THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS WITH FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN EKURHULENI SOUTH

DISTRICT, GAUTENG

by

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Dissertation

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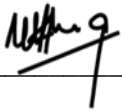
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University of South Africa

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JANUARY 2022

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DECLARATION

Student number: 51426358

I declare that the title, *The experiences of teachers with female leadership in Ekurhuleni South District*, is my original work. Where someone else's work was used (whether from a printed source, the internet or any other source), credit was given and references were made in accordance with departmental guidelines.

_____   Date: 29/12/2022

Signature

Miss N.H Mngadi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This study focused on teachers' experiences with female school leaders; the challenges these leaders are facing in leadership positions, as they need to effectively manage their schools; as well as the possible solutions to these challenges. Three schools in Gauteng's Ekurhuleni South District were purposefully chosen as research sites. Participants the female principal's, deputies, HODs and teachers. Data was gathered through individual interviews with all participants. According to the findings, the main challenges that female leaders face in managing their schools, are a lack of confidence in female leadership due to gender discrimination, a lack of support, favouritism, balancing work and home, and unfair procedures and labour practices with regards to the promotion of women. Possible strategies to minimise these challenges include the fostering of a positive attitude toward female leadership, a strong support system, empowering female leaders, and efforts to build good relationships with all stakeholders.

Women principals discussed their strengths and challenges in context of their daily work experiences. The study discovered that women are their own motivators, which is a powerful enhancer.

The overall findings of the study revealed that male and female teachers prefer female leadership, that they are aware of what their roles entail as set out in the PAM document, female leaders adopt democratic and parcticipative leadership styles in the corporate world

KEY TERMS: Leadership, Feminism, Experiences, Discrimination, Curriculum, assault, Harassment, Feminist theory, Favouritism, Promote.

ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

B.Ed.   Bachelor of Education

DoE   Department of Education

GDE   Gauteng Department of Education

HOD   Head of Department

LTSM   Learning and Teaching Support Material

SBST   School-based Support Teams

MEd   Master's in Education

PL1   Post Level One

PAM   Personnel Administrative Measures

SCHP   School Principal

SCHT   School Teacher

Leadership: The ability of an individual or a group of individuals to influence and guide followers or other members of an organisation.

Female leadership: Relating to leadership that is led by women; often associated with the occupation of leadership positions by a female person in society.

Experiences: The lived events one has gone through and experienced first-hand.

Principal: The head of a primary or secondary school, who is responsible for overseeing the pedagogical and administrative tasks within a school setting.

Teacher: A teacher is a person, who provides education for people; one who teaches or instructs

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Education is believed to be one of the programs that can prepare and guide the direction of human development in the future (Riski et al., 2021). Education in the concept of community development is an impact on civilized human development. Education is also not limited to just passing on knowledge (Kadarsih, et al., 2020). School as an educational unit that organizes the learning process for students. Article 12(1) of Government Decree No. 28 of 1990 on Primary Schools states: The school head is responsible for the implementation of educational activities, school administration, the development of other educational staff, and the use and maintenance of facilities and infrastructure. The school principal is one of the components of education that plays the greatest role in improving the quality of education.

Worldwide, women from different backgrounds have been treated inferior to men in terms of leadership Heilman, M. E., Block, C. J., Martell, R. F., & Simon, M. C. (1989). The traditional gender roles of male and female dictate how society perceives women and men in relation to leadership (Robinson, 2015).Pedwell and Whitehead (2012) contented that in most professions, women are overlooked in leadership positions. The field of education is no different, as men occupy most leadership positions, in contrast to their female counterparts (Davids, 2018; Rouleau-Carroll, 2014).

 Of course, the principle applies in general, both to men and women, because the personal characteristics of a person cannot be classified according to their gender alone. Meanwhile, when women are given the opportunity to hold leadership positions, particularly school principals, a thousand kinds of sad assumptions about the quality of their leadership role surface. Starting from the ingrained paradigm that women are weak beings, especially in decision-making, to the problem of fundamental character, which is the main content of women's declarations to show quality and make a career. The bureaucratic culture still puts women in a disadvantaged position, especially in educational decision-making (Kurniawati, e, al., 2020).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite being the majority in the teaching profession, female teachers are still underrepresented in leadership roles (Davids, 2018; Makatu 2013). The appointment of leaders have been tainted with discrimination, and so harmed the careers of female teachers, as they were denied access to leadership positions. This was in contrast to gender equality rights, which state that males and females should be treated equally (Bruyn & Mestry, 2020). The purpose of this study is to review the existing literature on the way women lead in organizations, with a focus on the area in education. A secondary objective is to identify implications of the literature for leadership and gender issues in the world of education.

In order to gain insight into this a qualitative study exploring the experiences of teachers with female leadership in Gauteng schools, with a focus on three Ekurhuleni South District schools, was crucial.

1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The study was of personal interest to the researcher, who, as a female teacher, had also experienced marginalisation in the workplace, based on her gender. Having seen this problem first-hand, the researcher, in hope of inspiring change, considered it essential to conduct scientific research about teachers experience with female leadership in education sector.

This study will be beneficial to different stakeholders in educational leadership, such as policymakers and female educators. The findings from this study could possibly inform policymakers on what changes are essential to implement gender equality in leadership roles within the education sector. Female teachers indirectly stand to benefit from this study, as potential policy changes could advocate for their rights as leaders within the education sector.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question is: What are the experiences of teachers with female leadership in Ekurhuleni South District?

In order to answer this question, the researcher explored the following questions:

I.   How does leadership impact teacher motivation and job satisfaction?

II.   What are the perception of teachers towards different types of leadership?

III.   What are the most effective ways to incorporate teacher input into decision-making process under different leadership styles?

IV.   How can a positive attitude towards female leaders be created?

1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this research was to gain in-depth knowledge, based on the experiences of teachers with female leadership in Gauteng as well as to examine the impact of female leadership on the performance and effectiveness of educational institutions, with a focus on Ekurhuleni South District.

The supporting objectives are:

i.   To establish the experiences of teachers towards female leaders.

ii.   To identify the challenges and opportunities that teachers face with female leadership.

iii.   To establish the coping mechanisms that female leaders use to overcome the challenges that they face.

iv.   To establish a positive attitude towards female leaders.

1.6 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Female leadership: Relating to leadership that is led by women and often associated with the occupation of leadership positions by a female person in society (Bruyn & Mestry, 2020).

Experiences: The lived events one has gone through and experienced first-hand (Davids, 2018).

Principal: The head of a primary or secondary school, responsible for overseeing the pedagogical and administrative tasks within a school setting (DoE, 2002).

Teachers: A teacher is a person, who provides education for people; one who teaches or instructs.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.7.1 The feminist theory

This study would be informed by the feminist theory, which explains the power relations between men and women in society, and also advocates for the rights of women. Feminism is one of the most complex ideologies in the field of gender studies, resulting in various viewpoints by different academics and writers.

According to Pedwell and Whitehead (2012), feminism is a theoretical philosophy that describes efforts and attempts to achieve gender equality. Robinson (2015) explained it as a general ideology that encompasses a number of concepts aimed at balancing the rights of men and women. Feminism was also defined by the values and complaints that advocate for women's rights in different areas of life (Robinson, 2015). It has become synonymous with women's struggle for independence and equality, according to Robinson (2015), since most cultures were organised around the patriarchal system.

Feminism assumes that no woman was oppressed solely because of her gender (Robinson, 2015). Women were often subjected to various types of oppression and injustices that violated their human rights. These forms of social, political and economic injustices had been at the heart of feminists' struggle to end the oppression of women, in order for them to enjoy the same freedoms as men.

In this study, this theory would be used to view and analyse the position of female leaders in the education sector and to investigate how the concept of gender influenced how others view them in these roles. The feminism theory would be used to explain the obstacles that female teachers and principals faced based on their gender.

The feminism theory was also influenced by the principles of transformational leadership, which contends that leadership should not be transactional for imminent outcomes, but should rather focus on establishing long-lasting, mutually beneficial relationships between followers and leaders (Goethals &, Goyt 2016).

For the past 20 years, transformational leadership had been linked to group effectiveness, organisational innovation, empowerment, and the accomplishment of organisational results (Goethals & Goyt 2016). This had placed focus on the theory as an emerging approach to organisational leadership.

