are responsible for ensuring that teaching and learning takes place without any interruptions. The data showed that when teachers leave their teaching positions, the learners are the hardest hit because they are left without a teacher for a while or they must get used to the newly appointed teacher. Learners develop bonds with their teachers and when the teacher leaves,

learners' emotions are affected. The teaching and learning processes are also affected and as a result, the learners' performance weakens and there is also a deterioration in learner discipline. This is discernible from the participants' statements below:

Performance dropped also, and it creates a lot of work for the SMT. (Gemma)

Ehh, learners are losing teaching time because they are not taught, so it (teacher attrition) impacts negatively, it becomes a challenge to learners, it consumes the time for learning, and at the same time as the principal, you must see to it that at the end of the term the results are. (Iris)

The participants' statements are indicative that learners lose out on teaching and learning when teachers leave the school which affects their performance and discipline:

It affects the results. Ja, the results drop because ehhh those learners were not taught everything. Then, my kids (the learners) become behind, then as a school definitely, even the discipline will deteriorate because sometimes you find those classes are without a teacher. (Nancy)

If you take somebody straight from university you sort of already suspect that there's going to be problems that comes with it. Especially discipline wise and if you don't have proper discipline in the classroom it goes to everything. You know you can see, bad discipline in the classroom leads to bad marks. It goes hand in hand. (Kate)

The participants pointed out the issue of continuity in the work of the learners. In some cases, learners take chances in denying that particular aspects of the curriculum were taught even though the teachers' record books tell a different story.

and then of course you come in and even though the record books say this has been done, the learners might sometimes use that opportunity and say, no we don't know this work. We've never been taught these things. You know this teacher is doing this and that, it's difficult. (Nancy)

So, you find that when the educator leaves and the learners will just tell you that we didn't do this, we didn't do that. (Mercy)

One participant said:

The problem as a principal is for me, you must put the children through one or more teachers per year. So, the same grade has two different teachers now. You are not sure if that person is, because you know we all different so, we don't know about personality and the relationship with the children. Another person stepped into the class, but it is never the same, the discipline might not be the same and I think sometimes it takes a few months. So, in those months you can see maybe a drop in either discipline or academically, before that teacher is on par. (Judy)

Judy's statement shows how concerned participants are when the teacher leaves because they realise that each teacher has a different approach and manner but when a number of teachers leave within a year, it could contribute towards a decline in both performance and discipline.

Elsa indicated that the learners form a bond with the teacher and thus when the teacher leaves, the learners become affected:

The children are sad emotionally you know that bond.

Participants were also concerned about learners adjusting to the new teacher because it also affects both learner performance and discipline:

Okay, the learners of course must adapt. Because now there is a new person, new experiences that the learners have to get used to. If it's the middle of the year that poses other things because they are used to certain way of working, in comes a new teacher and the new teacher might be working completely different, might be stricter might not be so strict but manages the classroom actually well, and that adjustment period, takes some time as well. The adjustment sometimes especially middle of the year or after a period of time when the teacher was in the classroom that I find as a challenge for learners and for the person coming in. (Kate)

Even the learners must adjust to the new teachers, isn't it? As they are adjusting, they are losing lot of work. (Nancy)

Participants stated that when a new person is appointed to the position, learners must get used to him/her. Thus, even though learners need to adapt, it is not a good thing to expose them to different teachers in an academic year teaching them the same subject. It thus, becomes a time of adjustment for both the new teacher and the learners.

Participants explained that it is not easy for the new teachers as well because they have to learn the culture of the school:

It is difficult for everybody, it is difficult for the person coming in, adapting to the unknown rules, Uhhh, you know there are some rules that everybody follows, and they are not written down but that is the way we do it. So, it is difficult for the person entering. (Lora)

You know mam, schools are different. You also get teachers from other schools and they have to learn how things are done at the school so as to be in par with other teachers. (Gemma)

Teachers and learners experience teacher attrition differently with a range of emotions, and during the time of adjustment and adaptation, teaching and learning time is often lost. Learners have to accustom themselves to the new teacher, and in the process their learning may be compromised especially if a novice inexperienced teacher is appointed:

Even the learners must adjust to the new teachers, isn't it? As they are adjusting, they are losing lot of work, and there must be a lot of revision, which means you must get an experienced teacher. Yes, that one can at least try, but if you get a teacher like the Funza Lushaka's, they don't have experience. (Nancy)

In some instances, the issue of teacher absenteeism also affects teaching and learning.

Yes, when they leave, definitely the challenge is that if an educator is leaving at this moment, you find that the learners are not well prepared. Because the educator maybe will start like not coming to school regularly so, and then the rate of absenteeism from the educator will just impact negatively on the learners. (Mercy)

The data revealed that teacher attrition has a negative effect on the learners with learners displaying more behaviour and discipline problems (Fibkins, 2012:18). Teacher attrition affects learner performance because learners must adjust to the new teacher which aligns with Jain (2013:1), who states that high attrition leads to decreased performance, and in this case, learner performance.

5.4.1.3c Sub-theme: Ramifications on remaining teachers

The data showed that when teachers leave their work, others remain behind. The female principal is left with the challenge of adjusting and managing the workload by allocating the work to the remaining teachers, to ensure teaching and learning is not affected thus increasing their workload which affects ultimately their morale. Some of the remaining teachers doubt themselves especially in secondary schools where they are charged with taking over from a veteran in the completing class (Grade12). As a result, they experience a range of emotions:

The teachers who remained behind are stressed. Immediately you announce that teacher so and so is calling it a day coming this date, they are all become shattered because they know that they have to carry the load themselves not only that teacher that is going away, but they have an extra job to do. (Alice)

You might have to council as a principal, they (teachers) are stressed and that can impact on their work delivery because they are stressed. (Judy)

They become demotivated because of the high numbers. (Betty)

This in turn could have an effect on the attendance of the remaining teachers because they end up absenting themselves from work. Absenteeism demoralises teachers because they have to substitute for those who are absent, which increases their workload:

Ijoo mam, it's very, very, bad and it discourages even the teachers who are coming to school every day. I am saying it is discouraging the teachers, it is also discouraging the principal even the SMT. (Nancy)

The issue of teachers who absent themselves from time to time has an influence on all in the school. Everyone is duty bound to substitutes but this becomes a monitoring situation with precious teaching and learning time being lost. It is felt that teachers

abuse sick leave, perceiving it as their right to take the allocated number of sick leave days even if they are not ill, and the issue is that the female principal cannot dispute the doctor's sick note.

It really impacts negatively mam. Let me start from the teachers themselves. Because remarks will be made to say, I am also going to take sick leave. Otherwise, I qualify for 36 days. So, I am also going to use my days. Even if the person is not sick and things are made worse by teachers who are absenting themselves from time to time. You know sometimes it's difficult because you cannot dispute the doctor's note to say this person is not sick. She just on sick leave because she wants to exhaust her leave days. (Betty)

Let me start with those who start by being sick. Then the person will be sick for a week, and then you know you have hope because you can't replace such a teacher. Then you just substitute internally, just say okay mam so and so, Mr/Ms so and so will be coming in but mam so and so this week she is not in then according to the doctor's note it's up to maybe Friday. Then you are expecting the teacher to come back on Monday, come Monday, another extension of another week. (Nancy)

Although principals combine learners in classes during substitution, it is not effective in that the class becomes overcrowded and effective teaching and learning cannot take place in such conditions. In many cases, this becomes a case of 'baby-sitting':

You find that the classes are demarcated according to the language, where we are doing Sepedi and Setswana, at our school, so we take the learners who are Sepedi speakers, try to accommodate them in the neighbouring class, where a teacher will end up having 100 learners in the class because they are not even 40 per class, so we accommodate them in the next class and you find that a teacher is faced with 100 learners and in reality, will teaching and learning take place, it is just to baby-sit. (Alice)

Firstly, because we have high enrolment in our classes, we have 50 plus learners in class. So, can you imagine if we have 50 plus in a class and a teacher is not there, then we have to distribute those learners among the others because our grades are two, two, three, three. So, imagine if we have to share 50 learners

among two teachers it means the learners will be 75, do you see that teaching and learning won't take place as expected. So those are some of the challenges and you may find that the ones that are sharing these learners become demotivated because they can't operate, as they were supposed to. (Betty)

In such a situation, teachers are put under pressure by parents who are unhappy when their children are not taught:

Educators are getting pressure because you have to devise some means that some must double themselves, as a principal, parents are nagging that their children are not taught, they don't even want to know the reason. So, it impacts negatively. (Iris)

Some teachers doubt their potential when it comes to teaching higher grades when a gap arises:

In high school, the problem is that we are judged by our results, and then normally we do not want to gamble with the learner's education. We put the best person in grade 12 so that when the learners leave, they are well prepared. So, when you put the best person in grade 12 that means this person will have more and more experience. So, when this person leaves, you find that others cannot teach grade 12 because they turn to doubt themselves and say am I really going to fit in the shoes of the one that has left. (Mercy)

It is not only the new teachers who doubt themselves but also the remaining teachers as part of the team-teaching Grade 12 who become unsure of the new teacher:

Will this new teacher do what the previous one did, whereas in the past they would have been confident with the one that has left. So now, its again, they need to start building new relationships, new trust and it takes time. (Judy)

The data showed that teacher attrition affects the team spirit of the remaining teachers when the new teacher joins the team that has been there for a while. Teacher attrition weakens the social cohesion between the staff (Husain, Matsa & Miller, 2018:23). The team trusts each other and when a new teacher joins the team the remaining teachers tend to be unsure of the new teacher because they are used to the colleague who had

left the team. Attrition damages the efforts of establishing a solid organisational culture and maintenance of staff unity (Elyashiv, 2019:160).

The data showed that teacher attrition has a negative effect on the teachers that remain at the school because they became dissatisfied with the working environment. This does not affect the teachers only, it also affects the participants and the SMT. The participants must see to it that the learners are attended to. Participants do this by requesting the remaining teachers to step in for those who are not present or those who have left. In the process of ensuring learners have a teacher, the workload increases, and the teachers' morale ebbs. This finding is in line with Ronfeldt, Loeb and Wyckoff (2013:8) who revealed that the remaining teachers are charged with carrying more of the teaching load. When the morale of the teachers is low, it affects teacher attendance, the rate of absenteeism increases, and the workload increases even more, it becomes a vicious cycle. Under the conditions stated by the participants, teaching and learning cannot take place in an effective manner. This finding concurs with Chemwei and Koech (2015:170) who note that excessive turnover creates an unstable work force and increases organisational ineffectiveness.

5.4.1.3d Sub-theme: Loss of experienced teachers and difficulty in finding suitable replacement

The data revealed that when participants lose teachers, they experience a challenge in recruiting a suitable replacement teacher. Losing experienced teachers has a serious impact on the school because often inexperienced teachers are appointed and need mentoring and development, which aligns with Hanyenga (2014:6) who claims that teachers who leave are often experienced veterans who are replaced with inexperienced new hires.

Losing experienced teachers especially in a primary school and at Grade 12 level has a serious impact as these teachers are fully equipped to handle the learners and cope with preparing learners for the exit examinations. In addition, the experienced teachers could take on the role of coaching and mentoring the newly appointed:

It had a very serious impact because they were experienced, in terms of teaching in primary school and as you know there is a difference between the Funza, I think the Funza Lushaka teachers wanted some mentors and I think they were

ehhh, I don't know how to put it. They were the correct ones and the more matured in terms of experience and in terms of handling learners, unlike the Funza Lushaka students. So, to me it was a challenge because they were supposed to be coaches and mentors for these young teachers then they left. (Daisy)

Yes, it, did pose some challenges in the sense that the teachers that were resigning were mostly experienced educators who were teaching Grade 12. Yes, teaching Grade 12 and the learners will just be left in the lurch. (Mercy)

Participants found it a challenge to replace teachers who had left in terms of qualifications, subject area expertise and experience.

The challenge that I experienced is to get the same quality of teacher. You know what you had, excellent teachers and you must sometimes replace them with people that are not that good, that is always a challenge for me. You lose good people and you can't always replace them with good people. (Elsa).

Ehh, you know experience and qualification is two different things. Sometimes we lose an experienced teacher and we have to take a less experienced teacher. And it does have impact on the classes on the academic standard. Another person step into the class but it's not, it's never the same. (Judy)

To get a substitute, which will fit 100%, it's not a child's play neh. (Nancy).

Sometimes you don't find a teacher straight away and you want to find the best teacher in the classroom. So that, is always a challenge because you don't want to just replace to replace. You would like to replace, if not equal but all with better skills. So that for me is the biggest challenge to try and replace skill with skill or better skill because you don't want to, you don't actually just want the same. You want somebody to come in with a fresh point of view, strong skills, better knowledge, but to find them is rare and it's difficult. (Kate)

Participants shared that it is painful to lose the teachers as many teachers develop during their tenure. These teachers are then considered an investment and when those teachers leave, the school loses on that investment:

But for now, to lose a teacher from where we are, ahh, it's going to be a loss to the school. We work hard as a school to develop teachers and at times you know when they leave, is a loss to the school because we have invested a lot in them.
(Gemma)

Participants explained how emotions are involved when teachers leave the school and a new teacher is appointed:

I think that is more the emotional change for us, the children and learning a new person, how to do things the way he wants it done. And I think sometimes it take a few months before that teacher is on par. (Judy)

Ehhhm, let's say nobody is irreplaceable mam. So, for a while it affects the school but later on you move on. You know, you get to learn to work without that person. Yes, it does. The children are sad, we are sad, you know for losing most people. Emotionally you know that bond. Ja, but as I said at the beginning it affects the school but later on you get used to it. You know you move on you've got other teachers. You can't cry over them forever. (Elsa)

Participants were however, pragmatic as they realised that teachers do leave the school and others join. They agreed that for a while it affects the school, but they do become accustomed to the loss.

Participants are challenged in recruiting teachers to replace those that have left which aligns with Akaadom (2014:1) who states that recruitment and getting replacement requires a large amount of effort, time and substantial costs. It becomes more difficult to replace an experienced teacher and, in many cases, the replacement teacher is inexperienced. The loss of good teachers contributes towards loss of knowledge and creates a need to compromise by employing mediocre teachers with a lower quality of teaching (Elyashiv, 2019:164). Handling teacher replacement on a continuous basis is a controversial, disruptive and constraining matter, the outcome of which inexperienced teachers are employed irrespective of their training to take over the role of the experienced teachers (Fibkins, 2012:17).

5.4.1.3e Sub-theme: Dealing with inexperienced teachers and their capacitation

The data revealed that young teachers are generally not experienced and have yet to develop their knowledge and practice. Having a novice teacher on the staff means that they do not tend to perform to expectation. As a result, new hires who lack experience and need to become aware of the school climate, need support and mentoring, which is time-consuming and takes much effort from the more experienced members of staff:

So, I find that the young teachers coming through the system, are really not up to what is expected these days in the classroom and I find that the younger teachers don't have that ability yet. They lack experience number one, they lack the knowledge. So, they don't come across as confident in themselves. (Kate)

At the moment we have this newly qualified educators, Funza Lushaka and staff like that. We have a challenge of taking them into the system and mentoring them because they lack the necessary experience. (Fiona)

As you do all these other things, we expect them to perform and they don't even perform as expected. You start everything from the beginning, we start planning for them, we workshop them we you know it takes time also. As you do all these other things, we expect them to perform and they don't even perform as expected. (Gemma)

As previously discussed, finding a suitable replacement is a challenge especially if the teacher who had left was experienced. Participants believe that new hires do not perform as expected and need to be fully supported and mentored so that they develop the knowledge and skill necessary to fulfil their duties in the classroom. According to Ronfeldt *et al.*, (2013:8) teachers who are new to the field, lack the essential skills and knowledge to implement the curriculum and thus require more support to improve.