Research showed that most female leaders are transformational leaders, as they encourage and empower their followers should holistically aspire to more in their lives. Female leaders are also known for considering the welfare of others, as well as the factors that impact the overall well-being of their subordinates (Wakefield, 2017). Such studies paved the way to associate transformational leadership with female leadership, for studies such as this one.

According to Wakefield (2017), studies that examine leadership complexity in contexts of organisations, as well as the types of leadership that were required, would benefit from including gender – specific and power interrogations as part of their analysis.

In this study, the feminist theory of transformational leadership would be used to explore the experiences of female principals in Gauteng schools, with a focus on the Ekurhuleni South District, and how these principals were impacted by the perceptions of female leadership.

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.8.1 Introduction

A literature review was undertaken in order to evaluate known facts and to identify the perceptions and attitudes of teachers towards female leaders in the educational sector, as well as to examine the impact of female leadership on the performance and effectiveness of educational institutions in this study. The review established an understanding about the general position of women in society, the relationship between gender and leadership, followed by perspectives on female leadership in education, and the challenges that female principals encounter which are different from what their male counterparts have to endure.

1.8.2 Women in society

The position of women in society was influenced by societal values, which had largely limited them to domestic roles not associated with leadership positions (Robinson, 2015). According to Elisha (2012),

societal systems, such as the patriarchal system, had often not only oppressed women and girls, but also exalted their male counterparts, by offering them opportunities to lead. This created gender stereotypes that concluded that women were incapable of leading. Society has been led to accept males as leaders, and females as followers. Therefore, when a female aspired to lead, she was met with ridicule and resistance (Hilal, 2015).

These traditional values endured the test of time and continue to manifest itself in different areas of life. Therefore, in terms of leadership, gender stereotypes had proven to be a barrier to the attainment of leadership positions by women (Robinson, 2015).

1.8.3 Gender and leadership

Originally, the role of gender in leadership was largely intended to strike a balance between female and male leadership. Leadership was not limited to one gender, as both men and women were seen as capable of leading. It could, therefore, be deduced that the undermining of women in leadership positions had nothing to do with their ability, but was rather due to social stereotypes (Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Morley & Crossouard, 2016a; Morley & Crossouard, 2016b; Shava & Ndebele, 2014).

However, the issue of gender has taken centre-stage, as it is clear that men occupy positions of leadership more often than women. The oppression of women, by restricting them from attaining leadership positions, was largely attributed to the societal setup which entrusts women with domestic care and men with leadership positions (Diko, 2014; Madsen, Ngunjiri, Longman, & Cherrey, 2015; Ndebele, 2018)

1.9 FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

1.9.1 Access

Accessing and attaining leadership positions have been some of the most challenging aspects for female leaders within the education sector. Davids (2018) explained that female teachers had to seek approval and recommendations from their male counterparts in order for them to attain leadership positions.

For women who wanted to become leaders, the process of getting to the top was daunting and filled with disappointment, since the authorities and bodies who appoint leaders largely comprised of men.

According to Lumby and Azaola (2014), for women to even be considered for leadership positions, they needed to demonstrate competence beyond the required standards.

The pressure on women to meet higher standards than their male counterparts, in order to even be considered for leadership positions, was touted as one of the factors that discouraged aspiring female teachers in Nigeria, from pursuing leadership roles (Aladejana & Aladejana, 2005).

1.9.2 Underrepresentation

As a collective, women are in the majority in the South African education sector. However, in terms of leadership, women are underrepresented, with only 36% of female teachers being principals. This was despite the number of female teachers being 68% overall (Davids, 2018).

The lack of women in leadership and managerial roles causes further marginalisation of female teachers. In cases where male principals are in control, the enhancement of female teachers are likely to be impeded, as most male principals are oblivious to the challenges that their female colleagues encounter (Moorosi, 2010).

One could therefore conclude that unless the number of men and women at the managerial level are balanced, inequality in the profession is highly likely to remain. If more women attain leadership positions, it will not only inspire others, but the better the chances are that these female leaders would also consider fellow female teachers for leadership positions (Burton & Weiner, 2016; Gobena, 2014; Lunyolo, Ayodo, Tikoko & Simatwa, 2014).

1.9.3 Lack of role models and encouragement

The lack of inspiring role models to look up to has been accepted as another reason why female teachers did not aspire to become leaders (Murakami & Törnsen, 2017; Mollel & Tshabanngu, 2004). Their contentment with non-leadership positions was akin, and sometimes attributed, to the traditional roles reserved for women in society.

Ng'ambi (2015) found that, among male teachers, the hunger to succeed was largely propelled by male principals who served as role models to them. On the other hand, female teachers did not match such

desire to attain a position in leadership, because they perceived the journey to become a principal as tough and impossible for a woman.

It could therefore be deduced that by their own lack of ambition and aspiration women placed themselves in a position where they could not attain leadership positions. Due to underrepresentation, women faced a huge challenge in inspiring each other, and most female teachers under male principals lack the motivation to attain leadership positions.

1.9.4 Life and work balance

Another study also discovered that women who attain leadership positions struggled to strike a balance between leading and caring for their families. In the study by Davids (2018), it was discovered that female principals felt a sense of guilt for neglecting their families, that this is inner conflict could have a negative impact on their performance as principals.

Robinson (2015) stressed the pressures that females have to endure. Unlike their male counterparts, they are expected by society to carry out family and domestic duties in tandem with their leadership duties. The fact that women were still considered as the sole designated caregivers at home, made it difficult for them to balance their work and home life (Murakami & Törnsen, 2017). In such a case, the playing fields for female and male teachers would definitely not be considered as leveled. Women have a greater disadvantage, as they bear an extra burden, while men, as expected in a patriarchal system, are not expected to carry a big burden.

1.10 Summary of the chapter

This review investigated issues with regards to female leadership in the education sector. The reviewed study pointed to the fact that women, in general, face difficulties stemming from stereotypes rooted in traditional gender roles. Women in the education sector faced similar challenges in attempting to attain leadership positions. The nature of the organisation also played a part in hindering female teachers to become principals or deputy principals. In broad terms, female teachers still suffer from negative perceptions attached to female leadership, which then limit their careers, by them never attaining a higher position than mere teacher, in contrast to their male counterparts. In order for significant change

to take place, there was a need to study the experiences of female leaders. Valuable input and recommendations, to ultimately affect change, can be obtained from those who succeeded, regardless of the challenges they had to endure.

Education, as a societal product, is dynamic. Changes is inevitable. Women should pursue their emancipation, and men should, for the sake of societal progress, rationally continue to support them, and so ensure that leaders are objectively appointed, based on competence instead of gender.

1.11 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

1.11.1 Interpretive Paradigm

The interpretive paradigm believes on the deep understanding of a concept and explores the understanding of the world in which they live. As the interpretive paradigm is founded on the assumption that people's perceptions, ideas, thinking, and the meaning that are significant to them can be understood through researching their cultures (Boas, 1995), therefore the methods used to comprehend human and social sciences cannot be compared to those used in physical sciences, because humans translate their surroundings and behave on that interpretation (Hammersely, 2013:26).

One of the advantages of this paradigm is that interpretativist scholars can use their different perspective on phenomena to not only describe objects, people, or events, but also to understand them in their sociocultural context because they believe they are common in their society. In addition, researchers can examine participants' thoughts, values, prejudices, perceptions, perspectives, emotions, and perspective using the key approach of interactive interviewing, which allows the researchers to analyse and balance things that we cannot observe (Wellington &Szczerbinski, 2007).

1.11.2 Research approach

This study would be explorative in nature; guided by an interpretive paradigm that focuses on recognising and narrating the meaning of individual experiences and actions (Fossey et al., 2002), and would adopt a qualitative approach. Exploratory research differs from descriptive and explanatory research in that it seeks to fully comprehend researched issues. Exploratory analysis entails probing

an issue for unknown information, in order to uncover variables that could then be investigated further (Salkind, 2018). Both primary and secondary data sources will be consulted and used.

A qualitative approach was suitable for this study, because the researcher aimed to identify the perceptions and attitudes of teachers towards female principals received from various stakeholders in the school environment. The purpose of the study was to correlate the narratives of the experiences of teachers with female leadership.

1.11.3 Research Design

The research design is a contribution-oriented and captures the communication and collaboration of researchers and participants as contributors to data and knowledge production Preece, J (2016). There is an explicit critical reflexivity within the research design, as such data collection and analysis required careful consideration. This research design was chosen because the research question is central and ties all components together, which Maxwell (2009) argues allows you to answer your research questions and also deal with plausible threats to those answers (p 217).

1.11.4 Population and sampling

In science, the population was described by Salkind (2018) as the total number of entities that a researcher is interested in studying. The author went on to say that members of a group must share certain distinguishable characteristics that, thus, justify categorisation.

The target population for this study would be all the female principals, of the three schools of Ekurhuleni South District as part of this study. The accessible population to the researcher was the female principals, deputies, HODs, male and female teachers.

 Purposive sampling is known as a selective or subjective sampling of individuals that were knowledgeable about their experiences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The findings of such a survey could be extrapolated to the population from which it was drawn. Non-random sampling, on the other end, requires the researcher's discretion in selecting a sample based on many variables. In this case, if any objects in the population did not fit into the researcher's design, they would not be chosen.

The term 'convenient sampling' refers to the practice of selecting samples based on their proximity to the researcher. In this study, the chosen sample, the female principals, was located near the researcher's workplace, making it easier for her to obtain access to the sample and collected data.

1.11.5 Instrumentation and data collection techniques

Primary data for this research was obtained from discussions and face-to-face interviews as tools for collecting data, in order to gain insight into how different organisational cultures impacted female leadership.

The face-to-face interviews involved a process where the researcher sat down with the participants – the informants in the study – asking them questions, which they then answered with explanations. Face-to-face interviews are ideal, because they are time conscious and enable the researcher to probe the participant to elaborate on a topic (Du Plooy, 2014).

The interviewer used open-ended questions, which were aimed to solicit detailed responses from the participants. An interview guide was used, but follow-up questions were also employed where necessary. The interviews were scheduled to take place on the school premises where the participants were female principals and female deputy-principals, female HODs and male and female teachers. These interviews were scheduled to last 45 minutes each, and was audio-recorded with an electronic recorder with the permission of the participants.

1.11.6 Data analysis and interpretation

This study used thematic analysis as the process of analysing the collected data. Thematic analysis is a method of extracting the most important data from a set of data, by identifying themes (Braun and Clarke, 2019). This method of research had been praised as an approach that is both open and technically versatile.

Thematic analysis assists in understanding data by, highlighting the most important topics. However, by solely focusing on themes, other emerging thematic areas in the data may be overlooked.

Researchers often use this method to study interview transcripts many in order to find common patterns. Even if these patterns did not appear in several sources, themes were valued, based on the meanings attached to them by the participants (Braun, 2006).

The data would be reviewed by reading it over and over, to identify the actual meanings conveyed by the responses. The data was categorised into themes and analysed against the research background and objectives.

The collected data, in the form of recorded audio from interviews, was then transcribed verbatim onto the Microsoft Word processing software for thorough analysis, narrative analysis and conversational analysis.

1.12 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE FINDINGS

The researcher employed data triangulation, which was described by Leedy and Ormrod (2015), as the process of collecting data by using two different methods in order to achieve consistency in responses through, different investigation methods. Discussions, interviews, and conversational analysis were alternatively used throughout this research.

The researcher' prolonged engagement with the researched participants, ensured that she is connected with them in such a way that enable her to obtain the most accurate data from their participation.

In addition to that, the researcher refrained from using leading questions and techniques during the data-collection period. This was to ensure that the responses from the participants were not influenced in any way.

The report provided extensive background information and data about the analysis process, in a transparent and frank manner; enabling any interested parties to examine it.

1.13 RESEARCH ETHICS

The researcher sought permission from the College of Education Research Ethics Committee to perform the proposed study under my supervisor supervision as required by UNISA regulations for research

involving human subjects. In addition to the above requirement, the researcher observed the following research ethics guidelines:

The researcher followed the informed-consent principle, which requires participants in research studies to sign a consent form, stating that they were participating in the study voluntarily, without being compelled or coerced, after being informed of the nature and consequences of participating (De Vos et al., 2017).

According to the 'no-harm' rule, researchers ensure that no harm comes to the participants in the study (Salkind 2018). In this context, Leedy and Ormrod (2015) define 'harm' as any adverse event that may have an effect on the participants' well-being. The researcher made certain that none of the study's participants were harmed in any way. This could be accomplished by adhering to appropriate research protocols, protecting their identity, and maintaining the confidentiality of the information. In accordance with the 'no-harm' principle, the researcher used pseudonyms to protect any research-related information.

The principles of anonymity and confidentiality were followed in order to protect participants from being harmed, while still respecting their right to privacy (Salkind 2018). According to Salkind (2018), unless the participants gave consent, their identities should be kept confidential, and any indications that could lead to their identification must be avoided.

According to the honesty and integrity principle, researchers must be fair, unbiased, and honest in their studies, regardless of their personal viewpoints (De Vos et al., 2017). The analysis would also be conducted without bias or any manipulation of procedures or data by the researcher. Regardless of the reality discovered during the research process, the researcher aimed to publish the results of the study with integrity.

The following departments and persons were contacted to consent to the research:

- College of Education Research Ethics Committee (UNISA)
- Gauteng Department of Education - Permission to do research in schools

- Office of the District Director: Ekurhuleni South

- School Principals – Request permission to do research in schools and conduct interviews with them.

1.14 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The first limitation relates to the research sample. Due to communication issues and no response from the principal, the researcher had to cancel all the interviews to be conducted at school number 4. At school number 3, only 4 participants were interviewed, and the researcher could not interview the deputy due to her busy schedule.

The second limitation is related to methodology, as time constraints would not allow for an inquiry that was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. It is believed by the researcher that such a study would reveal a true picture of how female leadership is viewed in schools.

Furthermore, the study was limited in the sense that it only covered a limited geographical area. If time and resources were readily available, a nationwide study on the topic would had revealed an overall picture of the situation on the ground. Despite all these limitations, the researcher is optimistic that the study was conducted professionally and in line with required standards.

1.15 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter One: Introduction and background to the study.

An overall layout provided the background of the study, the problem statement, the objectives of the study, and the rationale for the study.

Chapter Two: Literature review

A review of previous literature – both seminal and relevant recent publications. Conceptual, theoretical, and empirical evaluation of known information on the topic, with the aim of placing the study within the larger knowledge base, and identifying research gaps that can be explored in the study.

Chapter Three: Research design and methodology.

A provision of research methods to be used in the study. Selected methods are explained and justified for their usage in the study.

Chapter Four: Discussion and interpretation of findings

A discussion of the findings from the observations and interviews.

Chapter Five: Recommendations and conclusion.

Recommendations based on the researcher's findings are given in addition to an overall conclusion on the study.

1.16 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter laid the foundation for a study regarding the experiences of female principals on perceptions of female leadership. The study is based on the premise that female leadership is undermined, and women are underrepresented in leadership positions within the education sector. Female school principals face numerous challenges in managing their schools on a daily basis. Many attempts have been made to educate society on gender issues and the fact that there is no difference between men and women in terms of leadership abilities. Some socio-cultural stereotypes, however, continue to hold that women cannot lead schools as competently as men.

A qualitative approach was utilised, and data was collected by means of face-to-face interviews with two female principals and deputies, HODs, and teachers from schools in Johannesburg in the Gauteng Department of Education. A thematic analysis was chosen as a way of analysing the data. It was anticipated that findings from this study could aid in improving the leadership roles and positions of women in the South African education sector, and that it would also contribute to the existing body of knowledge regarding female leadership.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A literature review is conducted to evaluate known facts about a phenomenon and identify knowledge gaps to be further explored in future studies. In this review, a discussion on female leadership, which highlights issues surrounding gender and leadership in the education sector, is provided. The review discusses the general position of women in society, the relationship between gender and leadership, followed by perspectives on female leadership in education, and the challenges that female principals encounter which are different from what their male counterparts endure. According to Creswell (2008), a literature review allows a researcher to reveal the focus of the topic, based on what has been researched already.