5.4.1.3f Sub-theme: Notice period, delay in appointments and improper handover

The notice period regarding termination of the service of the teachers is provided by the Department through legislation. The notice period varies from three months to 24 hours depending on the reasons provided by the teacher who is terminating his/her services. In some instances, this notice period does not give the participant principals

enough time to prepare properly and find a replacement. The female principal has a duty to ensure all the school resources and documentation related to the teaching process are returned, including a proper handover of where the teacher is in terms of curriculum coverage. The data disclosed that if the teacher who terminates his/her services gives short notice, it becomes difficult to prepare for a proper handover:

So, especially if its short notice. But the time frame of trying to replace a teacher sometimes becomes a problem. Ehhmm, because even the unions will tell the teachers you know you can give eh, basically 24 hours' notice. Ehh in both the cases of Ms G as well as Ms M, they left on very short notice [Emphatic]. Ehh so there was no time to get proper eh, preparation for that, so that was one of the problems I feel is the time frame of leaving and that I found the challenge. (Kate)

And being teaching Grade 12 and the learners will just be left in the lurch. Like one educator, teaching Grade 12 Life Sciences and Life Orientation last year and then she just resigned like end of August like this date and time and the learners were ill prepared because when educators know that they are leaving, and then they won't just put more effort like they did before. So, you find that when the educator leaves and the learners will just tell you that we didn't do this, we didn't do that. (Mercy)

Some participants explained the difficulties in recruiting new teachers and the procedures and process that they need to follow. These tend to be time-consuming and drawn out and, in some cases, unsuccessful:

It was a challenge to start the process of reappointing somebody else because it was a PL1 post and with PL1 post, it's not being advertised, and the District or the Department has got a specific criteria, to fill these posts. It's not that I can just go and advertise, shortlist, conduct interviews and appoint. You know eh, I have to first to look at Funza Lushaka, the newly entries and then with the Funza Lushaka's, I have to go to the District, sit there go through boxes and boxes of CV's. Ehm, take CV's back to school and at the school, phone those candidates to find out if they have already been appointed. If unavailable, Ehh then go back to the district to ask for other CV's. I must have some more CV's and when I shortlisted those four that were available not everybody pitched up, and when I

appointed one, she said she is going back to her previous school because have offered her a permanent post, so it's a very frustrating process. (Cathy)

In terms of handing over, participants were emphatic that they required teachers to return all relevant documentation and resources:

The first thing when a teacher leaves, I must make sure that all my resources are back at the school and that teacher could do a proper handover. (Kate)

If a handover is not done correctly, it could have serious consequences for the teaching and learning process as the replacement teacher will not have a record of curriculum coverage and learner performance.

So, you find that when the educator leaves and the learners will just tell you that we didn't do this, we didn't do that. (Mercy)

Short notice contributes towards a delay in finding a replacement because there is no time for the female principal to prepare properly for recruitment of the replacement. Participants have to ensure that the teacher who is leaving does a proper handover before he/she leaves as an improper or incomplete handover offers learners the opportunity to take advantage of the situation about work covered and not covered.

The findings revealed that teacher attrition causes disruption and instability at the schools with ramifications on the annual year plan, the teachers and the learners. The learners and the teachers experience attrition with a range of emotions, and during the time of adjustment and adaptation, teaching and learning time is often lost. Loeb *et al.*, (2013:7) argue that when teachers leave the schools, there is an alteration in the relationships and relational patterns that were held previously. Often experienced teachers are replaced with novice teachers. Learners have to condition themselves to the new teacher and in the process their learning may be compromised, especially if a novice inexperienced teacher is appointed. Issues which arose include the need for the female principals to plan afresh and make adjustments to the school plan and timetable, ensuring that new hires are welcomed into the school and are mentored until they find their feet and learners have adjusted as teacher attrition could have a negative effect on school routine and management if not handled correctly (Elyashiv, 2019:160). These issues need to be addressed to ensure continuity and the smooth running of the school. However, various issues arose which affect the termination

process and include the notice period given by teachers which could compromise the recruitment process, not doing a proper handover of relevant documents and resources, the delay in submitting of relevant documents to facilitate recruitment and the involved process of recruitment to find the most suitably qualified and experienced teachers. Leaving of experienced teachers' presents the key impediment for the schools' climate and the programmes (Fibkins, 2012:15).

5.4.1.4 Theme 4: Challenges in managing teacher attrition

It is difficult for the female principal in managing aspects such as teacher attrition because school leadership is a space that is dominated by males and as a result, females tend not to be taken seriously. There are misconceptions that when the principal is a female that she cannot lead and as a result, she needs to double her efforts to prove her self-worth. This theme consists of the following sub-themes: school leadership a male-dominated space, leadership misconception, power struggle and 'pull her down' syndrome, being undermined and rejected, mistrust, resistance and intimidation and opportunities of teacher attrition.

5.4.1.4a Sub-theme: School leadership a male-dominated space

It seems that only a few females have been appointed to school leadership positions even though teaching is a female-dominated career:

Ehshm but when attending meetings, we are in the minority, ja. (Cathy)

Ehhh, but it is still the men's world. (Judy)

Like I said, I started when females were not principals. (Lora)

Some female principals feel that it is a challenge to be in a leadership position, while others view being a female principal from a more positive perspective as a benefit because it motivates one to double her efforts:

So being a lady principal is an advantage because you know that people are doubting, then you have to work hard, but being a male principal, people are already accepting you, believing that you are a man then you can be a principal. It can cause havoc because you are going to relax. So, it is an advantage to be a lady principal, you work to proof the world wrong. Proof the world wrong [with emphasis]. (Alice)

The participants' responses indicate that leadership is still male-dominated irrespective of the teaching profession predominantly comprising females. This is particularly evident when the female principals attend meetings that leadership is still male-dominated. Females are under-represented in management positions in the schooling system (Ndebele, 2018:1584). One participant indicated that she became a principal when it was a taboo for women to be leaders. The data indicate that female principals needed to work doubly hard to prove themselves and ensure that they were taken seriously, while males are automatically accepted because in society, a male principal is the norm. Since society finds it an exception to be a leader as a female, it encourages the female principals to work very hard to prove the world wrong that a female cannot lead; thus, it is regarded as an advantage for the female principal.

5.4.1.4b Sub-theme: Leadership misconception, power struggle and 'pull her down' syndrome

There is a misconception about females' ability as principals which make it difficult for these female principals to lead. In addition, female principals experience internal strife in their effort to lead. They pointed out that as female principals they have to work harder to prove themselves and have pressure to perform. Because they operate in a man's world, female principals experience disrespect including 'pull her down' syndrome (PHDS), which relates to a strategy of maintaining patriarchy in our society, and where the belief is that women are not good enough.

So, to the community also, when I landed it was what have you done? Because they are used to the male principals. (Alice)

The data revealed that when many of the participants were appointed to headships, there were very few females in leadership positions in schools and people found it hard to believe that they were the ones 'in power':

I started in a period when I was almost the only one. I don't want to talk to the finance person", I want to speak to the principal. I said but I am the principal. So, lots of times they will mistake me for, for not being the principal. [Laughing out loud]. (Lora)

My problem is the perception of the outside world, the community and the perception of males that we are not the same. They are still better and what, what than us. (Judy)

My new deputy, it sounds like I am still in a power struggle with him. (Elsa)

The participants indicated that they all have had struggles with male teachers and males within the community, but the experiences have made them stronger and more determined to be good leaders. However, it is not only males that participants had to deal with. They indicated that as female principals, they experience 'pull her down syndrome' at their work places:

Especially female teachers, they think that because they are your peer then they can do as they wish to pull you down. (Mercy)

It seems that women principals are belittled and maligned by other women:

Ehh sometimes as a woman when you lead, it's not easy, there is this "pull her down syndrome" (Daisy)

The data revealed that female principals find it difficult to lead schools because of the stereotype that women cannot lead. This is because the space in which the female principals operate is male-dominated and society has been socialised into believing that that leadership is the sole domain of males. It is evident from the participants' responses above that there is a misconception about females being school principals or leaders. It seems that participants do not only experience a lack of support from the female teachers but also from the male teachers, including males serving on the school governing body.

5.4.1.4c Sub-theme: Mistrust and rejection

Leading on from the previous sub-theme, female principals experienced mistrust and feeling of rejection. The following participants shared their experience of being undermined:

The main challenge is people will think that you will not make it as a female and they start criticising negatively. (Hazel)

They had a nickname for me, I heard they had a nickname for me, I later heard, they said no this “snopkop dogterjtjie”, meaning “jy is nat agter die ore”. (Meaning she is still young, what does she know? (Lora)

I think sometimes for other males to accept that I am a female, It feels like sometimes they don't take me seriously. Maybe it's strange for them to have a woman leading and even being white, you know at the school where majority is black. This school is for black children, but there is a white principal, even a female. (Elsa)

My problem is the perception of the outside world, the community and the perception of males that we are not the same. They are still better and what, what than us. So, I think it's still more in South Africa, the gender-based perception that the males are stronger and better. (Judy).

Data revealed that the female principals were not only undermined but also rejected. The following participants shared their experience of being rejected. They said:

I had one example of having a negative attitude towards me as a principal. A woman principal facing a situation where she is not accepted by another woman teacher and for no apparent reason. (Alice)

So, these are some of the problems that I encountered myself as a principal, the rejection. I was rejected, and I am still being rejected up to now. (Betty).

Although it is difficult to lead as a female, the participants indicated that there has been a bit of a mind shift in recent years:

Ehh, so we are gaining confidence in society that wasn't there few years ago. (Lora)

It seems that female principals experience negative attitude, negative criticism, and are undermined and rejected as leaders by the community in general. Ndebele (2018: 1582) argue that female principals are being undermined due to their gender and experience negative attitude from parents and teachers. These challenges make it difficult for the female principal to navigate the school leadership space but there has been a mind shift and there are an increasing number of females in leadership roles.

In addition to the above negativity, female principals experienced resistance and intimidation:

Sometimes to lead, the people who you found in a particular institution, there will be some eh, who resist change and who will think they know better than you in terms of the culture of the school. And another thing, the former two principals were male. (Daisy)

The main challenge is the male school governing body, male school governing body who come to the school thinking that they will manipulate me. When they fail, they try to do anything, in their power just to intimidate me. (Fiona)

The female principals' remarks above indicate that they endure wariness, that there is an unwillingness to accept them in school leadership, that they are being intimidated because they are females and are not accepted as having the capacity to lead because of their gender.

5.4.1.4d Sub-theme: Phases, grades and subjects hard hit by teacher attrition

According to South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996, the schools in South Africa are divided into different phases. These phases vary from Foundation Phase (Grades R to 3), Intermediate Phase (Grades 4 to 6), Senior Phase which consist of Grades 7 to 9, and Further Education and Training phase (FET) which comprises Grades 10 to 12. The learners do different subjects according to phases and grades. Participants had different views on which phase, grades and subjects are hard hit by teacher attrition. Participants said:

Foundation Phase, even at the district there are no Foundation Phase teachers who can teach Setswana. So, I can't say after six weeks to the end of June there will be a teacher for Foundation Phase, so I am already seated with a mammoth of a task. (Alice)

The female principals' remarks above indicated that the Foundation Phase identified as the phase that is hard hit by teacher attrition and that it is difficult to replace a Foundation Phase teacher because it is a specialised area which needs specialised training. However, it seems that most of the students at higher learning institutions tend to train for FET and not the Foundation Phase. The finding concurs with Hofmeyer

(2015:4) that shortage of teachers seems to be worse in the foundation Phase especially with black teachers.

The other area that is hard hit by teacher attrition is the scarce-skills subjects like Mathematics, Physical Sciences and English; however, other subjects were also identified:

Ehh, Mathematics, Economics and Management Sciences (EMS) and English are a challenge. Those are the three subjects and in Social Sciences the Geography part, is a challenge, those are the four subjects that gives us a challenge. (Daisy).

With me mam, I will talk about Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Afrikaans and English home. We are an English home school, then to get such substitutions is difficult. And also, to substitute in the higher classes especially Grade 11 and 12 it's a nightmare because mam you must get people who will PUSH, because in Grade 12 we are really, really pushing, we are not playing therefore to substitute in those classes and to get those subjects, they become scarce, Mathematics, Physical Sciences and also Afrikaans, and Afrikaans together with English home, it's a problem to us. [Coughing and drinking water] (Nancy)

Ehh, for me it's difficult to say because it's all over. For me is people are tired and they don't want to continue. It doesn't matter which subject. Ehh we struggled to have Afrikaans teachers, ehh, like in our schools. And if you go to the District, there is no teachers for Afrikaans, so there are in certain subjects a need for teachers. (Judy)

It seems that all phases, grades and subjects are affected by teacher attrition. Participants believe that teacher attrition occurs because people are tired and find the constant demands placed upon them difficult to deal with and in the end, they experience burnout. However, the scarce-skills subjects such as Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Life Sciences and languages are most hard hit by teacher attrition. The finding concurs with Rinke (2014: ix) who states that teacher attrition is severe in hard-to-staff subjects like Mathematics and Physical Sciences. It is interesting to note that female principals in primary schools also identified the Foundation Phase as a

phase that is hard hit by teacher attrition which could be that this phase is taught in the home language, which in South Africa means that it is taught in 11 languages.

5.4.1.4e Sub-theme: Opportunities of teacher attrition

The previous discussion was based on the challenges that female principals experienced with teacher attrition. The ensuing discussion shows that despite the challenges brought about by teacher attrition, there are opportunities as well. Opportunities alludes to a set of conditions that make it possible to do something. In teacher attrition, opportunities suggest a likelihood for employment or advancement for other teachers. Much as teacher attrition has disadvantages, it also has benefits. These benefits include job creation, promotion and attainment of relevant teachers for the curriculum.

Job creation

Job creation takes place when the teachers leave their teaching positions through teacher attrition that includes resignation, death, resignation, death, ill-health, retirement, redeployment and dismissal. Teachers who leave the school, leave vacant posts and as a result job opportunity is created. Vacant posts need to be filled and the principal starts with the recruitment process to fill in the vacant post. The data revealed that when teachers leave the schools, they create an open space where other teachers can get an opportunity for employment:

If we know that the teacher will be gone for more than 20 days then we are able to replace, find a substitute. (Betty)

I must make sure there's a replacement as soon as possible. (Elsa)

But in terms of human relations, which sometimes can affect the school, I would say they rather leave, and I get the ehh new Funza Lushaka from scratch. (Daisy)

When a teacher leaves his/her position or is sick for more than 20 days, there is a need to find a substitute or a replacement. This creates a space to hire a teacher irrespective of whether it is permanent or temporary, somebody gets to be appointed which is job creation.

Promotion

The study found that some teachers leave the schools to become heads of department, deputy principals, principals at other schools while others leave to become education officials at the districts. As these teachers vacate their positions in this manner, it creates vacant promotional posts for other teachers occupying lower positions. These posts are advertised, and the remaining teachers have the opportunity to apply to fill these promotional positions:

The second part where I enjoyed it, it was when my teachers leave the school because they will be handing letters of promotion. I've got teachers who were promoted to principalship, managers in the district. (Alice)

Others left the school because of promotion, and then, ehh, [silence], jaa. The other one is a principal now, one is my senior as I speak to you, in the district, because of promotion. (Fiona)

I've got two teachers who left. They got promotional posts. My deputy also left because he also got a promotional post. [silence]. (Elsa)

Another advantage is that when teachers leave the schools because they are promoted, it creates a space for promotional positions where the remaining teachers are offered an opportunity to apply for those positions. When teachers get promotional positions, it serves as motivation and that has potential to retain the teachers.

Attaining relevant teachers for the curriculum

It is not always the case that teachers who are working at the school are teaching subjects for which they are trained. Thus, when a teacher leaves the school, it gives the female principal an opportunity to find a teacher who has been trained specifically for that subject:

I have earmarked the teacher who is knowledgeable in the subject to act in that position. (Alice)

With the one who left, I could immediately get a suitable Funza Lushaka teacher. So, then the problem was solved immediately. (Elsa)

I've seen every time, that I get, a person just as good, they are just as good.
(Lora)

When teachers leave, they open a space for other teachers to be employed. These teachers may bring in new ideas that may improve the schools where they are employed. It is also an opportunity to ensure that suitable qualified teachers are employed to teach the relevant subjects.

The findings revealed that school leadership is still a male-dominated space even though there are more females in the teaching profession. The finding concurs with Husain *et al.*, (2018:6) who state that although the teaching profession is dominated by females, school leadership is not. Thus, the female principals find it difficult to lead schools because of the stereotype that women cannot lead. They have to fight the misconception that they are not as capable as their male counterparts. As a result, the females who find themselves in this space that is dominated by males, need to prove that they are just as capable, if not more so, than their male counterparts. The findings also indicated that society automatically accepts the male principal because it is a norm which means there are doubts when a female is appointed as principal. This doubt inspires the female principals to work very hard to prove the world wrong. Female principals are often not given the necessary support by the male teachers including males serving in the governing body. It seems that in some cases, female teachers, who are not happy about the success of women as principals, fail to give support as well. The findings again indicated that female principals experience negative attitudes, negative criticism, and that they are often undermined and rejected by their staff and society in general. This makes it difficult for the female principal to navigate the school leadership space. The female principal endures wariness in that there is an unwillingness to accept them in the school leadership position, and that they are being intimidated because they are females and are not accepted as having the capacity to lead because of their gender. These findings are in contrast with Elyashiv (2019:164) who conducted a survey on principals and inspectors' views on teacher attrition in Israel. Two main challenges were identified as managing teacher personnel and support of teachers who have shown intention to leave.