Women have been marginalised, both in the workplace and in society at large, since the inception of records (Lopez & Rugano, 2018). Kallie (2015) stated that mistaken and biased traditional stereotypes place men above women in different areas of life, including leadership. As a result, very few women have managed to attain leadership positions in comparison to their male counterparts. Khumalo (2021) contended that the position is not any different in the field of education, with so many men occupying leadership positions at the expense of women. In this literature review, the researcher will expand on the literature on female leadership in the South African education system, particularly on the position of the principal, the highest position in schools. The review begins by expanding on the concept of female leadership and views of various authors on the topic. The second chapter looks at female leaders in education and their challenges with representation. The overall challenges that the selected few female leaders face are highlighted in the subsequent section. Previous literature on female leadership in education is also briefly discussed, before the researcher elaborates on the theoretical framework that will be utilised in the study.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 The feminist theory

This research will be influenced by the feminist theory, which explains the power dynamics between men and women in society and advocates for women's rights. Being a feminist simply means that one believes in equal rights for all genders. It is not about hating men. It is not about women being better than men. It is not about eschewing femininity. It is about respecting diverse women's experiences, identities, knowledge and strengths, and striving to empower all women to realise their rights and full potential.

Feminism is one of the most difficult ideologies in the field of gender studies to define, resulting in various interpretations by academics and writers. Pedwell and Whitehead (2012) defined feminism as a theoretical philosophy that describes efforts and attempts to achieve gender equality. According to Robinson (2015), feminism is a broad ideology that encompasses a variety of concepts aimed at balancing the rights of men and women. The feminist theory then aims to impact structures, systems, and beliefs; challenging traditional ontological and epistemological assumptions about human nature, including gender roles (Wakefield, 2017). Some of these assumptions are that males are superior to females and that a woman's role is to simply bear and raise children (Shaked et al., 2018). However, over the years, this has evolved, as women have and are still fighting for more opportunities in different fields of the marketplace. While some have managed to attain leadership roles in their organisations, they have also experienced challenges in leadership because of their gender.

Different feminist-theory models can be found in literature. The focus of feminist theories is the fundamental concern that women are oppressed, and that they are continually treated unequally to their male counterparts. What can be regarded as feminist theory is highly contested, according to Radtke (2017), and should be reviewed within the constraints of the current socio-historical contexts. This implies that the feminist theory is reliant on the contestation of social values about gender in all settings of human endeavour (Ahmed, 2000). The feminist theory relates to how women and girls are marginalised by their gender, and to ways to eliminate such marginalisation (Radtke, 2017).

Feminism is also characterised by the ideals and movements that promote women's rights in several fields (Robinson, 2015). Since most societies are organised around the patriarchal system, feminism has become synonymous with women's battle for independence and equality (Robinson 2015). Women are frequently subjected to many forms of oppression and injustice, all of which are violations of their human rights. These types of social, political, and economic inequalities have been at the centre of feminists' fight to abolish the oppression of women and to afford them the same rights as men.

2.2.2 Assumptions about the feminist theory

There is currently four recognised perspectives within the feminist theory – the liberal method, also known as equality feminism; difference feminism; co-constructionism; and sex and gender analysis (Schiebinger & Schraudner, 2011). The liberal feminism strategy focuses on achieving a power balance between men and women in society. The publication of Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman in 1792*, epitomised this approach. She criticised most of the treatment that women were receiving and pushed for better and equitable treatment based on gender equality (Mills & Mullany, 2011). This viewpoint asserts that men and women are equals and should be treated as such in all aspects of life.

The differences between men and women are the focus of the difference approach. This method focuses on how society assigns femininity and masculinity, as well as what constitutes masculinity and femininity (Davis & Brown, 2017). The goal of this method is to redefine what it means to be a man or a woman outside of patriarchal and traditional boundaries. According to Schiebinger and Schraudner (2011), traditional gender definitions are stereotypical, hence, this strategy focuses on attempting to modify some of the gender stereotypes. Traditional gender stereotypes about men and women's roles are just a few of the issues that this method attempts to address.

The feminist concept of co-constructionism is concerned with the simultaneous development of multiple identities (Blackmore & Kenway, 2017). It contains characteristics of third genders' modernity, as well as other recently discovered notions that may distinguish females from males in

society. One of its key aims is to emphasise that gender roles and identities are not innate and may be co-constructed based on society's knowledge and needs (Yates, 2017).

The gender-analysis approach has its origins in attempting to comprehend various discourses via the lens of gender. This method entails a gender and sex critical investigation of numerous aspects of life, in order to discover areas in which women's equality and empowerment might be improved (Schiebinger & Schraudner, 2011).

Feminism assumes that women are not only oppressed because of their gender (Robinson, 2015). Women are frequently subjected to various forms of discrimination and injustices that violate their human rights. Social, political, and economic inequalities have been at the heart of feminism's campaign to end women's oppression, in order for them to enjoy the same privileges as men (Schiebinger & Schraudner, 2011). Feminism also assumes that people of both sexes should be treated equally, without gender-based discrimination (Davis & Brown, 2017). This notion is based on equality, which assumes that everyone in society, regardless of gender, has the right to equal treatment and opportunities.

As per Pedwell and Whitehead (2012), feminism also advocates for change in the political, economic, and other spheres of life. Feminists argue that people should be critical of society's current state and should work to restructure it to accommodate equality between men and women in order to ultimately achieve gender equality (Mills & Mullany, 2011). According to Mills and Mullany (2011), most societies continue to have an unequal power structure, in which men have more power than women in various spheres of life. This ensures that females are continually overlooked in positions of leadership, and that resource distribution continue to favour men over women.

The status of women in patriarchal societies is called into question, as is the representation of women in higher positions, such as politics. According to Yates (2017), there is a tendency to romanticise the representation of women at the decision-making level, when in reality, women are not given the opportunity to express themselves and make important decisions in society.

2.2.3 Application of the theory to the study

Feminism is used to critique the systems which oppress women, and advocate for equality in the various facets within education systems (Davis & Brown, 2017). According to Blackmore and Kenway (2017), feminism aims to identify and address Gender inequality in administrative areas of academia, in order to allow the participation of both genders on a level playing field. It also questions the role of gender in educational leadership in order to rectify all traditionally instituted notions based on gendered biases (Yates, 2017).

In the same line, feminism will guide the critique of the experiences that female principals face. The feminism theories will be used to evaluate societal values and perceptions towards female principals. These theories will also serve as a benchmark when interpreting the findings of the study.

2.3 FEMALE LEADERSHIP

Traditional gender norms stereotypically regard women inferior to men, as men are considered heads of the household and women as mere housekeepers, incapable of making important decisions (Murakami & Törnsen, 2017). Kallie (2015) added that these notions which stem from patriarchal systems impact how women are viewed when being considered for leadership positions. Despite women proving to be as capable as men in practice, society has so far demonstrated that it is not yet ready to accept female leaders in general (Bruyn & Mestry, 2020).

According to Lopez and Rugano (2018), the lack of representation by women in top positions, is another example of unfair bias against women regarding leadership. In both developed and developing countries, the representation of women faces large stumbling blocks in political, as well as corporate leadership. As per Lomotey (2019), only a handful of women have managed to attain leadership positions and, in most cases, such women also have a male superior to whom they report. At the top level, only a few women have managed to become heads of state, as political positions are dominated by males. Apart from political elected positions, the corporate world has seen even less renowned female leaders in comparison to men. The lack of representation in top positions means that only a few women can take part in changing policy to the benefit of other women (Schmidt & Mestry, 2015).

In addition to that, the few leaders who attain leadership positions face a different host of challenges, which is not the case for their male counterparts (Lomotey, 2019). Resistance to female leadership is common practice, as female leaders are often not entirely accepted (Oyeniran & Anchomese, 2018). Themane, Mabasa and Mathedimosa (2017) added that female leaders also have to advocate for themselves and that they have to jump through hoops to attain and retain their positions, in contrast to what is expected of male leaders.

2.4 FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

The education sector worldwide has been met with similar gender notions of leadership where more men have taken up the role of leadership than women (Lomotey, 2019). Despite the liberation of the academia, women have not taken large strides to occupy top leadership positions. Education systems around the world, including South Africa, have failed to actively advocate for the welfare of female leaders in these systems (Sinyosi & Potokri, 2021).

In a traditional setting, the most basic leadership position in education is the head of the school, who is in some contexts referred to as the principal (Ng'ambi, 2015). The principal is responsible for different areas associated with running a school in the short term and the long term (Ng'ambi, 2015). Principals oversee the learning and teaching processes, set direction for their schools, and ensure credibility and accountability, among other things (Sinyosi & Potokri, 2021). In addition to that, a principal is supposed to be a leader who motivates himself/herself and inspire others (Bruyn & Mestry, 2020). This means that a principal needs to be someone that both teachers and students look up to.

In South Africa, despite a large fraction of teachers being females, only around 36%of principals are females (Themane et al., 2017). This situation ironically confirms how women are considered when it comes to leadership. Most female teachers are not promoted by the administration, which largely comprises of male figures at the helm; making it very difficult to progress (Davids, 2018). This situation can be attributed to the gender imbalance at the top administration and managerial levels where the majority of officials are males.

However, studies have shown that female principals lead with passion and consideration for others. Unlike male principals, female principals lead by example, and connect with their teachers on a personal level; thereby bringing out the best in them (Schmidt & Mestry, 2015). The motherly type of leadership demonstrated by female principals, recorded in Lumby and Azaola (2014), is characterised by gentle guidance and opportunities for second chances, in order to achieve the set goals. This form of leadership boosts the confidence of subordinates and inspires them.

Female principals are also reported to have better social skills than male principals. This enables them to create productive relationships in the workplace, which can eventually lead to excellent collaboration opportunities and optimum performance in the workplace. Sinyosi & Potokri (2021) explains that female principals aim to transform their juniors through transformational leadership, by equipping them with knowledge and skills to perform independently in the long run. In the end, the leadership of female principals is uplifting and empowering to those who work with them (Oyeniran & Anchomese, 2018).

Despite that, the few selected female leaders in education, such as those occupying principal positions, face a mountain of challenges which are peculiar to their gender (Khumalo, 2021). These challenges make it difficult for female leaders to be successful and fall short of inspiring other women to lead (Lomotey, 2019). In the following section, some of the challenges that female principals encounter are discussed.

2.5 FEMALE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES IN EDUCATION

2.5.1 Underrepresentation

It is an evident from the literature, that advanced countries such as UK, USA and Australia are concerned about the underrepresentation of women at the top in higher education. Jackson (2002) noted that the absence of women in the highest positions may be the result of discrepancy between 'equal opportunities' policies and practices and the patriarchal system. Internationally, women are still outnumbered by their male counterparts, even in advanced countries such as the USA and UK.

As per Sinyosi and Potokri (2021), women outnumber men in the South African education sector as a whole. However, when it comes to leadership, despite the fact that the total number of female teachers is 68%, women are underrepresented, with only 36% of female teachers holding the position of principal. (Davids, 2018). This disproportional representation of women and men in leadership can be considered a slap in the face to the majority of women who work in education, as most of them are resigned to lower-level jobs, and the top lucrative positions responsible for making decisions are reserved for men.

As reported by the Minister of Education, Angie Motsega, in June 2018, statistics show that the number of teachers and school principals on the government payroll at the time of the interview, was 387 328. A breakdown of these numbers shows that there were 265 179 female teachers and 8 070 female principals. When it comes to males however, the numbers showed that there were 100 528 male teachers and 13 551 male principals.

As a result, female teachers are further marginalised due to the lack of female leaders at leadership level. When male officials are in charge, the advancement of female teachers is likely to be marginalised, because most male principals are unaware of the challenges that their female counterparts and female teachers face (Ng'ambi, 2015). In essence, there are not enough voices to present, champion and advocate for the interests of female teachers and principals; resulting in neglect and ignorance regarding issues affecting women in education (Davids, 2018).

The absence of enough women at policy-making level presents a challenge to the formulation of policies that give sufficient consideration to the interests of women (Sinyosi & Potokri, 2021). This means that policies and developments, formulated at national or provincial level, exclude the interests of women, or consider them as secondary, which is detrimental to the advancement of female values.

2.5.2 Insubordination and lack of cooperation

According to Khumalo (2021), the notion of having a female leader is still being challenged in the larger society. This is reflected in the way that female principals encounter deliberate defiance and insubordination from both male and other female teachers. Male teachers who still hold traditional stereotypes and prejudice often turn out to be resistant to female leadership, and this is evident in their lack of cooperation and unproductive behaviour (Oyeniran & Anchomese, 2018). Lumby and Azaola (2013) further echoed that when women take up leadership positions in the education sector, they experience different challenges than their counterparts.

Similarly, for female teachers who are conditioned in patriarchal values, seeing fellow females appointed as principals as it might not be all lead to non-cooperative behaviour and insubordination (Ng'ambi, 2015). When principals are faced with staff who do not want to work with them, they can become demoralised, and this might significantly, negatively impact the performance of their schools (Murakami & Törnsen, 2017).

Schmidt and Mestry (2015) stated that insubordination towards female principals, especially by male teachers, is a form of defiance or protest against female leadership. In most instances, male teachers undermine female principals, not because of their performance merits or leadership skills, but because they perceive their gender as incapable to lead (Themane et al., 2017). In the end, female principals have to contend with uncooperative subordinates due to their gender, which is unheard of for male principals. Ultimately, female principals end up with more issues to resolve than male principals, in terms of subordination and acknowledgment of leadership.

2.5.3 Discrimination

Numerous studies have referred to discrimination as a hindrance to administration by women in schools (Croft et al., 2010; Khalifa et al., 2016). Gender discrimination happens when there is inconsistent treatment or prejudice based on sex (Verniers & Vala, 2018). Female leaders, managers and other women who aspire to be in these positions, experience multiple forms of discrimination based on their gender. In their research Verniers and Vala (2018) narrated that, despite the fact that discrimination is unlawful, there is proof that it still exists, especially towards females. Bias against

women still exists in general management, and there are also indications of similar perceptions in the education sector (Verniers and Vala 2018). The extent and nature of gender-based discriminatory behaviour prevent some female principals to properly commit to their responsibilities and duties, which may lead them to resign from their posts (Lumby & Azola, 2013). The result of such discrimination is that female teachers who try to advance professionally often face cultural and social stereotyping.

Khumalo (2021) mentioned that female principals have reported to have challenges in forming alliances and support structures in their careers. This is often the case in a male-dominated space where it has come to be accepted as a norm to have a male principal. Lomotey (2019) mentioned that, as a minority, female principals are sometimes discriminated against and not considered for administrative positions, which is crucial for the advancement of women. The lack of support for female principals also leads to discouragement, and makes it even harder for female principals to perform well in an already prejudiced working environment (Bruyn & Mestry, 2020).

On district, provincial and national level, administrators tend to rather appoint men as principals at so-called 'more important' schools, and allocate female principals to schools considered as less significant (Oyeniran & Anchomese, 2018). Davids (2018) contended, for example, that most female principals are allocated to rural areas rather than urban areas.

Literature also indicates that female principals struggle to progress beyond being school principals (Ng'ambi, 2015). It has been shown that more male principals are promoted to senior positions at district and provincial level in comparison to female principals (Davids, 2018). This is despite evidence showing that female principals perform as well as the male principals in these capacities (Themane et al., 2017).

2.5.4 Harassment, assaults and abuse

Teachers and principals face various forms of harassment and assault; however, the situation is often typically worse for female principals who are viewed as imposter leaders by society (Kallie, 2015). Reports of verbal abuse by both teachers and students are not uncommon, as female principals are

still considered as undeserving of their positions and are less feared in comparison to their male peers.

In the South African context, sexual harassment is common, with cases of sexual harassment being reported on a daily basis in mainstream media (Davids, 2018). This problem has transcended into the school environment, where both female staff and learners have become prone to being sexually harassed (Khumalo, 2021). Some female principals have reported being asked for sexual favours by their male superiors, in order to grant promotions or other career opportunities.

In the end, society's perceptions about female leadership transform into phobias and hate, which make the working environment a scary place for female principals (Bruyn & Mestry, 2020). The perceptions of society, including the perceptions of teachers, learners and education systems, are still conditioned by the traditional gender roles, and subsequently influence attitudes and behaviours towards female principals. This is detrimental to the progress made in attaining equality.

2.5.5 Life and work balance

Shava et al. (2019) further claimed that it is mostly men who lead this female-dominant profession, because of structural, social and cultural challenges that frustrate women in leadership positions. According to research by Davids (2018), female principals felt guilty about neglecting their families, and this sometimes interfere with their ability to perform their duties as principals. Robinson (2015) emphasised the pressures that females have to deal with. Unlike their male counterparts, they are expected by society to balance family and domestic responsibilities with the duties of leadership.