The findings also indicated that the Foundation Phase, and scarce-skills subject such as Mathematics, Physical Sciences and languages are most hard hit by teacher

attrition. The findings also indicated that teacher attrition does not only have disadvantages but has advantages as well. When teachers leave, they open a space for other teachers to be employed. These teachers may bring in new ideas that may improve the schools where they are employed. It is also an opportunity to get to replace teachers who are unsuitable and in turn appoint teachers equipped to teach the specific subject. This finding is in line with Elyashiv (2019:160) who states that the advantage of attrition is the replacement of poor performers with others that may suit the job better. Another advantage is the opportunity for promotion when those that leave are holding a promotional position. When teachers are appointed to promotional positions, it serves as motivation to remain in the teaching profession.

5.4.1.5 Theme 5: Mitigation of teacher attrition challenges

When participants were asked as to how they deal with the challenges that are brought about by teachers leaving the schools, they specified that they employ several approaches that include sharing learners among classes and distributing subjects to teachers, juggling the teachers and the timetable, empowering new teachers and promoting collaborative planning and making use of available systems.

5.4.1.5a Sub-theme: Sharing learners among classes and distributing subjects to teachers

The female principals are responsible to ensure that the learners are being taught and never left unattended while they are at school. As previously mentioned, when teachers leave the school there is a gap and the remaining teachers are tasked with picking up the slack. The participants explained the process that they put in place to ensure that these teachers' classes are covered:

What we normally do, when a teacher is not there, we make sure that we share these learners into classes and learning and teaching continues. (Fiona)

In fact, at our school we have systems, in the Foundation Phase, we spread those learners. And in terms of the Intersen, we are having a relieving timetable. Let say for example in the meantime, when we are still looking for another teacher, we use those two particular systems. (Daisy)

You find that the classes are demarcated according to the language, where we are doing Sepedi and Setswana, at our school, so we take the learners who are Sepedi speakers, try to accommodate them in the neighbouring class. So, we accommodate them in the next class. (Alice)

Normally what we do here at school, we encourage our teachers, the very same teachers who teach the same subject to combine the learners for those periods. So, we combine the learners for those few days, two, four, three days so that these learners are not suffering. (Gemma)

The data indicated that when a teacher is ill or absent, and there is no replacement, learners are assigned to other classes or to subjects so that teaching and learning can continue. This practice does seem to come with issues - classes become overcrowded and effective teaching and learning cannot take place in such condition, which often results in 'babysitting' as a need to keep learners busy:

And where a teacher will end up having 100 learners in the class because they are not even 40 per class, so we accommodate them in the next class and you find that a teacher is faced with 100 learners and in reality, will teaching and learning take place, it is just to baby-sit. (Alice)

We give learners general work in the meantime just to keep them busy, until we can replace the teacher. Because it's not like in primary school where a teacher sees one class for the whole day. We exchange classes, so the teacher will see different classes, so we would always prepare work and then replace them as quickly as possible. (Kate)

Some female principals motivate teamwork among their staff to address the issue of absent teachers:

I taught my educators that if an educator leaves, die or whatever, please we are working as a team, I am going to distribute the subjects, to you guys, it means I am going to overload you. So, my staff members know that if we lose an educator or what they chip in quickly without struggling. (Iris)

The data showed that even though the female principal share learners among the classes so that they can be attended to or even distribute subjects to other teachers,

it is not beneficial to the learners. Thus, productive teaching and learning does not really take place because the classes become overcrowded with up to 100 in a class; hence the female principals regard this as 'babysitting'. This rise in learner numbers demotivates the teachers who come to school regularly and it has the potential of continuing the cycle of absenteeism.

5.4.1.5b Sub-theme: Juggling the teachers and the timetable around

Another strategy that the female principals employ to make sure learners are not left unattended is to reorganise the timetable around to see as to which teacher is suitable to substitute:

You have to go back to the drawing board. Either juggle the timetable around or juggle the teachers around so learners can be taught. (Alice)

But immediately it is cut chop and change because immediately they are coming in the new ones you must rearrange, you change the timetable so that, that one who has experience in grade eight must shift to grade 12, the one in grade 10 shift to grade, you know just reshuffling, serious reshuffling. (Nancy)

The data revealed that while the female principals wait for a replacement, they reorganise the timetable to ensure that teaching and learning takes place. The findings also indicate that even if the female principal is able to find a replacement, it may not be a perfect fit. Thus, the female principals need to plan afresh where they end up rearranging the timetable and the teachers to make sure there is effective teaching and learning taking place at the school. In many instances rearranging and reallocating subjects to the teachers results in them teaching subjects for which they did not train, and this compromises the quality of education. This finding concurs with Hofmeyer (2015:7) that many teachers do not teach the subjects and the phases they specialised in and this misutilisation of the teachers undermines the quality of education delivery.

5.4.1.5c Sub-theme: Empowering new teachers and promoting collaborative planning

It is the responsibility of the female principals to ensure that the new hires adjust to the new environment in which they find themselves. This can be done by means of

encouraging collaborative planning amongst the teachers who teach the same subject or same grades:

But what I do, I call them weekly to say how is it, and find out how it is, they do have mentors. All of them do have mentors as well, ja. (Judy).

We always do development through the line of protocol. So, the HOD's will develop the teachers and the teachers will also work together. Maybe if it's for a certain grade they will plan together, and they will guide one another on how we are working as a school and so on and so on. The deputy and the principal will also come in, if they still encounter problems. We always plan together. (Kate).

The data showed that female principals make use of experienced teachers as mentors to empower and develop the new appointees. Empowerment and development are also enhanced by the grade teachers who teach the same grades or subjects with the new hires. They come together to plan and, in the process, share knowledge and skills. In case there is a need, the SMT also intervenes to inspire the teachers and assist. The female principals make sure the new teachers adjust by constantly checking on them. The finding is in line with Campbell-Whatley and Lyons (2013:194) who state that school principals can assist both veteran and novice teachers by sharing their professional visions related to the school, exploring ways to cultivate professional expectations by zooming in on the gaps in the professional goals with the view to closing them. Principals must continually seek ways to support the experienced and novice teachers by way of listening to them and through empowerment.

5.4.1.5d Sub-theme: Use of available systems

It is the responsibility of the female principals to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place irrespective of whether some teachers are not at school and confirming that a plan is in place. Female principals have systems in place that they employ to deal with the challenges of teacher attrition. They have structures at their disposal such as management plans and the use of the SMT members:

We have management plans, that will always help us. (Hazel).

So, we tried and sometimes what helped me a lot is to have systems in place, we are having a relief timetable. (Daisy)

In some instances, female principals who have vision, put succession plans in place so that knowledge and experience is not lost:

Ehh, you know, what we do is we have a succession plan, so I know that my head of departments are applying for promotion posts. So, I already have someone ehh, shadowing them, and so when they leave, I have someone taking their place and then they will do that work, eh, and the SGB will reward them for the work that they are doing. So, we try not to have one person that is knowledgeable about something. So, they must share, and they must have somebody that works with them. (Lora)

Lora makes use of a succession plan where a teacher shadows his/her senior to learn the ropes in case the senior gets promotion then, there is somebody who can step in to do the work.

Like I said, we have 26 class assistants, ehh, that is University students ehh, from Unisa and other institutions, that are in the classes and ehh, some of them were here the first year and now they are in their final year, and some of them are starting now, it's their first year. I have a mixture. And when a teacher suddenly leaves, I would temporarily use ehh, my class assistant for that period until I can get a replacement. So, eh, that is something that I do and also when somebody falls ill or whatever for that short period of time. All have SACE registrations. So, and I know they are training capable. (Lora)

Lora is the principal of a school that has class assistants at the school who are on an internship programme. These class assistants act as substitutes when a teacher is sick or absent from school as they are able to continue with the teaching and learning process. These class assistants already know what is expected and as they have been in the various classes, the learners are used to them, so the teaching and learning process proceeds smoothly.

In some cases, when the female principal does not have teaching responsibilities, she can substitute:

I also assisted because eh, as we speak, I am not teaching, so I sometimes act as a substitute, meantime we are still waiting to get a substitute, because not all sick leave teachers deserve to be replaced. (Betty)

However, as senior management tends to do the substituting, it becomes a daunting task as it impinges on their own teaching and administrative duties:

It is also discouraging the principal even the SMT because they are the ones who are substituting. (Nancy)

Senior management tend to do the bulk of substituting as they have less teaching periods but, because they must attend to their managerial duties, these suffer when they substitute for absent teachers.

Some female teachers are pro-active and are determined to uncover the reasons for teachers' continued absences, especially when the sick leave is extended. They wish to ensure that the doctors' notes are legitimate:

It's not my practice to stay more than five days without a teacher. I would rather go sit down with that person's doctor request and explain the problem the school is facing. I did interact with most of the doctors to explain the importance of filling in those sick leave forms and returning them back to school. (Fiona)

The data indicated that participants make use of different approaches to ensure that teaching and learning is not interrupted which includes the use of available systems such as management plans and enlisting the help of SMT members to assist with the learners, so the learners are not left unattended with even the principals themselves stepping in to substitute. In addition, the participants communicate with the teacher's doctor to ensure that the filling in of the leave forms is completed, so they the process of finding a substitute or replacement is facilitated.

The findings revealed that the female principals make use of various approaches to deal with the challenges caused by teacher attrition. The female principals use strategies that are relevant to the context of their school since there are no formal procedures prescribed by the Department regarding the management of these challenges. While the female principals await the appointment of the new teacher, they make internal arrangements at the school where they share learners among the classes, distribute the subjects to the remaining teachers, rearrange timetable and teachers. The findings indicate that even though steps are taken the arrangement are not beneficial to the learners with productive teaching and learning not taking place. This rise in learner numbers in already overcrowded classrooms demotivates the

teachers who come to school regularly and have to pick up the substitutions. The findings indicated that finding a perfect match replacement is sometimes challenging. Thus, the female principal needs to ensure the new teacher is empowered and they do this by encouraging collaborative planning and working within grades and subjects. Substituting often falls on the shoulders of SMT with female principals also assisting with teaching and learning. All these strategies are put in place to ensure that no learner is left behind in terms of teaching and learning.

5.4.1.6 Theme 6: Retention strategies

Empirical data showed that even though the teachers leave their schools for various reasons, the female principals have established ways that they use to try to retain their teachers. These ways include promoting from within, motivation and support, developmental programmes, communication and mutual respect, caring and showing appreciation, and finally, modelling good practices.

5.4.1.6a Sub-theme: Promoting from within

The data showed that when there is a prospect for a promotional post at the school, the female principals more often than not, wants to appoint teachers who are serving at the school:

I make sure that when opportunity comes, I promote from within because I need to retain certain individuals, which I am 100% sure I have developed, and they are fully equipped in terms of capacity. (Fiona)

I have promoted teachers from post level one up to deputy principal. They are all from here. My teachers who are deputy principals, the two of them, my HODs were teachers who started as post level one, teachers under my leadership. Now they are deputy principals. The HOD all of them because they are capable and have expertise, I managed to keep them by promoting them. (Alice).

By promoting internally, teachers who have been part of developmental programmes at the school are qualified and experienced through their tenure and are highly suitable to take up the promotion posts. However, in some instances, external teachers are appointed:

But what I can tell you that, normally when it happens here at school that we happen to have this promotional posts, I encourage them to apply for this in-house positions, then if really a person has met the criteria and has qualified, I do recommend to the SGB to say, consider the ones that are home, if indeed they qualify, then we will promote from within, but then, there has been some cases whereby we had support and unfortunately things did not turn our way, there is nothing we can do, obviously we will take somebody from outside. But normally I recommend to the SGB to please consider the ones because I know they know the work. (Gemma)

The data demonstrated that when there are promotional positions at the schools, the female principals prefer to appoint teachers who are currently serving at the school, which boosts the morale of the teachers showing then that their principals believe in them because they have gone through training and professional development within the school and are well-suited to fill the promotion posts.

5.4.1.6b Sub-theme: Motivation and support

It is the responsibility of the principal to create and sustain an environment conducive to teaching and learning, so teachers enjoy coming to work to render their services. Thus, the female principals need to embark on a number of activities that have the potential to motivate and encourage the teachers to enjoy their work and subsequently chose to remain at the school:

Every morning in our morning briefing, we start with something positive. (Elsa)

So, we also have this thing of teacher outing together with our SGB because they are part of the team. (Alice)

The principals feel that activities build teamwork and motivate and encourage the teachers to remain at the school:

And what I do every year the end of March I take my teachers as well as the support staff for a retreat and team building and try to address things that we identified the previous year, as we were evaluating ourselves. The team building, the retreat, the closing party, it can be a party but before we become very happy, we reflect, and correct each other. (Fiona)

We are working together, that's what we are doing [laughter]. I am an Afrikaans lady and on Mother's Day we did the "kop doek" (Cathy)

It is important for teachers to be regarded as people with families and through organisation within the school, teachers are recognised and regarded:

We have a social committee and have a policy that say if this is happening this is the amount that we contribute. When there is death in the family of a teacher we provide financial and moral support. (Cathy)

The data indicated that female principals go the extra mile to ensure teachers remain motivated and encouraged. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate the staff members by providing meaning to their work (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2014:179). To motivate the teachers, the female principals engage in several activities that includes organising motivational speakers, team building sessions, retreats and social events. When teachers are motivated and happy within their schools, there is job satisfaction and they would rarely think about terminating their services.

The data showed that when teachers inform the participants that they wish to terminate their employment, where possible they try to talk to the teachers as a form of intervention, offer guidance and support or even try to persuade the teachers to reverse their decision and remain at the school:

I first have a conversation with them, to find out if there is anything I can do to save the situation. I try to convince them otherwise and check if there is something the school can do differently to keep the educator? I have personal conversation with all of them. I give them advice. If I convince them to stay, then we have to act on what we agreed on. (Judy)

Nancy declared that she does not mind when the teachers leave if there is a valid reason, such as working closer to home. She believes that working closer to home is necessary and does away with long commutes. Nancy just needs the teachers to tell her in advance if they want to leave so that she can find a suitable replacement as quickly as possible This is how she puts it:

Mam, there's nothing else but my role is just to motivate them and encourage them to inform me in advance jaa. Let's work together, inform me in advance if

you want to leave. Because with me mam, I don't mind to encouraging them to say, if you need a transfer because there is a space nearer home, inform me. I believe in working closer home because they will show all their best. Therefore, that's the only thing I can do, to motivate them and also to encourage them to inform me in advance so that I can also get the teacher in advance. (Nancy)

The data showed that participants have the interest of the teachers at heart. When the teacher indicates his/her intention to terminate the service, the female principals sit with the teacher to find out why the teacher wants to leave, what is bothering them and give advice where possible. Elyashiv (2019:166) state that the most common means that principals use is to have one-on-one talk with the possible leaver. The participants also offer teachers the necessary support, both professionally and personally, which is evidence of a caring principal. However, the participants are aware that it is up to the teacher to consider the advice or not and make the final decision.

5.4.1.6c Sub-theme: Developmental programmes

Female principals make it their responsibility to develop the teachers that are under their leadership. This is done through several activities such as mentorship, support through meetings, workshops and encouraging teamwork among the teachers as well as inviting motivational speakers to the school:

We do a lot of staff development, team building, formal and informal meetings. [laughing]. (Kate)

We try to get motivational speaker like professor G, we were with her at our team building. (Betty)

The data indicated that participants understand that teachers need development and they thus ensure that there is continuous professional development at their schools. When teachers experience development, it gives them confidence in their work and that has potential to motivate teachers to remain at the school.

Mam we do teacher developmental workshops rona mo skolong. Teacher developmental workshops ka di phases tsa bona, it will be for Foundation Phase, Intersen, and we also call the District to come and capacitate them, regarding

mmereko wa bona, so that things must be easy for them. Then we call the district to come often so to assist them. Then we also allow them the opportunity to coordinate the committees tsa mo skolong for their personal gain. When we have a meeting, we take a circular, we circulate among the school then they are given the opportunity to include all these other items that they want us to discuss as a school. During parents' meetings we circulate then they also become part of those meetings. Each time when we issue out a newsletter quarterly, I involve them. As teachers normally they communicate with parents, ko dilevel tsa bona. Parents will go straight to a teacher requesting information pertaining to something that was issued out then they must be in a position to answer to whatever. We do classroom visits, in their classes to give them support to lessen their burdens. Sometimes the HOD's model things for them and also do control the teachers work. Each time there is a workshop, I encourage them to give immediate feedback. (Gemma)

The other development that we are doing is through IQMS and then besides the IQMS, they attend workshops, develop one another, and share the information that they have from the workshops or even from within as they plan. (Hazel)

The data revealed the teachers also attend workshops and when they return, they share the skills they have acquired through the meetings that they hold in their grades and departments. Data revealed that Integrated Quality Management system (IQMS) is another programme that is used to develop the teachers where the teachers are assessed to identify their strengths and areas that need development, with the aim of improving their performance.

The data indicated that female principals involve the teachers in the activities of the school. This make the teachers to feel valued and respected and thus make them feel good about themselves.

Then I also involve them, we give them a lot of responsibility. We have post level one teachers, who are grade guardians. (Judy)

When the teachers are involved in the activities of the school, they see themselves as part of the school and can thus enjoy working at the school.

Another strategy is to support and hold meetings with the teachers to show their support:

Ehhh, in most cases I have these informal meetings with the educators, where I sit down with them and them. I am hands on with curriculum. (Iris)

I think the basic is support, directly from me as the principal and we have put support structures in place so that they don't feel overwhelmed. We've got a mentor system, so we do all those from bottom up. (Judy)

The data suggests that female principals are conversant with the programmes that help to develop the teachers at the schools and are fully involved in supporting their teachers. They make sure the teachers have mentors, so that they know what is expected of them. Development takes place in the form of meetings that are held at the school and workshops that are organised internally at the school. These workshops take place in different phases and in cases where there is a need, the participants consult the relevant district personnel to assist and capacitate the teachers. Teachers are given the opportunity to lead certain activities which has potential to boost their confidence and at the same time make them grow.

5.4.1.6d Sub-theme: Communication and mutual respect

Communication is the heartbeat of every organisation with communication being the key to success. Steckley and Smith (2013:175) contend that ethics of care highlights the importance of listening, communication, dialogue and interpretation. The data showed that female principals communicate openly with their teachers and involve them in all the activities of the school. When there is open communication between the female principal and the teachers, it develops mutual respect:

So, I try to have an open conversation with them. I am very, very open minded. (Kate)

I think human relations, respect and being accommodative. Ja, because you know mam, personality, at times can break you, if one is not careful. The manner in which we address our colleagues, is important. Whether in a meeting, formal or informal. If you want them to respect you, you must also give them respect back, it must be mutual. (Gemma)

The data revealed that when participants engage in open communication with their teachers, it promotes good human relations that lead to mutual respect. Effective communication is the cornerstone of successful relationship because it serves as an adhesive that builds confidence between the leader and staff members (Lubelfeld, Bullies & Filippi, 2016:2). The way a leader relates to others is also important because it contributes towards developing a positive school climate in which the teachers can optimally give their best in the service they render at the school. Principals can make many positive changes with just a little planning and forethought to improve the climate, communication, safety and morale in their schools (Farber, 2010:3). The attributes for leadership include communication skills, negotiation skills, motivational skills, change management skills, empowerment skills and a vision for the future (Lentz, 2012:187).

5.4.1.6e Sub-theme: Caring and showing appreciation

Participants use different way to show their teachers that they do care and appreciate them. These were indicated in various ways such as giving the teachers incentives, rewards or acknowledgement and engaging in individual conversations:

We even issue certificates to teachers, when you show that you appreciate them even a chocolate. So those are little things that goes a long way. So, I try by all means to keep them nearer me. (Betty)

If the performance is good like during the year, we don't give them money as such, but what we normally give them, you know we give them certificates then end of the year, every teacher who received more than 80% then they receive a token in a form of money now. They receive certificates and on top of certificates, they also receive the money. That is what we are doing with our little resources. (Nancy)

The data revealed that participants are very aware of the efforts of their staff members and are appreciative. The participants show their appreciation by publicly

acknowledging their teachers or presenting them with certificates to recognise their efforts and sometimes, monetary rewards. This is in line with Muteswa and Ortlepp, (2011:15) who state that employees tend to stay in organisations where they are recognised, awarded and appreciated. According to Koggel and Orme (2013:3), caring is an essential attribute in all human relationships.

5.4.1.6f Sub-theme: Modelling good practices

Female principals' model good practices in an attempt to retain their teachers. Good practices include acting as a role model, being responsible, being accountable, being hands on, being visible, available and proactive:

Participants felt that being a role model was vital for leaders:

You must be exemplary, you must be consistent, you must have integrity. (Daisy)

In addition to being exemplary, responsibility is vital to lead and guide the teachers. In addition, a leader must be a team player and ensure that others become part of the team:

If I expect something from others, I must be willing to also do what I am expecting of them, so I must lead and guide them at all times and also make them part of my team. (Cathy)

I am not someone who stand behind and scream, go there, go there. I will be in the front and I will say come here, do this and so forth, so they follow your example, so it's no use being a principal and you are never on time, never at work or if I do something I do it at the best of my ability. (Lora).

The other aspect that is important in leadership is accountability:

As a principal you have to be accountable. (Kate).

Sometimes when I go to class, I just say, you and you let me see your books, and after that the HOD and the deputy will account why is the work of these learners not up to standard. (Daisy)

In addition, participants believe that they are fully involved:

So, for me is being there, being available. Being hands-on, always there. (Judy)

I am hands-on. I am with them. When they have to weed, I am with them. (Alice)

Participants explained the importance of their visibility, availability and proactiveness

Being always available, they can come to me, so I can help them in any way I can. (Judy)

and you must not be a leader who will always be sitting in an office, you must be a leader who walks around. (Daisy)

So, it's not like somebody is standing from the outside and just giving them instructions. So, for me it's, it's being there, being available. My door is never, closed unless I deal with private things, so it's not like somebody is standing from the outside and just giving them instructions. So, for me it's being there, leading by example, being available. (Mercy)

The findings show that participants are always available and personally involved with every aspect of the running of the school and in particular, encourage open communication with their teachers, and as a result, the teachers can always consult their principals when in need of anything that can make their work better. The data revealed that when participants model commitment, involvement and good behaviour, the teachers follow suit. Transformational leaders conduct themselves in a manner that enables them to serve as role models for their staff members (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2014:179).

5.4.1.6g Sub-theme: Retention barriers and expertise to be retained

Participants explained that in some cases they had to come to a conclusion about supporting their teachers' decision to leave and not encourage them to remain:

I think if it's retirement age, there is nothing I can say or if it's through death, those are one of, the obstacles that can prevent me from stopping the teacher, then ehh, promotion. If a teacher got greener pastures, I think those are the three obstacles that can prevent me as principal to say mam don't go. (Daisy).

Promotional posts, and also SGB employed teachers, if they get departmental posts they go. I would think ja, those would be the things that would prevent me.

I think most of them left because of promotion and those cross transfers and ja. (Elsa).

The findings revealed that even though the female principals might want to retain certain teachers, they are unable to control issues such as death, retirement, transfer, promotion and permanent positions.

In some cases, teachers cite the increase in workload, lack of respect and discipline as a reason for leaving:

Ehm, maybe the teacher having enough of the paperwork, understand, you can say whatever you want, I can't handle the paperwork anymore. So that obstacle. And also discipline at school. The learners are so disrespectful, and so I wonder if you understand it correctly and that's the reason that I can't. Because I have heard it, many times teachers saying you know what, there is nothing you can do. You can do whatever you want, they (learners) are not listening. So enough is enough, I can't handle it anymore. And also, the administration. (Cathy)

Ohhh, obstacles would be the challenges that educators are facing, ehh, through parents. Parents who are overprotective of their children. Parents who are falsely reporting teachers, that's the only reason that I would lose them, I won't have powers to keep them where parents don't respect us. That is the only issue that will make me not to be able to retain them. (Iris)

The data revealed that with increased paperwork, teachers find it difficult to cope and can no longer continue. In addition to the workload, teachers are challenged by learners who lack discipline and disrespect the teachers, which makes it difficult for the teachers to do their work. The data further revealed that it is not only the learners that cause teachers to leave, it is often the parents who are disrespectful and overprotective of their children who end up reporting teachers falsely to the Department. These false accusations are of concern to the participants because the teacher might end up losing his/her job by being dismissed, which compromises them financially.

Teachers often have a long commute to school with the distance travelled between home and school being a challenge:

Travelling distance. I mean Pretoria is different from other towns, where it's a small town you are closer to your school whatever. Here if you stay in Centurion, and you are teaching here, you know the traffic in the morning is so bad, so ehh, I would think ja, those would be the things that would prevent me from retaining the teacher. (Elsa)

Mam, I have a teacher who stays in Kwagga. She is travelling every day. Daily mam, from Kwagga. Immediately she says to me mam, I will be happy to have a transfer. I've got nothing to say to stop her from that. I will say mam, get it and go because I know the pain of travelling. (Nancy)

One other obstacle is the teachers themselves, because once the teacher has made up her mind that she or he is leaving, the principal cannot convince them otherwise:

The obstacle that I have is the teachers themselves, because if a teacher has made up his or her mind, like I told you about that particular teachers who I tried to, to discourage her from going trying to show her why we need her and why we recommended her as an HOD here, but I could not break through. (Betty)

Participants indicated that if they have a choice, they would retain teachers who display skills, competence and expertise, as explained below:

Definitely, I will keep somebody who is positive, who wants to take the school forward. Somebody who can teach the learners, who can handle these learners, because that's also not easy. Somebody that can contribute or help my school with extra-murals. Supportive and positive teachers. Willing to work and walk an extra mile. (Cathy)

Ehh, currently I would, prefer to keep all my teachers, that are performing. Whose results are good. Whose discipline is good. Ehh, whose doing what they are supposed to do. (Judy)

Teachers who are always cooperative and who when requested to do something they would show willingness to and will use their skills to share with other teachers to can help the learners. (Hazel)

The data revealed that teachers with a positive attitude, supportive teachers, those who are committed and hardworking, those who value the learners, and are

determined and disciplined, those who are good performers, ready to assist, ready to share skills with others and teachers who are versatile are the ones whom the participants would choose to retain. In addition, it is important to retain teachers who teach scarce-skills subjects such as Mathematics, Physical Science and languages.

Ohhh, if I have to retain, I will look at educators of Maths and Science. I'll also have to keep, educators who are knowledgeable, with the language, because Maths and language, are the key subjects that learners must ehhh, must pass before any other subject. These is Maths and Science, and language. (Iris)

Retaining teachers who have knowledge of Mathematics and languages is vital because these are the main subjects that learners must pass. In some areas, where a national language is offered, there could be a shortage of the teachers who either teach in the language, as in Foundation Phase, or teach it at higher levels as a language:

I think it will be for Maths, English and Sepedi because in terms of teacher who teach Sepedi, there is a challenge we even ehhh, it's a challenge we do not have Sepedi teachers around Pretoria and Maths since it's a serious challenge, I will retain teachers for these three subjects. (Daisy)

The data in this section revealed that participants find difficulty in retaining teachers who resign from their positions for a number of reasons which include lack of learner discipline, lack of respect and regard for teachers, which includes parents who are not supportive in disciplining their children. Another factor that prevents female principals from retaining the teachers is promotion at another school, a permanent position or a teaching post closer to home.

The findings demonstrated that female principals prefer to appoint teachers currently employed at their schools to promotional positions when there are vacancies. The female principals believe that promoting from within the school has the potential to boost the morale of the teachers and in addition, they know that the teachers have been trained and developed in-house, know the work, are capable and experienced and will only be needing training for their new position. The female principals ensure that their teachers remain motivated and encouraged, by engaging them in various

activities that include organising motivational speakers, team building sessions to encourage collaborative work, and issuing of certificates to show appreciation. Principals must intensify supportive and mentoring initiatives to reduce teacher attrition (Elyashiv, 2019:166) and this is done by female principals supporting the teachers and ensuring that the teachers have mentors. Teachers are empowered through meetings and workshops that are organised at the schools. Teachers are also given the responsibilities such as the opportunity to lead various activities at the school. Fibkins (2012:119) proposes that with mentoring and support, teachers can become good teachers and ensure effective teaching and learning. The female principals strive to have open communication with their teachers as it promotes good human relations that lead to mutual respect. The way a leader relates to others is also important because it contributes towards developing a positive climate in which the teachers can optimally give their best in the service they render at the school. The findings demonstrate that female principals ensure that there is a creation of a conducive working environment because such an environment relates to job satisfaction. The female principals also promote teamwork and ensure that they keep the school environment clean. When the school environment is clean and well maintained, it makes the teachers to be proud of the school and invested in it. The female principals offer teachers the necessary professional and personal support which illustrate the care for their teachers. Furthermore, acting in a caring way towards others promotes growth and self-actualisation.

The findings revealed that when female principals model good behaviour, the teachers follow suit. This is done by always being available and hands-on and as a result, the teachers can always consult the participants when in need of anything that would improve their work. The findings also revealed that teachers tend to resign because of ill-disciplined learners and parents who do not respect the teachers. The findings further showed that female principals have difficulty retaining the teachers if the cause of attrition relates to a better salary, a permanent position, promotion or a teaching post nearer to where the teacher lives.

5.4.1.7 Theme 7: Leadership and teacher attrition

Campbell-Whatley and Lyons (2013:9) indicate that the single-most important factor in the success or failure of institutions is leadership. The style of leadership that female

principals use plays a vital role in influencing the decision of the teacher to stay or leave. When a teacher is happy about the way the female principal leads, that has the potential to ensure that teachers remain in their employment but conversely, if the teacher is unhappy or uncomfortable about the manner in which the female principal leads, the teacher may think of leaving his/her employment and seeking employment elsewhere

5.4.1.7a Sub-theme: Leadership style and understanding

The data revealed that female principals employ different leadership styles, dependent on the need at the time as indicated by some of the participants below:

Ehhh, in my leadership style, you know I prefer that we talk. I engage the SMT. We hold eh, meetings, briefings on daily basis and if I get this information, I call them we sit down, and we discuss and when we go to the educators, we go there as one unit. I try to communicate as much as possible. If I get information, we have a WhatsApp group with the educators and with the SMT. We try to communicate so that there are no misunderstandings. (Mercy) Ehm, I can be autocratic sometimes when it comes to certain things that I think we should just do. I can be, say probably situational as the overall term, because, it really depends on every situation. Sometimes I am democratic, I want people opinions and I am not going to make a decision. So sometimes, I am fully democratic. Sometimes I am autocratic. (Kate)

It's a mixture of styles it depends on the situation. I can be democratic, I can be autocratic, participative, but it depends on the situation, I mix those types of leadership styles. It depends on the situation. (Daisy)

The data showed that the female principals prefer to involve the SMT and the teachers in what they are doing at the school, requesting input and opinions in what is being done at the school. This is done through meetings, briefings and even WhatsApp chat groups. Caring leaders facilitate negotiations that are participative and therefore ensure that potentially marginalised voices are heard and responded to (Brannelly, 2013:227). The female principals give the teachers the platform to become involved in school matters so that they are involved in decision making processes where decisions are made collaboratively to clear misunderstandings.

The female principals were quite clear on their understanding of leadership:

Okay, leadership mam, is just to lead people, you give them support, you show them the way, providing guidance mam, to inspire others to reach a high level of commitment. (Fiona)

Leadership simply means that as a principal you have to be accountable, you have to be fair and be firm. (Mercy)

Leadership mam, you need to, is nothing else but influencing your followers to do the right things. (Nancy)

The data revealed that the participants were very aware of the crucial leadership values and traits needed to be a good leader and as such, they regard themselves as influencing, empowering, mentoring, leading and guiding the teachers. Van Deventer, (2016:113) states that leadership relates to the mission, direction, inspiration and influence over others to structure and change activities and relationships.

5.4.1.7b Sub-theme: Setting the vision of the school

Data revealed that participants regarded themselves as responsible for setting the vision of the school to give direction to the teachers and learners. According to Rubino, (2012:19), leaders need to keep the entity on course and manoeuvre around obstacles, such as teacher attrition. This is what the participants said:

You are basically in charge of the vision of the school. (Kate).

You must have a vision of where you want to go otherwise you might look back and see nobody is following you. Because the people must share your vision. (Mercy)

The data revealed that female principals established the vision in their schools and ensured that the teachers share the vision, which is in line with Bush and Glover (2016:213), who state that principals are expected to develop a vision that can be

shared by all stakeholders. They further indicate that the principals' vision includes ensuring achievement of the best possible resource, allocation of these resources, evaluation and the security of site and property. Xaba (2012) adds that such activities are needed to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is of a high standard, irrespective of the context. Van Deventer (2016:113) states that leadership relates to the mission, direction, inspiration and influence over others to structure and change activities and relationships.