Studies exploring the lifestyles of male principals have indicated that almost all of them were traditional heads of their households (Murakami & Törnsen, 2017). Bruyn and Mestry (2020) added that the majority of male principals and teachers do not have the role of 'housekeeper', but they rather are only expected to be the financial provider. In contrast, female principals not only endure the weight of looking after their family, but they also have the weight of contributing financially to the household (Lomotey, 2019). This difference between men and women with regards to their personal and family lives also plays a significant role in how female principals perform and are able to find a balance between work and life challenges.

Because women are still regarded as the sole designated caregivers at home, it is difficult for them to balance work and home in their respective roles (Murakami & Törnsen, 2017). Female and male teachers would be considered to be on different playing fields in this case. Women have a greater disadvantage, because they bear an additional burden, whereas men, according to a patriarchal system, are not expected to bear a significant burden in domestic matters (Themane et al., 2017).

2.5.6 Internal challenges

Internal challenges that manifest as barriers for women in their leadership positions are recognised as psychological factors. These factors may include self-esteem, aspiration and fear of failure or success, which affect how females in leadership and management positions perceive themselves (Coetzer, 2004; Moorosi et al. 2017). Furthermore considered that all management conduct begins within the person's intrinsic identity, meaning the way a person acts is highly shaped by how they view themselves.

2.5.7 External challenges

The dominance of men in leadership and management positions causes an organisational culture that rewards masculinity and uphold a nation that such roles are only designed for men. This they find it difficult men and women to accept that they have equal rights to these leadership opportunities and once they are appointed, that they are equal, regardless of being male or female ,leadership roles make them equals according to the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 (RSA, 1998) . In addition to that, Moorosi (2010) stated that leadership capabilities of South African females are frequently defied by the cultural and traditional values of the public. The Department of Education (2004) claims that individuals who embrace leadership as masculine, and hold values that support standards that reflect female leaders and managers to be secondary to men, may find it diffic ult to report to female leaders. This culture may create problems for females in leadership positions. With this being noted, female leaders find themselves working twice as hard in their leadership positions, since they constantly want to prove themselves as being equal to men and others around them.

2.6 THE ROLE OF POLICY IN SUPPORT OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

In South Africa, with the shift to a democratic leadership, an effort towards women's liberation around the realisation of human rights was confirmed in the perspective of great points of injustices affecting women (Msila, 2013). The post-apartheid government presented actions to enhance women's role in leadership position by way of legislation, guidelines and approaches which included policy amendments and the building of the institutional machinery. Government is thus responsible to ensure that the laws in place are successfully enforced to tackle inequity in the workplace. Relevant legislation will next be discussed.

The Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) – mostly referred to as 'the Constitution' – is the supreme legal charter that guards the human rights of the citizens of the country. It has been used in the promotion of women rights, which they did not have before the democracy. Section 9 of the Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the Constitution) specifies the intention to specifically encourage females' economic freedom and contribution.

The Constitution supports and advocates the positions forwarded for by numerous acts of Parliament and other legal policy instruments – the ones of relevance being the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997 (Act No. 75 of 1997), Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act No. 55 of 1998), Integrated Strategy on the Promotion of Entrepreneurship and Small Enterprises of 2005, Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, 2000 (Act No. 5 of 2000), Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, 2000 (Act No. 4 of 2000), South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality (2001) and The Commission of Gender Equality Act, 1996 (Act No. 39 of 1996). The policies above were initiated to synchronise, and to convince people to act accordingly with the mandate of gender equality and women empowerment.

The empowerment of women has shown to have significant advantages for communities, and the ratio of females working in the public sector has increased, although senior management positions are still below the target (Arrieta, 2021). This means that the policies and other efforts that were put in place to empower women have somewhat helped, but not to the desired effect. While some

institutions and government departments in various provinces have made improvements in promoting women at senior management level, others have made little to no progress (Lumby & Azaola, 2013). Between 1994 and 1999, new discourses of social justice and gender equity have propelled the entry of a significant number of women into previously all-male domains of the educational bureaucracy (Msila, 2013). It is for example evident within our universities that more recently, women are afforded more opportunities to be appointed in authorities' roles in positions of leadership. These women are : Professor Thoko Mayekiso , Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mpumalanga, Professor Sibongile Muthwa Vice-Chancellor of Nelson Mandela University, Professor Rushiella Songca Vice- Chancellor and Principal of Walter Sisulu University, Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng Vice – Chancellor of UCT, Professor Puleng LenkaBula Vice – Chancellor University of South Africa and, Professor Xoliswa Mtose Vice –Chancellor of the University of Zululand.

2.7 EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE PRINCIPALS IN EDUCATION

In a study by Lumby and Azaola (2014), the researchers explored the experiences of female principals in Gauteng and North-West, to determine how female principals led their schools and the challenges they encountered. Interviews were done with 54 female principals who were purposely selected. The study indicated that more than half of the participants self-reported to using a mothering style of leadership, characterised by consideration and compassion.

This style of leadership was found to have helped the female head teachers to create productive mutual relationships with their subordinates. Most of the participants reported to have positive outcomes in their schools, as a result of this approach. Therefore, one can deduce that female leadership styles, like the motherhood approach witnessed in this study, are just as effective in leadership as any of the male-favoured approaches.

Another study, conducted by Themane et al. (2017), explored the experiences of female principals regarding curriculum leadership in the rural secondary schools of Limpopo province, South Africa. This study departed from the understanding that traditionally curriculum leadership has been reserved for men. This study was done qualitatively, and data was collected through focus-group interviews and document analysis.

The findings of this study showed, that the principals involved had strong social skills, which enabled them to create and maintain healthy working relationships with their staff, just as reported in Lumby and Azaola (2014). These relationships enabled the principals to interact with the teachers and to exchange insights; thereby getting on the same page as to how to implement the curriculum.

The study by Themane et al. (2017) also discovered that female principals policies in place to enhance their professionalism. This was contrary to common belief that women ideally lean more towards social relationships at the expense of organisational objectives and professionalism (Themane et al. (2017) also reported that some of the participants had challenges with cultural issues, where some of the stakeholders and subordinates were insubordinate and deliberately resisted instructions, which they pinned on their gender. These findings ultimately show that women are indeed assessed based on gender, by those they lead, and this can in the long run become problematic as women attempt to achieve certain goals.

Schmidt and Mestry (2015) attempted to explore the experiences of female principals in Gauteng, based on the intersectionality theory, where intersections of gender, race and class were considered. The study explored the experiences of two principals through semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires. The study showed that these principals faced numerous challenges related to their race and gender.

Schmidt and Mestry (2015) also discovered that family and social relationships are the pillars which female principals turned to for support, in order to navigate their challenges. The researchers found that female principals were capable of leading their schools effectively if they are afforded the cooperation and support that they require. This study shed light on the different playing fields between men and women, as female principals reported facing certain challenges which drew on their gender and not the nature of their work.

Similar to the study by Themane et al. (2021), Khumalo (2021) also investigated the experiences of female principals in Limpopo. The author, however, used the social-justice theory and focused on the perceptions of staff members towards women as school principals. In the study, semi-structured in-depth interviews were employed and descriptive data was collected. The study revealed three

significant results which showed that female principals do not only face stern insubordination from male teachers who undermine their leadership, but they also face sexual harassment and the lack of promotion.

Sinyosi and Potokri (2021) also investigated the experiences of female principals in rural areas of Limpopo. This study was based on the assumption that communities in rural areas are still predisposed to deep patriarchal values, making the situation for rural principals even harder to cope with. Ten female principals in Vhembe Education District were selected and data was collected through semi-structured interviews. In this study, it was revealed that gender stereotypes, rooted in patriarchal values, affected female principals who faced gender bias. One particularly profound revelation was that female principals faced resistance and poor cooperation not only from teachers, but also from learners, parents, the community at large, as well as from some members at the Department of Education. However, the study found that, instead of being demoralised by these challenges, the principals were rather motivated to inspire those who followed them.

The previously reviewed literature seems to suggest that most of society still perceives females as incapable of leading. This is reflected in the attitudes and behaviour which most stakeholders have towards female principals. These experiences of female principals shed light on the challenges that female leaders face and on the ability of women in education, to lead. As the discrimination against female principals is still current, it is imperative that researchers continue to investigate the challenges principals are facing, so that novice solutions can be developed, which should only change the perceptions of society, but also prepare principals for the tough world which they are likely to face.