5.4.1.7c Sub-theme: Acting in a motherly way and applying Ubuntu

Female principals apply the qualities of *ubuntu*, an African philosophy related to the essential human virtues of compassion and humanity. From a maternal perspective, female principals show teachers empathy, sympathy, care and compassion just like a mother would to her children:

I think as females, we do have another touch, that softer side, where the female or the motherly part comes in. I believe it helps us in being better principals. (Judy)

Ehhh, as a woman, I think I am using the motherhood, ehh, sense of leading people. I take my educators as my kids, when they have problems, I can detect easily as a mother, because I know them. I am not a boss lady, I am a mother, a care giver, in order for them to feel free. You learn to put yourself in their shoes so, that is how women do it. (Iris)

I think you [laughter] are a leader and at the same time you become a mother, I am very warm, I am so sensitive and when I approach a person, I approach a person like his or her own mother. It doesn't matter how soft I might be. I embrace them especially the young ones, I embrace them as my own children, I guide them like my own children. (Fiona)

As leaders, female principals who act as mothers would apply the principles of *ubuntu*:

I become patient with them and govern by Ubuntu, although they take advantage of too much Ubuntu. (Nancy)

I'm compassionate. So, I always try to show compassion. (Lora)

Even those ones that I want to get rid of, you know I am walking the path with them. I even paid out of my pocket for two teachers here who did not have the money to go see a psychologist. (Judy)

The data revealed that female principals apply *ubuntu* in their leadership role when dealing with teachers, the running of the school and problems, both professional and personal, that arise. Responsible leaders strive to develop characteristics such as humility, compassion, integrity and self-control (Blakeley, 2016:118) and strive to show empathy by thoughtfully considering others' feelings. When interacting with them, female principals employ good social skills, which is moving people in the direction that one desires by their ability to communicate effectively (Rubino, 2016:29). When female principals display caring for their teachers, showing empathy, sympathy and compassion as the principles of *ubuntu*, teachers feel valued and when teachers feel valued, they will feel secure and satisfied.

5.4.1.7d Sub-theme: Applying an open-door policy approach and allowing teacher autonomy

An open-door policy approach refers to open communication which encourages openness and transparency where participants make themselves available to the teachers. Participants' availability ensures that teachers are free to consult their principals, discuss issues and problems and end up opening up to their female principals:

I have an open-door policy and I always say to them if you are not happy with something that I do, please come to me and tell me. (Elsa)

I am open to my staff members to an extent when they encounter problems, they are so quick to come and share them with me. (Iris).

I am always honest and truthful. I am not keeping any secrets, I am transparent, I inform them about everything. (Judy).

In addition to being open to the teachers, some participants shared that they offer teachers the freedom to be themselves, to work and grow within the framework set by the school:

I am not prescriptive to the point that I say you must teach like this. I have standards that I set but I allow freedom in that for them to be themselves. (Judy)

I am a leader who does not stand in front of the people, and not give them a way to discover for themselves, and even giving the followers the space to discover and explore further (Alice).

The data indicated that participants employ an approach where teachers have open access to them because they avail themselves to the teachers. This makes it easy for the teachers to approach the participants whenever they have challenges. This aligns with Botha (2013:34) that the principal need to develop a caring spirit towards the teachers. The participants also give their teachers the freedom to do their work without being micro-managed, which allows the teachers space to grow. Hughes (2012:247) contends that teachers want to work in the schools where there is autonomy. When participants employ an open-door policy approach and allow the teachers independence, this has the potential for teachers to enjoy their work and with job satisfaction, they will remain in their positions. Young (2018:20) argues that principals need to employ an open-door policy to engage with the teachers as this has the potential of mitigating teacher attrition.

5.4.1.7e Sub-theme: Relationship with the teachers

Relationships are vital in creating a good school climate and the way the female principals relate to their teachers has a major impact on how teachers view the situation at their schools. It is imperative for the participants to know and understand the teachers with whom they are working. If the relationship between the participants and the teachers is pleasant, then the teachers will develop trust in the participants:

I have this harmonious relationship with my colleagues. We work very close, we are close, to such an extent that we even talk about our personal things. The same to our SMT, and all the teachers. I think human relations, respect and being accommodative. Ja, because you know mam, personality, at times can break you, if one is not careful, the manner in which we address our colleagues, is important. Whether in a meeting, formal or informal. (Gemma)

The issue of trust was identified as an important element in relationships.

Being trustworthy, that people can know that we can go to that person anytime.
(Judy)

The data showed that it is imperative for the female principals to build good relationships with the teachers. The relationship between the female principals and the teachers at the school can either build or break them, thus female principals need to treat their teachers fairly and equally. Leadership is built upon trusting relationships; thus, it is imperative as a leader to listen, respect and recognise others to sustain relationships that are purposeful (Lubelfeld *et al.*, 2016:1). The female principals must strive to know and understand the teachers better so that the teachers can trust them. The female principals need to understand their teacher's problems, accommodate the teachers, check the teachers when they are sick, understand their problems and make them feel valued. It is this kind of relationship which motivates teacher to continue in their positions.

5.4.1.7f Sub-theme: Having knowledge and adhering to requirements

It is imperative for the female principals to have the necessary knowledge and adhere to departmental requirements, so they are able to guide the teachers accordingly. A leader who does not have the necessary knowledge is incapable of running a school effectively and efficiently:

As a leader you must be knowledgeable, you must know ehh, all the policies; they must be at your fingertips. A leader is somebody who seek knowledge and impart it correctly, allow the new ideas to come forth as a leader in order for you to be above level of the educators. (Iris)

I must know what is to happen before my followers can know everything and know what is expected of the team. (Alice)

A leader needs to have everything at her fingertips and know exactly what is going on at the school hence, the need to fully engage with the teachers, the learners and the parents:

Ehh, I need to know what's going on in the school that's why I also get involved with the learners and the parents and I give my numbers to the parents. (Judy)

It is vital that a leader is knowledgeable about the curriculum so that there is support for the teachers. Teachers become more committed when they perceive the principal to be capable (Williams, 2018:45). In addition, she should be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of her teachers, so she can help and support them:

It is imperative for the leader to have knowledge of the curriculum, so teachers cannot be deceived. You must be a leader who knows curriculum, because if you don't know curriculum that is the core, sometimes teachers can mislead you. (Daisy)

You have to know your people, you have to know their level of competence and know how to handle them. Get to know them better, know their frustration, and also listen to them when they talk. And don't be quick to judge. (Gemma)

Participants must adhere to the requirements of the Department using these policies and guidelines to lead their schools and ensure that it is run effectively and efficiently:

Do what is correct, what is expected by the Department of Education. (Betty)

You must also be spot on in everything that you do (Gemma).

Everything must be done according to the book (Alice)

The data revealed that participants understand that as leaders, they must be knowledgeable about the curriculum and the relevant policies. Policies give directives to participants so that they are able to lead the teachers according to the requirement of the Department of Education. This includes managing issues regarding teacher attrition. The female principals realise that being aware of their teachers and their capabilities gives them insight into how effective each of the teachers could be and by placing a strong belief in their capabilities but always ensuring high expectations of their teachers as well as their learners. This finding concurs with Williams (2018:40) that the principal as the main individual to establish an effective school, needs to possess strong and effective leadership skill and the necessary knowledge and skills for the successful running of the entire school.

The findings revealed that the female principals as leaders, use a range of leadership styles depending on the context and the situation. Although the female principals are democratic in nature, but they sometimes become autocratic so that the teachers

should not take advantage of the democratic situation. The female principals regarded themselves as influencing, empowering, mentoring and guiding the teachers. The female principals are responsible for developing the vision of the school, although this is done democratically with the teachers, and then shared with the stakeholders at the school. Transformational leaders establish expectations that are clearly communicated to the staff members to demonstrate and meet the organisations goals and the shared vision (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2014:179). The findings also revealed that the female principals apply the principles of *ubuntu* in their leadership practices that include caring for the teachers, showing empathy, sympathy and compassion, which has potential to make teachers feel they are valued and when teachers feel valued then prefer to remain secure in their positions. Female principals employ an open-door policy approach to keep the teachers at the school. The participants are accessible to teachers within the open-door policy approach. The female principals also allow the teachers autonomy which offers the teachers the opportunity to grow.

The findings declared that the way in which the female principal relate to the teachers plays a role in influencing the teachers to leave or remain at the school. It is vital for the female principal to know and understand the teachers with whom they are working. The female principals need to understand the problems that the teachers have, ensure that they accommodate them, show caring behaviour by checking the teachers when they are sick, understand their problems and make them feel valued. If the relationship between the female principals and the teachers is pleasant then the teachers will develop trust in the female principals and that will encourage job satisfaction; however, if the teachers experience the contrary, then that can cause the teachers to resign. According to Hughes (2012:247), the principals must build a positive working relationship with the teachers and empower them. In addition, the findings revealed that female principals understand that as leaders they must have knowledge of the curriculum including knowledge of the relevant policies. Female principals get directives from these policies, so they can guide the teachers and manage teacher attrition matters according to the requirements of the Department.

5.4.1.8 Theme 8: Support received by female principals

Teacher attrition is not an easy aspect to deal with and as a result, participants need to be supported to be able to handle teacher attrition in a proper manner. The female

principals indicated that the support they receive entails guidance with administration of the recruitment process, keeping CVs of unemployed teachers and assistance from the SGB.

5.4.1.8a Sub-theme: Guidance with administration of the recruitment process

Data revealed that when the teacher leaves his/her employment, irrespective of the type of teacher attrition, the female principals need to follow the correct recruitment process to fill in the vacant position. As the participants are the representative of the employer at the school level, they are the immediate senior to the teachers, thus they are the first to know when there is a vacant position. The female principals thus inform the Department through the District human resource personnel. Regarding administration of the recruitment process participants remarked as follows:

I contact the district and submit the request form for approval. (Hazel)

Then already I make submission to the district and engage with the SGB. (Gemma)

The data revealed that female principals do everything in their power to ensure the learners have a teacher in class. They immediately notify the District once a teacher has indicated his/her intention to leave and they submit the necessary documents, such as the request form and HR21 form, so they find a replacement as soon as possible. In some instances, the SGB also steps in to play a role in assisting the female principals with finances for a substitute teacher while Departmental processes are still underway.

Some participants had a differing view regarding the Department processes and how are being assisted in terms of administration of the recruitment process:

I don't think we get much help from them, like I said mam if a teacher is on short sick leave it becomes a nightmare because of the procedure that needs to be followed. (Betty)

The Department of Education is stuck let me use this word because if they were intervening, we will be hearing them talking about the introduction of at least few colleges of education where the teaching methods were the order of the day, not the way it is being left to pass unattended. If the Department of Education is

intervening or assisting schools and principals to get proper teachers, they have to initiate the introduction of colleges of education but the way it is standing we can say it seems they are turning a blind eye to this problem that there are no teachers. (Alice)

Mam, what frustrate me about the system is Funza Lushaka. You've got the post, you've got this teacher but first, Funza Lushaka. You must choose one of the Funza Lushaka's. If there's no one who is suitable for the post, you must take a teacher that is declared in excess and then only if there is none of those, you can only come with your teacher that you want to appoint. But first, you have to go to those two avenues and to me mam, Funza Lushaka's, I don't like Funza Lushaka's. (Elsa)

The data revealed that participants hold differing views about the support received from the Department regarding administration of the recruitment process. Data revealed that most of the female principals indicated that the Department is helpful while some did not see it that way, particularly promoting the appointment of Funza Lushaka teachers. The participants concerns are that the newly appointed teachers do not have skills in terms of teaching methods and thus their appointment is really not what is needed at the schools.

5.4.1.8b Sub-theme: Keeping database and the CVs of unemployed teachers

The data showed that the District keeps the database of unemployed teacher as well as their CVs. Female principals thus have access to the CVs of unemployed teachers that are kept by the District, which helps them in the recruitment process:

They have the database of teachers with different subjects at the HR unit and they also check in the system if there is a teacher who is able to teach, who qualifies for the need of the school. They immediately give you a CV, you phone that particular teacher. So that is how they are assisting. (Daisy)

Our HR personnel to be honest are hands on because they keep the CV's of unemployed teachers and when you submit the request form, they only ehh, check the requirements, the needs of the school against the CV's that they have. We request about four or five that meet the criteria, then we come to school, contact the educators and conduct the interviews, then we appoint. (Gemma)

One participant was concerned that the CV's kept by the District are not kept up to date and this impedes the recruitment process:

Yes, they do have ehh, CV's at the district but you find that those CV's are not relevant. (Iris)

If female principals are new to the position, they will get help from the District in terms of completing and submitting the relevant forms:

You know I struggled with the required documents, when one teacher resigned. So just when I went to the district they told me what to do. That's how they supported me. (Cathy)

Cathy indicated that she struggled with the documents that were needed when one of the teachers at the school terminated her services. This might be that she lacked experience because she had only been appointed in 2015 which means she had just three years' experience at the time of data collection.

The data revealed that the District has a database where it captures the information of unemployed teachers, new and old. The district also keeps the CVs of these unemployed teachers which the participants can request to check if they are relevant to the needs of the school if they need a teacher. The challenge with this database is that it is not regularly updated and thus sometimes the teachers on the database have been already appointed. Not all the female principals have the knowledge of what documents are needed for the recruitment process but are supported by the District in this regard. The female principal also engages the SGB in case there is a delay from the District so that they can assist with financing a substitute while the Departmental processes are underway.

5.4.1.8c Sub-theme: Assistance from the SGB

Participants not only seek assistance from the Department but also assistance from the SGB as stakeholders in the education system:

Then already I have to engage with the SGB for they play a role in the recruitment process, and then make submissions to the district. (Gemma)

As stakeholders at the school, the SGB is responsible for recommending the relevant teacher to the Head of Department during the recruitment process. In addition, the SGB supports the female principal in a number of ways with recruitment and staffing:

Luckily my SGB allows us to have relief teachers and they pay them an amount of R350 a day. (Cathy)

Like I said, we have 26 class assistants, eh, that is University students, we pay them eh, if they are first year they get R3 000, and for every year that they academically go further they will get R200 increase. (Lora)

The data revealed that the SGB plays a major role in supporting the female principal in the smooth running of the school so effective teaching and learning can take place.

The findings showed that participants hold differing views about the support received from the Department regarding administration of the recruitment process. The findings revealed that majority of the female principals find the Department helpful while a few did not see it that way. This could be due to the differing experiences of the female principals. The findings also showed that the District has a database where it captures the information of unemployed teachers, new and old. The District also keeps the CVs of these unemployed teachers which the female principals can request to recruit new teachers to fulfil the needs of the school. The challenge with this database is that it is not updated. Not all the female principals have the knowledge of the documents needed to be compiled and submitted, but this could be because of inexperience. The findings further showed that the participants get assistance from the Department, the District and the SGB regarding staffing during teacher attrition and the recruitment process. It is worth noting that schools in affluent areas receive financial assistance from the SGB while it is not the same with schools from rural areas. This shows disparity of what prevails amongst the schools depending on where the school is situated.

5.4.2 Findings from Participant Observation

Observation as an additional data collection strategy, was specifically chosen to observe the strategies that female principals displayed to retain the teachers. The observations that I conducted focused mainly on the female principals. The aim of

observing the female principals was to observe their interaction with the teachers specifically observing the practices that participants mentioned when they were asked about mechanisms or strategies that they use to retain the teachers at the school and align that with the reviewed the literature.

I observed the female principals at their schools during their daily routine looking at the physical setting, the infrastructure, activities taking place (such as a morning briefing), their interaction with the teachers and their behaviour as they interacted with the teachers. I employed observation to look at the practices and behaviour of the female principals that have potential to make the working environment conducive, thus encouraging the teachers to remain in their work. My main observation was with female principals conducting the morning briefings with their staff members, firstly with the SMT then with the teaching staff. A morning briefing is a dialogue or communication between two or more people using concise and relevant information prior to the starting of a formal school day. The purpose of a morning briefing is to provide information quickly and effectively about an issue or some issues. It is often used to influence decisions and solutions. It can be presented or delivered as short written documents or presented in person. At the school level, morning briefings focused on matters such as relief timetable for absent teachers, urgent issues that might have cropped up towards the end of the previous day, reminders in respect of visitors and workshops to be attended.

Most of the female principals held meetings with the SMT first in their offices, and then they proceeded to the staffroom. At School 10 and School 12, the SMT briefings were held in the board room and the staff briefings in the staffroom. In all the briefings (SMT and staff), the female principals led the meetings and the SMT members and the teachers were given the opportunity to participate either by presenting or asking questions for clarity.

I was able to conduct observations in 13 schools which offered the opportunity to view the practices of female principals in ensuring that the environment is conducive to encourage the teachers to remain at the school. In all the 13 schools, I observed the principal in her office before the school started, shadowed her to the SMT morning briefing, staff morning briefing, and back to the office after the school had started.

All the schools indicated that they usually hold morning briefings for both the SMT and the teachers. Some schools held their morning briefings every day, some held both meetings on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Some held the SMT morning briefing on Mondays and the staff morning briefings on Tuesdays. In the SMT briefings the principal gave directives for the week and allowed some other members to do the same in their departments. If there were decisions to be made, they agreed and went to the staff as a united front. At the staff briefing, all the schools start with a motivational talk by the participant or the member of the staff according to the roster indicating who should do the motivation talk at every briefing irrespective of the position or post level. Although I conducted observation at 13 schools, I will not report on all of them because of the limited time spent at the other schools because the participants had other engagements to attend to. Although the schools operated differently, the participants' practices were very similar.