2.8 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This literature review evaluated different literature studies in order to analyse previous works on female leadership in education. The review focused on the experiences of teacher with female leadership as recorded in various studies. The review found that female principals are still marginalised and are facing more challenges than their male counterparts based on gender. It was discovered that societal perceptions of female leadership are still conditioned by gender-biased stereotypes, which influence how teachers, learners, and other stakeholders behave towards female principals. Some of the challenges that female principals face, include underrepresentation, insubordination, discrimination, harassment, and the challenge to balance work and family life. Feminism, as a theory, will also be discussed as the foundational theory that will guide the research. The role of societal perceptions will be evaluated, using this theory in order to further explore the challenges that female principals face in their capacity as leaders. This chapter elicited the challenges that still plague female school leaders.

According to the phenomenon of socio-cultural stereotypes, women are thought to be less capable of leading schools than men. Different authors argued, however, that while such a scenario exists, female school principals can use specific strategies to mitigate the difficulties they face, such as personal characteristics, management styles, and communication networks. Education is a product of society, and changes to combat the stereotyping of women – being seen as incompetent and not able to fill managerial positions – are unavoidable. Women, especially, teachers and principals, must continue to fight for equality within the workplace.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN FOR EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter was to provide detailed and clear statements outlining the steps to carry out this project. According to McMillan & Schumacher (2021), research methodology refers to the way data are collected, analysed, and designed in order to answer the research question. Research methodology is generally viewed as the overarching strategy and approach to any research (Braun & Clarke, 2013) and includes a discussion of the paradigms, approach designs, and methods chosen to conduct the research. The researcher concluded this section with the reliability and ethical considerations of this study.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The term 'paradigm' is derived from the Greek semantic pattern (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017) and has been broadly defined by many scholars. For example, paradigms are perceived as the "views of the world that frame research topics' and influence the way researchers think about them" (Hughes, 2010: 35). Fraser and Robinson (2004) further argued that a paradigm is "a set of beliefs about how particular problems exist and a set of agreements about how such problems can be studied". (Year: 59). This research was exploratory in nature, guided by an interpretive paradigm focused on recognising and communicating the meaning of individual experiences and actions (Fossey et al., 2002), and a qualitative approach was adopted. Exploratory research differs from descriptive and explanatory research in that it seeks to fully understand the research question. Exploratory analysis examines a subject for unknown information to reveal variables that can further be investigated (Salkind, 2018). Both primary and secondary data sources were referenced and used. The interpretive paradigm refers to "the process of transforming human experience into consciousness and language to create multiple realities" (Kekeya, 2019: 28). This worldview is not limited to specific phenomena. Therefore, this research presented perceptions and realities, and attempted to interpret

them (Ary et al., 2010). Interpretive paradigms are frameworks and practices within sociological research that invest resources in philosophical and methodological approaches to better understand social reality. It is generally seen as a set of paradigms embedded in various hypothetical structures, ranging from ethnomethodology to the basic hypotheses of women activists (Poni, 2008). The roles of communication, symbols and language are therefore fundamental to interpretive researchers (Poni, 2014).

They initiate a personal investigative process and attempt to understand their interpretation of the world around them. This study is set in an interpretive paradigm. In the interpretivist paradigm, people's perceptions are weighed heavily, and their actions and reactions are understood from within their own frame of reference (Maree, 2007). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison(2007: 19) argued that the role of scientists in the interpretivist paradigm is to understand, explain, and articulate social reality through the eyes of different participants. As explained, a key challenge with regards to an interpretive worldview is to attempt to understand the emotional universe of human experience. To preserve the integrity of the efforts are made to infiltrate and comprehend individual experiences from within and uncover the treatment teachers receive from various stakeholders within the school environment (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This chosen paradigm supported the purpose of the study to report on the experiences of female school leaders and teachers in the Southern District of Ekurhuleni, Gauteng, and how it relates to teachers' and authorities' attitudes toward and perceptions of leaders. To understand how others see the world and how personal experiences relate to those of others, can help one understand one's own reality.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

3.3.1 Qualitative approach

This study was exploratory in nature, guided by an interpretive paradigm that focused on recognising and communicating the meaning of individual experiences and actions (Fossey et al., 2002), and a qualitative research approach was adopted. Exploratory research differs from descriptive and explanatory research in that it seeks to fully understand the research question. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 321), qualitative research is "characterised by features such as natural

surroundings, contextual dependence, direct data collection, rich narrative description, process orientation, emergent design, open-minded data analysis, and complex understanding and explanation''. The qualitative research approach was chosen because researchers can interact with the participants through interviews and observations. In this way, the study extracted experiences from female and male participants.

Researchers who use this approach collect data about sensory experiences – what a person sees, feels, hears, tastes or smells. Researchers interact with participants within the participants' natural environment. According to qualitative researchers, life experiences and events happen in context. Context is the natural environment in which people work, learn, play and live. Qualitative researchers are interested in individuals, and seek interaction because they seek substance and in- depth understanding. These researchers seek to make sense of what they learn in thoughtful, ethical, and politically astute ways. In addition, qualitative researchers conduct research, gathers evidence, and build theories. In this study, the researcher was also interested in the 'why' and 'how' of women in school leadership, and attempted to understand the experiences of school leaders and the context of their situation. With a qualitative research approach, participants were able to tell their own stories.

Qualitative research was primarily interactive, using face-to-face methods to interact with selected individuals in their natural settings. Researchers therefore use in-depth interviews, participant and document analysis to address research questions. The study also describes the social factors female school leaders experience at work (Creswell 2008; Creswell J. W. and Creswell J. D.

Olesen (2011: 127) said, "Feminist qualitative research was not accepted because the field of policy analysis was largely quantitative and male-dominated". She saw this as a gap that feminist researchers had to fill. "Qualitative research can greatly contribute to our understanding of policy formulation and implementation". She continued by saying that qualitative research is a form of research that collects data over time. According to Neuman (2007), qualitative researchers place a high value on gathering knowledge directly from research participants. In qualitative research, researchers ask and encourage participants to answer broad, general questions about a topic. We chose a qualitative method, because it allowed us to gain access to the lives of our subjects, to communicate with them on an individual basis, and to gain additional knowledge and understanding

regarding our research subjects. This allows the researcher to speak directly with the participants and to gain a better understanding of the research topic. Also, based on the characteristics shown in Table 3.3.1 below, it was determined that the qualitative approach in this study is appropriate.

Table 3.3.1. Basic key characteristics of qualitative research

What it does?	Experience is captured and its meaning is discovered.
Properties	It contains concepts presented in the form of property themes, generalisations, and taxonomies.
Advantage	It benefits and enables the creation of spontaneous actions, often tailored to a specific environment or researcher.
Form	Data is often in the form of words extracted from documents, observations, or interviews.
Procedure	The research method is unique and replication is rare. Analysis begins by extracting themes from the evidence and organising the data to form for a coherent picture.
Theory	Theories can be causal or non-causal, and are often inductive.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

For this study, the researcher used research design is a detailed plan of how the researchers conduct their study. The plan describes the conditions and procedures for collecting and analysing data, and answering research questions. Cresswell (2008:113) showed that design is part of methodology. McMillan & Schumacher (2006:36) described the research design as a conceptual image or architectural impression of what the research product should look like. This design indicates the concepts of 'when, where and under what circumstances', as well as who will be tested (McMillan

& Schumacher, 2010:102). The research design is a contribution-oriented and captures the communication and collaboration of researchers and participants as contributors to data and knowledge production Preece, J (2016). There is an explicit critical reflexivity within the research design, as such data collection and analysis required careful consideration. This research design was chosen because the research question is central and ties all components together, which Maxwell (2009) argues allows you to answer your research questions and also deal with plausible threats to those answers (p 217).

3.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

In science, Salkind (2018) described population as the total number of entities that researchers are interested in studying. The authors go on to say that members of a group should share certain traits that distinguish them and thus, justify classification. The population accessible to the researcher comprised of female principals, deputies and teachers. The study group, therefore, consisted of two female principals, three deputy principals, six HoDs females and 3 male and female teachers in Ekurhuleni South District. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016) defined a population as the entire collection of cases that meet a specific set of criteria, and a sample is defined by Koul (2006: 187) , as participants who are selected using a selection process. Based on these two definitions, population refers to "the total number of units from which empirical data can potentially be collected" (Parahoo, 2006: 375).