At School 12, the principal issued out cards to the people who were celebrating their birthdays. At this school I learnt from the principal's announcement that one teacher had lost a parent and that the teacher responsible for the social club was asked to organise a card and some flowers to be delivered to the bereaved family. That showed the *ubuntu* prevailing at that school including promotion of collaboration.

At School 1, the principal congratulated the staff who had attended a music competition after one staff member, the music coordinator, announced the results and presented the trophies to the principal. This was confirmation that the female principal does appreciate the efforts of the teachers. I also learnt from her announcement to the staff that she had organised a financial advisor to come and advise the teachers on issues of finance especially regarding taking early retirement or resignation, but that he had cancelled his appointment. Most of the teachers at this school seem disappointed and indicated that they were looking forward to the presentation.

At School 1 on the day of my observation I found that the participant had scheduled a meeting with non-teaching staff. Although I was there to observe her practices and interaction with the teachers, I also had an opportunity to observe at this meeting. At this meeting the participant informed the non-teaching staff that she had resigned and would be leaving when the school closed in June. This confirmed that indeed participants are using an open communication approach.

At School 3, during my observation the participant announced that one of the HODs at the school has been promoted to deputy principal. During the interviews, the participant told me that she was awaiting the interview results which came the day prior to my observation. This confirmed the interviews that female principals promote from within when given the opportunity.

At School 11, I observed the female principal conducting a staff meeting in the staffroom. The staff meeting started with a motivational talk that was presented by the principal as a PowerPoint presentation. During the observation, I found that the principal had organised a financial advisor to make a presentation to the teachers on the advantages and disadvantages of taking early retirement or resignation. At this school, some teachers were happy that the information was fruitful while others felt that financial advisor wasted their time because it prolonged the meeting unnecessarily and that this would delay their departure from school. The impression I got from the principal's gesture in organising the financial adviser was that she cared about her staff and their well-being.

During the interviews, as reported earlier, the female principals raised the point of modelling good practices such as being a role model, being available and visible, being hands on, being frank and fair, being caring and compassionate, being empathetic, allowing teachers' autonomy, encouraging mutual respect and effective communication. A further leadership aspect which emerged was involving staff in the decision-making process, developing staff was considered an important aspect as was giving the teachers individual attention, both professional and personal, when required. Participants spoke about creating an orderly environment which is conducive to the development of a teaching and learning culture. In the day-to-day running of the school, female principals attended to safety issues and ensured adherence to protocol (for example, the issue of learner trip-transport requirements). Finally, participants were very aware of acknowledging teachers, praising them for their achievements and showing appreciation for their efforts.

During my observation, I found that the atmosphere in all the schools was very pleasant except at one school where the participant seemed to be unhappy about an incident that had taken place the previous day at the close of the school and she wanted to put things into perspective. Apparently one of the SMT members had made

a nasty comment when signing the time register. The participant addressed the issue at the SMT morning briefing but unfortunately the said person, a female member of the SMT, was absent. This incident occurred at the school where the participant indicated that she is experiencing the 'Pull her down' syndrome. I found that the situation was a true reflection of what the female principal explained during the interviews.

Unfortunately, I had limited time to observe at all the schools since the principals had other responsibilities to attend to. Generally, my view is that the female principals displayed practices that have the potential to make the environment in which the teachers work positive and that this has the potential of ensuring that teachers want to stay at the schools. If I had observed for a longer period, I may have observed things in contrary to what I saw.

5.4.3 Description and Analysis of Documents Analysed

Document analysis provided an indication of how female principals handle termination of teachers from the schools, irrespective of whether the teacher was moving to another school or was leaving teaching altogether. Documents analysed were divided into two categories, that is, firstly, legislative framework and secondly, resignation letters and any form of directives from the Department that deal with termination of teachers' services such as circulars.

5.4.3.1 Legislative framework

The legislative framework analysed are the Personnel Administration Measures (PAM), the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 (EEA), the Labour Relations Act No. 66 of 1995 (LRA), the South African Council for Educators Act No. 31 of 2000 (SACE), and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 5 of 1997 (BCEA). These are the documents that I consulted to obtain information on teacher attrition since this study is about female principals' experiences of teacher attrition.

- PAM: Attrition (ill-health)

PAM Chapter H on leave measures section H.5.4 refers to permanent incapacity leave due to ill-health. (*Policy and Procedure on Incapacity Leave for Ill-Health Retirement determined by the Minister for Public Service and Administration in terms of sec. 3(3)(c) of the Public Service Act, 1994, and made applicable to educators by the*

Minister of Basic Education in Government Gazette No. 29248, dated 22 September 2008). This document is relevant in that it deals with ill-health which is one of the identified type of attritions identified in this study.

- EEA: Attrition (retirement, dismissal and resignation)

EEA (No. 76 of 1998) Chapter 4 mentions termination of services which comprise retirement (section 10), discharge (dismissal) due to ill-health and misconduct. (sections 11, 12, 14) and resignation (section 15). This document is relevant in that it deals with retirement, dismissal and resignation, some of the identified type of attritions in this study.

- LRA: Attrition (dismissal)

LRA (No. 66 of 1995) Part F, Chapter VII addresses fair and unfair dismissal. This document is relevant in that it deals with dismissal as one of the identified type of attritions in this study.

- SACE: Attrition (dismissal)

SACE discussed in Chapter 3 deals with registration of teachers while section 23, removal of the teacher's name from the register and 23(1) (c) (if the educator was found guilty of a breach of the code of professional ethics). This document is relevant to this study in that it deals with dismissal which is one of the identified type of attritions in this study.

- Awards and benefits (Retention)

PAM Chapter E relates to awards and benefits. These awards and benefits have the potential to motivate and keep the teachers in their employment. The document is of relevance to this study in that it refers to awards and benefits that can be regarded as the things that have the potential to keep the teachers in their employment. These awards and benefits amongst others include:

- Incentives (*Government Gazette No. 30678, dated 18 January 2008*)
- Housing allowance, (*Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Chamber (PSCBC) Resolution 2 of 2004, Government Gazette No 27657, dated 6 June*

2005 and the Determination on Housing, issued by the Minister of Public Service and Administration and PSCBC Resolution No. 7 of 2015).

- *Medical aid (PSCBC Resolution 1 of 2006 and the Determination on Medical Assistance in the Public Service, issued by the Minister of Public Service and Administration and PSCBC Resolution No. 2 of 2015)*
- *Recognition of long service, (PSCBC Resolution 1 of 2012 and Determination on the long service recognition in the public service, issued by the Minister of Public Service and Administration)*
- *Service bonus (PSCBC Resolution 3 of 1999, PSCBC Resolution 7 of 2000 and the DPSA Financial Manual (for purposes of the calculations and application of allowances and benefits, August 2010 and PSCBC Resolution No. 2 of 2015)*
- BCEA: Notice period for termination of employment

This document is relevant to this study in that it sheds light on the notice period that a teacher must give when he/she leaves employment. BCEA denotes termination of employment. Chapter 5 section 38 refers to notice of termination of employment. This is the notice period that a teacher needs to give to the employer at the time he/she decides to end the service.

5.4.3.2 Resignation letters, forms and directives from the Department

Documents requested were any form of directives from the Department that deal with termination of teachers' services such as circulars, forms, resignation letters written by teachers who are leaving and the different forms that the teachers complete when they leave the school or terminate their services. It is crucial to mention that the schools could not produce directives in the form of circulars or legislation from the department that deals with termination of teachers' services. Some participants indicated that they cannot share the teacher's information with me without their consent, especially the resignation letters and the HR21 forms.

The above information seems to be a summary of the regulations of teacher attrition tabulated in the legislative framework.

- **Resignation letters**

The teacher's resignation letter is a letter that a teacher writes when he/she resigns. All the participants indicated that they only know that the teacher needs to write a letter of resignation. A resignation letter is relevant to my study in that I was establish the reasons for the teachers' resignation. Three participants were able to share teachers' resignation letters when they terminated their services. The letters were for those teachers who had left from 2015 to 2018.

Taking into consideration the resignation letters, it is evident that some teachers do not provide reason in their letters. It is also evident from the resignation letters that there are various reasons why teachers leave their schools such as the following:

My reasons for resignation are factors beyond my control and cannot be disclosed.

The reason for my resignation is private and confidential.

I would like to exercise my expertise and skills to my full potential in a different field of occupation and environment.

Reason for resignation is permanent appointment at another school.

What was of interest was that all the teachers gave three months' notice, as required by legislation. The only exception was the letter where the teacher indicated that he/she had been given a permanent appointment at another school. She gave short notice of a week.

The information above corroborates the interview information that participants provided.

- **HR21 form**

The HR21 form is a termination of service form that the teachers complete when terminating their services. In the case of resignation by the teacher, the HR21 form is completed by the principals and submitted to the District HR personnel. The District HR personnel then takes over the process to finalise with the provincial HR department. This form was relevant to my study in that the teacher indicates the type

of teacher attrition such as resignation, retirement (medical, early or normal), expiry of contract or misconduct.

As with resignation letters, only three participants were able to share teachers' HR21 forms. These HR21 forms were again for those teachers who had left between 2015 to 2018. Participants mentioned that in the case of dismissal and death, the District HR personnel handled the process and sent the information to the provincial HR personnel or Department. The HR21 forms that I analysed revealed that there had been 10 resignations, seven retirements.

The information aligns with the interview information on the type of attrition that the female principals experienced. Of note is that the HR21 forms confirms that the most frequent type of teacher attrition is resignation, as mentioned by the participants during the interviews.

After analysing the HR21 form, I could understand why the participants seem to lack information regarding documents needed for termination of teachers' service. The HR21 form states that "This form is to be completed by the employee and in cases of Misconduct and Death by the Department"

All the participants indicated that their role ended with receiving the resignation letter and the HR21 form in case of resignation, which they submit to the HR department at the District. All other forms or processes are then taken over by the District HR officials. The District HR officials then facilitates the process with the teacher who is exiting the system and will then communicate with the provincial HR department. The same applies to instances of dismissal, retirement, death and PILIR.

In addition to the HR21 forms, there was one CT1A form for cross transfer, which was discussed during the interviews. Some teachers, as discussed earlier, cross transfer to other schools.

- **Another relevant document**

One participant, Fiona, who was the most experienced with 20 years' experience as a school principal, produced a form that provides information on the various documents and forms that need to be completed and submitted when a teacher terminates his/her service. She indicated that she had been given the form by the District a while back.

This document is a one-page document without an author. According to the information on the form, all forms of termination of service such as expiry of the contract, resignation, retirement, death, misconduct, transfer of pension benefits, would need documents such as the HR21 form, a certified copy of the identity document, a certified copy of marriage certificate or decree of divorce, Choice form, declaration of ID copy form, and SARS income tax reference. In addition to these general documents, the specific forms need to be completed for contract expiry, resignation and misconduct, death, retirement (early and discharge) and transfer of benefits.

- In case of expiry of contract, the teacher fills in forms such as HR21, Z864, Z894, resignation choice form, and contract letters.
- For resignation and misconduct, the following is needed, HR21, Z894 or Z1252, Z864, resignation choice form, copy of fund registration certificate if transferring to another fund, decree of divorce plus settlement agreement and letter of dismissal issued by Labour Relations.
- In an event of death, HR21 Z143, Z300 and Z894 submitted directly to GEPF, death certificate, deceased ID, certified copy of spouse ID, certified copy of marriage certificate and SAP form.
- In case of retirement (early and discharge), HR21, Z894, Z864, Z583 (medical aid membership certificate attached, Choice form upon retirement, WP1002 and certified copies of ID/Birth certificate (compulsory if unmarried), Letter of approval for medical retirement done according to PILIR.

In addition to the above document, one other important aspect that the form includes is information on transfer of pension benefits. To transfer benefits, the teacher must fill in HR21, TW ERWP for penalty, Z1525 plus fund registration certificate and letter by member requesting for a transfer to an external pension or preservation fund.

It is evident from the documents that I analysed, that female principals do not handle leaving of the teachers to the letter. The Department HR personnel from the District take over the process from the principal hence the sentiment uttered by Participant 3 during the interview when she said: *I don't think we all have the knowledge of which documents need to be completed when a teacher leaves on an official part. Remember*

the Department is also expecting us to be HR officers, but we do not have training in that.

The cause of concern was that the female principals are the representatives of the Department and they seem to lack knowledge of the whole process or what is expected of the teacher when exiting the Department or leaving the school; hence they could not produce any written documentation on how to handle termination of teachers, except for the HR21 form and the resignation letter.

5.5 SUMMARY

This chapter presented an analysis of data and the research findings. The findings presented in the above themes provide the answers to the main research question: *How do female principals in Gauteng Province describe their experiences with teacher attrition?* The findings resulted from the interpretation of responses from participants interviews, observations and document analysis. The findings of the female principals' experiences of teacher attrition revealed the complexity of this phenomenon. The female principals shared how teacher attrition manifest itself in the schools, their role in handling teacher attrition as leaders in the school, challenges posed by teacher attrition, the impact of teacher attrition, how they mitigate the challenges posed by teacher attrition, practices that they employ to circumvent teacher attrition, the leadership they display or employ in managing teacher attrition and the support they receive. The findings revealed that although teacher attrition presents some challenges to the female principals, it is worth noting that it also has some benefits for the Department, the school and the teachers.

The next and last chapter deals with a summary of the study, the conclusions and the recommendations based on the findings of this study.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter presented the analysis of data and the research findings. The purpose of this research was to explore the experiences of female principals on teacher attrition. This is the last chapter and it presents the summary of the chapters of the study, the conclusions of the main findings based on the research questions presented in Chapter one, the recommendations for theory and practice, the limitations of the study, and the suggestions for further research.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY CHAPTERS

The following section offers a summary of each chapter which comprised the study.

6.2.1 Chapter One

Chapter one offered me a guide on how to approach this research journey as a researcher. The chapter presented the outline of the study that entailed the introduction and background of the study, the rationale, the research problem and research questions, the aim and objectives as well as the significance of the study. The chapter ended off with measures ensuring trustworthiness, ethical issues considered in this study, the definition of key concepts, and the chapter outline.

6.2.2 Chapter Two

Chapter two gave an account of literature pertaining to teacher attrition regarding the views of other researchers about the phenomenon. The key aspects outlined in this chapter were causes of teacher attrition, effects of teacher attrition, the role of the principal in handling teacher attrition matters, teacher supply and demand in the light of teacher attrition, management of teacher attrition, strategies for teacher retention and leadership that include school leadership, responsible leadership and female leadership.

6.2.3 Chapter Three

Chapter three provided the exposition of the theoretical framework that underpinned this study. The chapter provides the definition of a theory, function of theory, the purpose of theory and the role of theoretical framework. This study was underpinned by two theories, namely transformational leadership theory and ethics of care theory. This chapter revealed that no inquiry can succeed without the guidance of a theory. Theories offer the framework and the knowledge that provides people with a better insight into how familiarity with the social world may be used to assist in explaining the social phenomena, in this case female principals' experiences of teacher attrition in Gauteng Province.

6.2.4 Chapter Four

This chapter gave an in-depth account of the research approach and the detailed discussion of the research methodology employed in this study. This investigation followed a qualitative approach positioned within the constructivist paradigm which was focused on how female principals experience teacher attrition in Gauteng Province. This research used a qualitative case study as a design and was conducted in purposively and conveniently selected schools in the Tshwane West District of Gauteng Province in South Africa.

The data gathering instruments that included semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis were discussed in this chapter. Qualitative content analysis was used to analyse the data. The ethical issues such as application of ethical clearance, informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity considered in conducting the research were also outlined. The study also addressed the issues of trustworthiness which included credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The selection of the sites and the participants were also discussed.

6.2.5 Chapter Five

This chapter presented a detailed discussion of findings emerging from the data gathered through face-to-face interviews, observations and document analysis. Verbatim quotes from the participants were used to substantiate the findings. In this chapter, data was discussed with reference to the literature reviewed and theoretical framework that underpinned this study.

6.2.6 Chapter Six

This chapter provides a summary of the main findings in an attempt to answer the research questions and the recommendations for policy, practice and further research.

6.3 MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In this study, conclusions are drawn from the empirical data that there is a paradigm shift in the role of the female principals from the traditional function of planning, organising, leading and controlling towards being more caring and supportive. The female principals are confronted with an increasing number of teachers who leave their schools, and this affect the school negatively.

The main research question which guided this study was: *How do female principals in Gauteng Province describe their experiences with teacher attrition?* This main research question directed this study and sought to obtain the experiences of the female principals on their opinions and views regarding teacher attrition in the public schools of Gauteng Province. Female principals are expected to successfully lead and manage the activities of the school including teacher attrition.

In order to address the main question, sub-questions that were relevant and related to the research phenomenon namely teacher attrition, were formulated. These research sub-questions were:

1. What are the causes of teacher attrition in schools?
2. How do female principals perceive their role in handling teacher attrition?
3. What challenges do female principals experience in dealing with teacher attrition?
4. What measures do female principals employ to mitigate the challenges caused by teacher attrition?
5. What is the effect of teacher attrition in schools?
6. What kind of support do female principals receive in managing teacher attrition?
7. What leadership style do female principals display in their attempt to address teacher attrition?
8. What strategies do female principals explore to retain the teachers?

The findings of the study are discussed in relation to the main research question and the sub-questions, based on the female principals' responses and their relevance to the study.

What are the causes of teacher attrition in schools?

The findings revealed that the female principals experience various types of teacher attrition that include resignation, death, ill-health, retirement, transfer, redeployment and dismissal. The findings also indicated that the reasons that individual teachers give when they leave differ as well. The common reasons provided by the individual teachers are classified as personal matters, financial issues, work position, policy-related matters and institutional matters. Furthermore, the attrition rate at the different schools differs from one school to the next with some schools experiencing low rates of attrition while other experience high attrition rates. This might be because schools operate under different context such as urban and rural that might affect the individual needs of the teachers.

The findings also showed that the participants had differing views regarding teacher attrition. The participants of the schools with a low attrition rate did not regard teacher attrition as a challenge while participants of schools with high attrition rate regarded teacher attrition as a serious challenge and stressful. Teacher attrition influences the education system negatively and has the potential to hinder the deliverance of Education For All, (EFA), Universal Primary Education (UPE) goals and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

How do female principals perceive their role in handling teacher attrition?

The findings indicate that most of the participants understand their role as Departmental representatives, apart from a few novice participants who have indicated a lack of knowledge on policies and procedures for the termination of employment contract between the teachers and the employer. This superficial knowledge of policies and procedures of the termination of the employment contract by novice participants may be detrimental not only to the learners, but to the school at large. The findings revealed that the participants oversee the administration process when teachers terminate their employment contracts which they regard as very stressful. Once the teacher indicates his/her intention to leave, the female principals immediately

notify the Department via the District office and submit relevant documents such as the request form, HR21, to start the recruitment process to find a replacement. The role of the participants is to make sure that the correct procedures, as determined by the law, are followed and that the correct information regarding the correct forms are submitted via the District when the teachers conclude their employment contract. The female principals also enlist the help of the SGB to find a substitute in case there is a delay from the District.

The findings further revealed that participants embark on a recruitment process and make proper plans to replace the teacher, but they (participants) regarded the process as stressful and frustrating due to Departmental protocols that must be followed and again, because finding a suitable replacement is not easy. The findings further showed that the protocols lead to a delay in the appointment of the substitute or replacement teacher. As a result, learners may be without a teacher for some time, leading to non-completion of the syllabus and ultimately poor performance of the learners. At the other end of the continuum, the delay and late replacement of the teachers may lead to the dissatisfaction and low morale of the remaining teachers. It is incumbent upon the female principals to speed up the process of replacement of a teacher as it is seen by the participants to be a good recipe to circumvent job dissatisfaction and further boost the morale of the remaining teachers. Furthermore, the findings revealed that the role of the participants is to create a conducive working environment that would motivate and support the teachers because in such an environment, the teachers would experience satisfaction which has the potential to reduce teacher attrition.

What challenges do female principals experience in dealing with teacher attrition?

The findings revealed that patriarchal society views women leadership with scepticism. School leadership is still male dominated even though the teaching profession has more female teachers. Thus, the females finding themselves in this space must double their efforts to prove their capabilities. Female principals often experience 'pull her down syndrome' as female teachers fail to give their female principals support. Furthermore, female principals are being prejudiced and continue to experience negative criticism, negative attitude, rejection and being undermined by the society at

large because of their perceived lack of capacity to lead. This makes it difficult for the female principals to navigate the school leadership space.

Curriculum delivery equally suffers the same fate as other aspects of the school due to teacher attrition at all levels of the school, although the study has shown that the hardest hit are scarce-skills subjects such as Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Life Sciences, Life Orientation, and Languages in the secondary schools and in the primary schools, the Languages especially the African languages. It is interesting to note that the female primary school principals identified the Foundation Phase as the phase that is hard hit by teacher attrition while those in secondary schools mentioned that teacher attrition is rife in secondary schools, especially in Grade 12 classes.

Another illuminating finding is the advantages of teacher attrition. It is striking to note that the participants appreciate the positive effects of attrition, namely the provision of employment to the unemployed, replacing teachers who do not meet curriculum needs and the promotion for those who are already in the system. The latter serves as a motivating factor for teachers and has the potential to keep the teachers at the school. The new recruits who are suitable and meet curriculum needs, may bring in new ideas which could improve the schools.

What measures do female principals employ to mitigate the challenges caused by teacher attrition?

The findings revealed that the female principals make use of various approaches to deal with the challenges caused by teacher attrition. While the female principals await the appointment of the new teacher, they make internal arrangements at the school where they share learners among the classes, distribute the subjects to the remaining teachers, rearrange and reorganise the timetable and the teachers. The findings also showed that even though the female principal employs the aforementioned methods, it is not beneficial to the learners because often, it is just babysitting the learners, meaning productive teaching and learning does not take place because the classes become overcrowded. Substituting for absent colleagues means a rise in learner numbers in each class which demotivates the teachers who come to school regularly. Such a scenario has potential of teachers absenting themselves resulting in a high rate of teacher absenteeism. The findings further revealed that it is difficult to find a perfect replacement match in terms of qualifications and experience. Thus, the female

principal needs to ensure that new teachers are empowered, and they do this by encouraging collaborative planning, where teachers of certain grades and subjects plan together. Another approach is making use of available systems such as enlisting the help of the SMT for substitutions and where the female principals also assist with substituting teaching and learning. All these measures are put in place to ensure that no learner is left behind in terms of teaching and learning.

What is the effect of teacher attrition in schools?

It was evident from the findings that teacher attrition destabilises and disrupt schools. The disruption and instability are as a result of the reorganisation of the timetable, the working committees of the school as well as the individual tasks that have to be executed on a daily basis. The principal is tasked with formulating a plan to ensure that all these responsibilities are catered for. To further compound the problem, some teachers terminate within short notice, further destabilising the school. As such a teacher may not have the luxury of time to give a proper handover. Lack of proper handover further serves as an impediment to proper planning by the participants and further impacts negatively on learner discipline and performance because learners lose out on teaching and learning.

The findings raised the issue of experience when a teacher who relinquishes a post is replaced. The findings indicate that replacement of experienced teachers by inexperienced is regarded as a serious challenge faced by the participants and is detrimental to the learners and the school as it affects learner performance and discipline. When it comes to inexperienced teachers, the challenge is that they have to be mentored in all aspects of the school ranging from lesson planning to teaching methods, including discipline in the classroom. This is time consuming because in the process, the learners lose teaching and learning time. In addition to carrying an extra workload, the remaining teachers have a responsibility to mentor the newly appointed, so they are on par and are able to render quality service.

It is the responsibility of the female principal to ensure teaching and learning is not affected and she thus reallocates the classes or subjects to remaining teachers. In secondary schools some of the remaining teachers doubt themselves especially where the remaining teacher must take over the completing class from a veteran (Grade 12). As a result, they become stressed and demotivated.

What kind of support do female principals receive in managing teacher attrition?

The findings of the study revealed dichotomous views from the participants on the issue of support received. While the majority of participants concede to getting support from the Department with regard to the challenges caused by attrition, a handful refuted this claim. This could be due to the difference in the experiences as well as the fact that principals serve in different circuits and thus the support might not be the same. Those who concede to getting support, cite the availability of a database and CVs of unemployed teachers at the District as one of the supports at hand, which means they do not have to find their own teachers. The study has further shown that the support for participants is drawn not only from the Department, but from the SGB as well, with schools in quintile one getting little or no support from their SGBs since parents cannot afford to offer donations or pay the School Development Fund thereby failing to secure a replacement when the teacher leaves the school. Critics of the Department maintain that the database of unemployed teachers is never updated, making it a useless venture which cannot assist them. It seems that the CVs at the District are, in most cases, also not updated and thus irrelevant to the needs of the school. It is evident from the findings that there is still a disparity in the education system in that only schools that are in the affluent areas where parents can pay school fees are able to get assistance from the SGB in terms of payment for relieving teachers or assistant teachers to substitute the absent teachers or those who have left, while still awaiting Departmental response.

What leadership style do female principals display in their attempt to address teacher attrition?

It is evident from the findings that the female principals are versatile when it comes to leadership style. They are mostly democratic but employ an autocratic style when the situation dictates to avoid the situation to degenerate into lawlessness. There is also an indication that female principals involve staff members in the decision-making processes of the school and are supportive of their teachers. They influence, empower, mentor and provide guidance to the teachers. Female principals are responsible for developing the vision of the school which they then share with the stakeholders at the school.

The findings also revealed that the female principals employ *ubuntu* in their leadership practices that include caring for the teachers, showing empathy, sympathy and compassion. This spirit of *ubuntu* ensures that the teachers are content and feel valued, hence they are motivated to remain in their current employment. Furthermore, the female principals follow an open-door policy and therefore are approachable and available to their subordinates. The promotion of an open-door approach make it possible for teachers to engage in open conversation with the participants when faced with professional and personal problems. When the female principals employ an open-door policy approach and allow the teachers independence, this has the potential to allow teachers to grow and be happy and consequently teachers will remain in positions at their schools. The open-door policy serves to cement the relationship between the teachers and the female principal. The findings showed that the way in which the participants relate to the teachers plays a significant role in influencing the teachers to stay or leave. It is important for the participants to know and understand the teachers with whom they are working. The participants need to have an understanding of the problems that the teachers encounter, ensuring that they are accommodative of the teachers, showing caring behaviour by checking the teachers when they are sick, understanding their individual problems and making them feel valued. When the relationship between the female principal and the teachers is sound, attrition is minimised, and retention is strengthened.

In addition, the findings showed that female principals understand that as leaders they must have knowledge of the curriculum as well as relevant policies. Participants get directives from these policies and thus can guide the teachers and manage teacher attrition matters according to the requirements of the Department.

What strategies do female principals explore to retain the teachers?

The findings demonstrated that participants use various strategies to retain the teachers such as promotion from within, motivation and support, developmental programmes, communication and mutual respect, showing care and appreciation, and modelling good practices. In order to boost the low morale of the teachers, female principals advocate for promotion of teachers from within the school. This practice is beneficial to the school as such promoted teachers will work harder to realise the goals of the school. The advantage of promoting from within is that the teachers already

know the climate and the culture of the school and it becomes easier for them to execute policies of the school. To further motivate and encourage the teachers, motivational speakers are organised, teambuilding sessions events are held which encourage collaboration and the participants give accolades to deserving teachers to show their appreciation. Where necessary, the female principals give teachers a share in the running of the school where they are allowed to lead committees and report back in staff meetings.

The participants also support the teachers to ensure the teachers have mentors. In supporting the teachers, the participants also attend to the teachers' concerns which is evident of their caring nature. Furthermore, acting in a caring way towards others promotes growth and self-actualisation. This in turn serve as a boost to teacher confidence. Participants strive to have open communication with the teachers to promote human relations that lead to mutual respect. The findings also revealed that when female principals model good practice or behaviour such as being exemplary, the teachers emulate and follow in their footsteps. Being a good role model means exhibiting good behaviour, being hands-on and available so the teachers can always consult the participants if in need of anything that lead to job satisfaction. Modelling good behaviour ensures that the teachers understand the behaviour expected in the school and in the carrying out of their duties. With the female principal as the role model, this filters down to the teachers and the learners and assists in developing a positive school climate.

What is still a matter of concern for many female principals and emerged as a finding, is the issue of ill-disciplined learners and parents who are over-protective of their children and disrespect the teachers, which makes it difficult for the teachers to discipline the learners. This has been the main source of discontent among the teachers and has persuaded many teachers to exit the profession, resulting in female principals being unable to retain their teachers. The participants generally agree that although they are trying to manage and minimise teacher attrition, there are few attrition aspects over which they do not have control, such as death, retirement, transfers, greener pastures, promotion and permanent position. In some instances of attrition, the female principal has no option but to support the teacher's decision to leave the school. Such instances relate to promotion, a permanent position, higher salary package, better working conditions and a position closer to home.

Furthermore, the findings showed that despite the retention obstacles that participants experience, it is their wish to keep the teachers who have a positive attitude, are supportive, committed, determined, hardworking and value the learners. The teachers who are versatile and teaching scarce-skills subjects such as Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Languages are also retained.

Since all the questions have been answered and addressed, I thus conclude that the aim and purpose of this study have been realised.

6.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was grounded on two essential theories which were verified during data collection. These theories are transformational leadership theory and ethics of care theory. These theories were examined to pinpoint their significance to the study. Transformational leadership and ethics of care theories were selected for this study to explore how female principals experience teacher attrition in public schools of Gauteng Province.

According to transformational leadership theory, leaders influence staff members where the leader transforms and motivates the staff members by making them aware of the importance of the task outcomes, encouraging them to exceed their own self-interest for the sake of the organisation and activating their higher order needs (Krishna, 2011:153). The participants who took part in this study are leaders in their various schools and as such, are expected to model the characteristics of transformational leadership that entails motivation, inspiring, stimulating and caring for their staff members. Female principals can make use of the components of transformational leadership to motivate staff members by building the school vision, providing intellectual stimulation, establishing school goals, offering individualised support, modelling best practices and important values, demonstrating high performance expectations, creating a productive school culture and developing a structure to foster participation in decision-making (Bush & Middlewood, 2013:19-20). All the afore-mentioned aspects have the potential of ensuring job satisfaction and thus reducing the rate of teacher attrition. The female principals in this study saw themselves as advocates of transformational leadership where they act as role models, go the extra mile to provide morale support to the teachers who feel

demotivated and want to leave their positions at the school. Transformational leadership was seen to be dominant in the leadership of these female principals. Such leadership is inclusive, participative, democratic, educative and empowering.

Another theory that was deemed relevant for this study is the ethics of care theory. Ethics of care deals with the real interest taken by the educational leader in the well-being of the teachers and learners which manifests in sympathy and commitment (Van der Vyver *et al.*, 2014:62). Data collected in this study found that female principals are very sympathetic, empathetic, compassionate and caring towards the teachers with whom they are working.

Transformational leadership and ethics of care were employed by female principals to build a relationship of trust with their teachers, to nurture, support and to attend to their unique demands.

6.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In this study, the phenomenon under investigation was teacher attrition. The themes obtained from the data played a role in detecting the importance of this study and the contributions it may have on school leadership and the management of teacher attrition in South Africa. These have an influence on the system of education in South Africa. This research is significant in that it builds on previous studies, which examined female principals' experiences in educational leadership.

The research study focused on the views, opinions, perceptions and understanding of female principals' experience with teacher attrition in schools. Even though there have been previous studies on the phenomenon (Farber, 2010; Muteswa and Ortlepp, 2011; Pitsoe and Machaisa, 2012; Pitsoe, 2013; Tshabalala and Ncube, 2014; Mafukata and Mudau, 2016; Oke *et al.*, 2016), these focused on the involvement of the principals in general on teacher attrition and to a minor degree on the experiences of female principals in the schools. Not much attention focused on the female principals' feelings and understanding (experiences) of their involvement in phenomenon at their specific schools. There was a need to tap into the voices of the females since school leadership is a space generally dominated by males. The study was interpretive in nature and focused on the interpretations of the participants, female principals, considered vital for this study.

The outcomes of the research proved that the interviews were of significance in this kind of study because they enabled the participants to voice and reveal their involvement and passion in the phenomenon under investigation. All the participants were fully committed to and involved in their schools and were exceptionally open about what was taking place at their schools, what disturbs them and what they approve of. As a result, the female principals shared with me their accomplishments, concerns regarding their handling of teacher attrition as well as their frustrations of being in a male-dominated space where they are undermined and rejected. The concerns that the female principals presented have the potential to conscientise the authorities of the probable challenges and complications that need attention in the management of teacher attrition in schools.

This study is noteworthy in that it could contribute to narratives that have the potential of providing a better understanding and knowledge of teacher attrition in schools. The study may add value to theory and practice on educational leadership. The study could also contribute towards providing solutions on how to reduce the rate of teacher attrition in schools. The female principals' accounts individually and collectively could potentially contribute to the emerging literature base, which is to understand how female principals experience teacher attrition.

The findings have the potential to contribute to a better understanding of how female principals attend to the issues of teacher attrition and the way in which this is reflected in their behaviour. The findings could also be used by policy makers to create guidelines for all principals on teacher attrition matters and retention, develop teacher attrition and retention strategies within schools and offer recommendations on how to effectively support principals on issues regarding teacher attrition and retention. These developments might have relevance for all principals, both male and female, and possibly for other practitioners in other sectors who could make use of the findings to retain their employees and improve their organisational stability.

The study has the potential to alert society to the status of teacher attrition issues in Gauteng Province. The results of this study also have the potential to add to the growing body of knowledge related to the field of study and in addition, could furthermore stimulate further research in other sectors in the field of labour attrition.

Finally, the study has the potential to help the policy makers use the findings to review and refine existing policies.

6.6 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study are based on the experiences of the female principals on teacher attrition in Gauteng Province. The findings are founded on the responses of the interviews conducted with 14 female principals in the Tshwane West District of Gauteng Province, one of the nine provinces of South Africa. The qualitative research approach used, only represents the views of the participants who were interviewed and observed. The method I used, which is case study, does not allow generalisation of the findings to all female principals though the findings might be useful for females in settings of a similar context.

Collection of data is a process that does not take place without challenges. Things did not go as planned and I encountered challenges when I was collecting data and thus, I regard this as a limitation to the methodology that I used. The problems that I experienced played an important role in the entire research design because they caused a distraction in the data collection process and confused and frustrated me at some point.

Firstly, I was frustrated by being unable to access all the schools that I had selected. I wanted to do my research at 18 schools and thus selected 20 schools. I used the list from the District to select the female principals and found that at one school the female principal had retired in December of the previous year and the present principal was a male. Secondly, two principals declined to participate in the research, citing work pressure as their reason for declining and thus I accepted that it was in their right to refuse taking part in the research study. At two other schools, I was unable to secure an appointment with the female principals since they were sick and hospitalised for the entire time that I collected data. At one school, the female principals agreed to participate but on the five occasions that I managed to secure an appointment, she gave an excuse citing work-related matters. I finally ran out of time as I was only given up to September to collect data. I could not replace the schools nor the participants because of the Department's acknowledgement of the schools which could participate.

It would have been unethical to approach other schools that had not appeared on the agreed-upon list.

Another major challenge was the postponements due to lack of time and tight schedules experienced by the female principals. It was difficult for the female principals to honour appointments because of their workloads which involved a range of principal duties and crises that needed their personal attention. At one school I made five appointments but failed to interview the female principal. On three occasions I went to a school, but when I arrived, I found the female principal busy with other issues such as engagement with the police officers because there had been burglary at the school and thus she could not see me. On the fourth occasion, the female principal was attending a principals' meeting and had forgotten about the appointment. The fifth time she went to Eskom offices to sort out electricity issues. At another school, my appointment was postponed three times; we finally agreed to meet in the late afternoon around 18h00 in the parking lot at one of the malls close to where the female principal lives. We held the interview in the car in the parking lot. Others forgot the appointments or had commitments at the District. Although I always confirmed my appointment a day before by calling the female principals, I was disappointed in not being able to conduct the interviews. On one occasion, when I was five minutes away from the school, the female principal called to inform me that she was to attend a meeting at the District, and that she received a call from one of her colleagues making her aware of the meeting. At another school, I found that they had a serious challenge with learners who were involved with drugs and they had to call ambulances to take the learners to hospital. This was relayed in the morning briefing during observation when the principal informed the staff about the incident.

All of these challenges meant increased trips to the schools which became a financial strain because my visits were to have included interviews as well as observations. The delays also meant that the research extended over a longer period, which meant that more time was taken than was budgeted for as I had to complete the collection of data within a specific period. This process was very frustrating because I had taken leave from work and every time, I failed to collect data it meant that I needed to request permission once again.

Gauteng province has male principals, but this study focused solely on female principals and thus the research sampled 14 female principals who were purposely selected from the rest of the principals. The research focused on how female principals experience teacher attrition in the public schools of the Tshwane West District of Gauteng Province. Only the selected female principals were individually interviewed and observed. Document analysis was also conducted. These data collection tools permitted me to conclude the findings according to the data collected.

Gauteng Province has 15 school districts, but this study only focused on one district, namely the Tshwane West district. I did not include the male principals because I needed to explore the views and opinions of female principals since their views and opinions are lacking in research as they are in the minority in leadership positions.

6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- The Department should provide constant and sustainable support to empower the female principals with the necessary skills to cope in their role of managing teacher attrition.
- The Department should develop strategies to fast-track the replacement of teachers to alleviate the burden that female principals endure during teacher attrition.
- The Department should develop a plan where the teachers can access part of their pension fund at a certain period to alleviate their financial burdens.
- The Department should conduct in-service training or workshops on learner discipline which will assist female principals in dealing effectively with learner disciplinary matters in schools.
- The Department should constantly update the database of unemployed teachers and only keep the CVs of the unemployed teachers.
- The Department should hold regular awareness campaigns regarding Employee Assistance Programme available to help the teachers with their individual problems.

- Female principals should establish woman associations that could serve as support systems for women in leadership positions to assist them in coping more effectively with teacher attrition.
- Female principals should continue to create a school environment that is conducive for teaching and learning by treating all the teachers fairly and equally.
- Female principals should model good practice, so the teachers can follow suit.
- Female principals should encourage collaborative teaching among the teachers to assist one another in ensuring effective teaching and learning.
- Regular and effective communication between the female principals and the teachers should be encouraged.
- Schools should encourage effective partnership between the school and the home to develop a harmonious relationship between the parents and the teachers.

6.8 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There is lack of research on the female principals' experiences of teacher attrition in Gauteng Province because females are in the minority in the school leadership positions in Gauteng Province. It is recommended that more research is needed in this regard thus, I suggest the following as possible areas for future research.

- A comparative study could be conducted to investigate the similarities and differences between how male and female principals in Gauteng experience teacher attrition in schools.
- Conduct a study that consist of a larger sample of female principals in other districts of Gauteng Province, so the findings can be generalised.
- Conduct a study to discover the impact of teacher attrition on female teachers in Gauteng independent schools.
- A repeat of the same study with the female principals and the teachers from other South African provinces.

6.9 CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study was to explore how female principals experience teacher attrition through the study of literature and empirically among selected female principals. This final chapter detailed the main findings and the conclusion of this research study. The reader was reminded of the main research questions and the answers were provided based on the data collected through interviews, observations and document analysis, as interpreted in Chapter Five. The theories that underpinned this inquiry were explained to indicate their relevance to the study. Detailed explanation of the recommendations, limitations and delimitations of the study were provided. Suggestions on further research on teacher attrition in South African schools was presented.

In conclusion, one notes that teacher attrition is not an easy matter to deal with. It is an international phenomenon that is on-going and deeply affects school leadership including delivery of the curriculum due to the added responsibility caused by the teachers who leave their teaching positions. High teacher turnover or attrition rate is seen as a disruption to the teaching and learning process and a key impediment to learner achievement as schools lose experienced teachers who are replaced by inexperienced ones. The study confirms that teacher attrition affects the morale of the teachers who remain behind as well as the female principals due to increase in the workload and overcrowding in classrooms. Learners are negatively affected by teacher attrition because they lose on teaching time while waiting for the replacement teacher. Learners are also affected when a new teacher is hired because they must adjust to the new teacher. Both the new teacher and the remaining teachers are affected where the new teacher is adjusting to the new environment and the remaining teachers also adjusting to incorporating the new teacher in the team, which has the potential to disturb the team spirit that was prevailing before. In the process of the learners and the teachers adjusting, teaching and learning time is lost which affects learner performance.

The study found that the space in which the female principals operate is still male dominated and as such, female principals are undermined and disrespected. As a result, they have to double their efforts to prove their worth. This is due to the misconception that people hold that women cannot be good leaders. The study found

that the female principals regarded this as an advantage in their leadership because they work harder to prove themselves.

The study found that female principals understand that their role in managing teacher attrition is to act as the representative of the Department where they engage in the recruitment process and ensure the process is followed according to the prescriptions provided by the Department. The study also found that the female principals took it upon themselves to ensure the environment in which the teachers work is conducive and safe for both the teachers and the learners for effective teaching and learning to take place without hindrances. The study found that the female principals set the vision of the school which gives direction to the school community.

The study found that the female principals employ practices that are relevant to their unique situations to retain the teachers such as promoting from within in the case of a promotional post, motivating the teachers by offering the incentives such as certificates, acknowledging the teachers' efforts verbally, giving teachers individual support, showing appreciation when teacher do good, showing care by being sympathetic, and communicating openly and effectively, listening to the teachers as well as involving the teachers in decision making processes and applying Ubuntu in dealing with the teachers. Modelling good practices such as being exemplary, hands-on and visible are also strategies used. Organising programmes that empower the teachers such as team building sessions and organising motivational speakers were found to be effective strategies. Retention of teachers is imperative because it promotes consistency and sustainability that schools need for effective teaching and learning to take place to improve learner performance.

The findings revealed that even though teacher attrition is difficult to deal with, the female principals get assistance from the Department via the district HR personnel and the SGBs. The findings showed that the SGBs from schools in the affluent areas help the female principals financially unlike the SGB from the schools in the less affluent rural areas, which an indication that there is inequality in the education system.

The study found that teacher attrition has opportunities such as the creation of employment for the teachers who are unemployed or those employed on contract can get permanent employment which has benefits. Teachers who are employed are offered an opportunity to be promoted when a teacher who is holding a promotional

position, leaves. It becomes an opportune time for the female principal to find a suitable teacher equipped to teach the relevant curriculum.

The study confirms that teacher attrition poses some challenges to the schools in Gauteng Province; however, female principals' application of transformational leadership theory and ethics of care theory in their leadership which offers teachers a democratic voice, teamwork, a working environment conducive to teaching and learning can improve job satisfaction and potentially reduce teacher attrition and improve teacher retention.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2018/03/14

Ref: **2018/03/14/06103049/07/MC**

Name: Mrs MR Mabusela

Student No.: 06103049

Dear Mrs MR Mabusela

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2018/03/14 to 2023/03/14

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs MR Mabusela
E-mail address: mabusmp@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: +27 12 429 4474

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof PR Machaisa
E-mail address: machapr@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 012 429 4560

Title of research:

Female principals' experiences of teacher attrition in Gauteng province

Qualification: PhD Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2018/03/14 to 2023/03/14.

*The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2018/03/14 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



University of South Africa
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www.unisa.ac.za

3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2023/03/14**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2018/03/14/06103049/07/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



Prof AT Motlhabane
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
motlhat@unisa.ac.za



Prof PM Sebate
EXECUTIVE DEAN
Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za



Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

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APPENDIX B: GDE APPROVAL LETTER



GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	09 March 2018
Validity of Research Approval:	05 February 2018 – 28 September 2018 2017/384
Name of Researcher:	Mabusela M.R.
Address of Researcher:	P O BOX 1432 Rosslyn 0200
Telephone Number:	012 549 2494 082 513 8606
Email address:	mabusmp@unisa.ac.za
Research Topic:	Female principals' experiences of teacher attrition in Gauteng Province
Type of Degree:	PhD
Number and type of schools:	Eleven Primary and Nine Secondary Schools
District/s/HO	Tshwane West

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

F. Tshabalala 13/03/2018

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

1

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001

Tel: (011) 355 0488

Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za

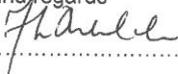
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

Open Rubric

1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
4. A letter / document that outline the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
5. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
6. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
7. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
8. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
9. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
10. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
11. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
12. On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
13. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
14. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards



Ms Faith Tshabalala
CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 13/03/2018

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001

Tel: (011) 355 0488

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APPENDIX C: DISTRICT APPROVAL LETTER



Enq: MK Majola
Tel: 012 725 1373
Ref no: 8/4/4/1/2

To: The Principals
Laerskool Danie Malan, Rosslyn, Thorntree, Gontse,
Meetseng, Tiphuxeni, Ema, Radineo, Edwin Moalusi,
Tidimalong and Mlokotwa-Dube Primary Schools

Amandasig, Letlotlo, Setumo-Khiba, MH Baloyi,
Rethomile, Fusion Secondary Schools, Hoërskool
Elandspoor, Hoërskool Pretoria-Wes and Hoërskool
Langenhoven

From: P Galego (Ms)
District Director

Date: 12th April 2018

Subject: Request to Conduct Research: Mabusela MR

Please note that Mabusela MR has been granted permission by Head Office to conduct research at the above-named schools. The exercise is scheduled for academic year 2018.

The school principals and SGB members are kindly requested to welcome the researcher.

Research Topic: **“Female Principals’ Experiences of Teacher Attrition in Gauteng Province”**

Please ensure that teaching and learning process is not negatively affected.

P Galego (Ms)
District Director
Tshwane West

“Enthusiasm Breeds Success”
Office of the Director – Tshwane West District
(Mabopane, Winterveldt, Ga-Rankuwa, Soshanguve, Kameeldrift, Rosslyn, Akasia, Pretoria North,
Mountain View, Roseville, Capital Park, Hercules, Pretoria West, Lotus Garden)
Private Bag X38, ROSSLYN 0200. Tel (012)725 1300 Fax. (012) 725 1346
Paula.Galego@gauteng.gov.za; Web. www.education.gpg.gov.za

APPENDIX D: LETTER FOR PARTICIPANTS

Enq: Mabusela M.R.

Box 1432

Contact: 082 513 8606

Rosslyn

Email: mmabusela@mweb.co.za

0200

Dear prospective participant

Department of Education

Tshwane West District

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

My name is Mapula Rebecca Mabusela and I am doing research towards my PhD study in the department of Leadership and Management at the University of South Africa. I am inviting you to consider participating in a study entitled: Female principals' experiences of teacher attrition in Gauteng Province. I have purposefully selected your school and identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research study. Your contribution on this research topic has potential to improve practice regarding teacher attrition issues. It also has potential to raise awareness about the status of teacher attrition within South African context.

The research seeks to explore how female principals experience teacher attrition in Tshwane West District, Gauteng Province. I will employ the use of interviews, observation and document analysis for data collection. If you agree to take part, I will interview you for a period of approximately 40-50 minutes. The interviews will take place at your convenient time after school at a mutually agreed upon location. I will tape-record the interview with your permission and you have the right to ask that I turn off the tape at any time. I will then observe you for a day as per arrangement and I will request to do on-site analysis of documents that relate to teacher attrition. Immediately after data transcription, I will provide you with a copy of the transcript for you to affirm the correctness of our conversation and to refine where necessary.

The research project will need you to respond to questions in an open, free, and honest manner. Your identity will remain anonymous. I will keep all the data and tape recordings confidential. I will make the findings and conclusion of the study available at your request.

Your participation in this research is voluntary and I will use the information collected for the research report, journal publication and conference proceedings. You may choose to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

I do not know of any risk or anticipated risk that may occur to you as a participant in this study. There will be no payment or reward provided, financial or otherwise for taking part in this study.

Should you agree to participate in this research study, kindly fill in the attached consent form as evidence of your agreement to take part in this research study.

Thanking you in anticipation of your participation in this study.

Yours faithfully

Mapula Rebecca Mabusela

APPENDIX E: CONSENT LETTER FOR PARTICIPANTS

CONSENT FORM

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.

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 confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print) _____

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print) _____

Researcher's signature

Date

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR FEMALE PRINCIPALS

1. Have you experienced teachers leaving the school ever since you were a principal and if yes how many have left and over what period?
2. What reasons did they give for leaving?
3. What challenges did this pose to you as the principal?
4. What effect did it have on the school as a whole?
5. How did you deal with the challenges brought by the teachers who left the school?
6. Is teacher attrition a problem at your school? In which grade, phase or subject areas is the problem worse?
7. What challenges do you experience with teachers who remain at the school?
8. What does the department of education do to assist you with the challenges of teacher attrition?
9. What is your opinion about this support?
10. What do you understand by the term leadership?
11. How do you perceive yourself as a leader?
12. How does your gender influence how you perform your leadership role?
13. How can you define your leadership style?
14. What is your main challenge as a female principal with regard to teacher attrition?
15. What do you think your teachers appreciate about you?
16. Are there any national, provincial and district initiatives aimed at retaining teachers?
17. What is your view about these initiatives?

18. Describe practices that you perform that you believe result in teacher retention.
19. Do you target your retention effort towards certain teachers? Which teachers? In which way do you target these efforts?
20. What are the obstacles if any, that prevents you from retaining teachers at your school?
21. What advice would you give to other principals who are trying to improve teacher retention?
22. What do you see as the primary role of the principal in handling teacher attrition?
23. What mechanisms can be put in place to avoid the situation where teachers will leave their job?
24. Is there anything else you want to share about teacher attrition?

APPENDIX G: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Observation pointers	Descriptive notes	Reflective notes
Date		
Time		
Place		
Observer		
Participant		
Physical setting		
Activities		
Participant interaction with teachers		
Conversations		

Source: Creswell 2016

APPENDIX H: EDITOR'S LETTER

To whom it may concern

This letter serves to confirm that editing and proofreading was done for:

Mapula Rebecca Mabusela

Educational Management and Leadership

College of Education

University of South Africa

Doctoral Thesis:

Female Principals' Experiences of Teacher Attrition in Gauteng Province



Cilla Dowse
06 May 2021

Cilla Dowse
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