3.5.1 Purposeful sampling

The researcher used the non-probabilistic purposive method when selecting participants.

In contrast, it is a non-probabilistic sampling technique used to select the wealth of information to be used in in-depth studies, Related to primary data collection techniques and the availability of data-rich cases (Cohen et al., 2007: 307).

This sampling method is used to access knowledgeable people. They are assumed to have in-depth knowledge about a particular topic or experience based on their job function, authority, expertise and their personal experiences. According to Cresswell (2009:178), qualitative research "selects

participants who help researchers understand problems and research questions". Targeted sampling is known as selective or subjective sampling of people who are aware of their experiences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Targeted selection is based on the recruitment of participants, and rather than being selected at random, participants should be selected on the basis of programme research (Denscombe, 2007:182). Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016) defined a population as the entire collection of cases meeting a specific set of criteria, and a sample is defined by Koul as "participants who are selected using a selection process" (2006:187). Based on these two definitions, population refers to "the total number of units from which empirical data can potentially be collected" (Parahoo, 2006: 375).

The results of such studies can be extrapolated to the population on which the study was based. The population of this study consisted of female and male teachers and female principals, aged from 26 years upwards , from the Ekurhuleni South District, who were mentally healthy and willing to participate. Women principals in Ekurhuleni South District, who met the above criteria, were selected as a smaller support group for the target population. In addition, the researcher approached one female principal of schools in informal settlements within Ekurhuleni South District to participate in the study. Only fifteen of the original sample of possible participants, who responded positively to the researcher's request to be part of the study, were chosen. Although the sample was limited, the process had to be objective, so that the sample could stand up to independent scrutiny. Sample selection was expedient. The term 'convenient sampling' refers to the practice of selecting samples based on their distance to the researcher. In this study, the selected samples were located near the researcher's workplaces, facilitating easier sample access and data collection. This is a sampling technique in which the researcher relied on when selecting members of the population to participate in the study (Creswell 2008). The researcher also selected participants based on demographics, age, gender, school type, and leadership position within the school.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

3.6.1 Interviews

According to Cohen et al. (2007:345), a qualitative interview is "an exchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest; it recognizes the importance of human interaction in knowledge production and emphasizes the social situatedness of research data" (2007:345). The interview is a versatile data-collection tool that allows for the use of multiple sensory channels – verbal, non-verbal, spoken, and audio. An interview is not considered a normal, everyday conversation. Interviews serve a specific purpose and are frequently question-based, with the interviewer presenting the questions. The interviewer may express ignorance, and the response must be as explicit and detailed as possible. Furthermore, because "the interview is a constructed rather than a naturally occurring situation, the researcher has an obligation to set up and follow the various rules of the game in an interview" (Cohen et al. 2007: 349).

Different types of interviews, such as in-depth, individual or face-to-face, focus group, semi-structured, unstructured, and structured interviews, are at the disposal of the researcher. Semi-structured interviews were used in this study; it is a one-on-one interview that simply extends and formalises conversation; it is also described as a conversation with a purpose. This technique, which necessitated interactive field research, was chosen to assist the researcher in understanding the experiences of female secondary school principals. This is "face-to-face interaction between the researcher and the participants, allowing the researcher to collect data on how the individual perceives her world" (Mcmillan & Schumacher, 2006:36). It should be noted that semi-structured interviews were planned ahead of time, along with an interview guide containing a list of questions based on the research questions' objectives. This entailed translating the research objectives into the main body of questions.

The interview schedule was divided into two sections. Section A was designed to gather demographic information such as age, family status, level of education, among other things. Section B mostly comprised of follow-up questions. Open-ended questions were used to encourage full cooperation and meaningful responses. According to McMillan and Schumacher, "it is critical to keep in mind that

the interview is a social, interpersonal encounter, not merely a data collection exercise" (2006:361). An effective interviewer must be an expert, not only in the subject matter, but also in interaction and communication. The researcher created an environment in which participants felt safe enough to speak freely. Participants were repeatedly assured of confidentiality, informed consent, beneficence and non-beneficence.

Furthermore, the researcher established a good rapport by being friendly, polite, and respectful, without being assertive or losing sight of the interview's purpose. The interviews were conducted with a female principal, female deputies, female teachers and male teachers. As a result, personal and social information was directly gathered from the participants. To make the interviewees feel at ease, the researcher initiated the conversation by introducing herself and by providing a brief background about herself. Participants were encouraged to do the same. This was a crucial exercise; it helped participants deal with any tension or suspicions they might have had.

Interviews were conducted primarily in English, but occasionally in Zulu, particularly during casual conversations. Notes and responses, on the other hand, were written in English. During the interviews, a voice recorder (text to speech) was used to ensure the completeness of verbal interaction, and to provide material – archived on a hard drive – for reliability check and to ensure validity of the study. The recordings were not problematic for the participants. Furthermore, interviewing different participants aided in comparing responses and encouraged different leadership perspectives. This exercise would result in a more complete understanding of female leadership. Furthermore, "the use of a recorder does not eliminate the need for taking notes to help reformulate questions and probes, and record nonverbal communication, which facilitates data analysis; as long as it does not interfere with the researcher's full attention on the participant" (McMillan &Schumacher, 1993: 254).

3.6.2 Semi-structured interviews

An interview, according to Maree, is a "two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect data to learn about the participants' ideas, beliefs, views, opinions, and behaviors" (2007:87). Semi-structured interviews were used to obtain a comprehensive picture

of the participants' beliefs and insights on a specific topic. Both the researcher and the participant benefited from increased flexibility, because the researcher could follow up on specific topics of interest raised during the interview, and the participant could then elaborate and provide more information (Cohen et al., 2007). According to Greeff, "semi-structured interviews are especially appropriate when the issue is controversial and personal" (2002:302). The researcher used a semi-structured interview schedule with a list of predetermined questions, but the schedule was only to be used as a guide and not as rules that had to be followed (Smith, 1995). The participants have a say in the direction of the interview, and they may raise an issue that the researcher did not consider when developing the questions. The participant can be perceived as the experiential expert on the subject, and should thus be allowed maximum opportunity to tell his/her own story in this relationship (Smith & Osborn, 2003:59).

During this study information was collected through "direct interchanges with individuals expected to possess knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation, using a one-on-one interview method" (Ryan, Coughlan & Cronia, 2009: 310). To gather detailed information from the participants, 45 – 60 minute one-on-one interviews were conducted. The semi-structured interviews were guided by an interview instrument prepared in advance by the researcher (Maree, 2007). The research objectives of the study influenced the interview instrument, as the goal was to elicit in-depth and open-ended responses. While the interview guide provided some structure, it still allowed a high degree of flexibility (Bowen, 2005). The researcher also made certain that the interview was friendly and relaxed in order for the participants to be open and honest in their responses.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

3.7.1 Data analysis process

Analysing qualitative data necessitates understanding of how to interpret text and images in order to form answers to the research questions (Creswell, 2008:243). Thematic analysis was used as the process of analysing the collected data in this study. Thematic analysis is a technique to extract the most important data from a set of data, by identifying themes (Braun and Clarke 2019). This research method has been lauded as a method for analysing qualitative data that is both open and technically

versatile. Thematic analysis aids in data comprehension, by highlighting the most important topics. However, by solely focusing on themes, other emerging thematic areas may be overlooked.

Researchers who use this method repeatedly go through interview transcripts to look for common patterns. Even if they do not appear in multiple sources, themes are valued, based on the meanings that participants assign to them (Braun, 2006). The data was organised according to themes and compared to the research background and objectives. Silverman's (2005) suggestion was supplemented by frequent listening to interview tapes and reading interview transcriptions to populate the built matrix. This assisted the researcher become acquainted with the context-specific details of the schools' female leaders. Data organisation and familiarity emerged concurrently during a single stage of the thematic analysis process. Over time, each participant's particular background and leadership challenges became more evident. At this point, the researcher was primarily focused on the participant's expressions.

The researcher also obtained data, by gathering school documents with the permission of the principal, reading through the contents, and comparing it to the interview data. The data was gathered in the form of recorded audio from face-to-face interviews, which would then be transcribed verbatim into Microsoft Word processing software for thorough analysis, narrative analysis, and conversational analysis. The semi-structured interviews were guided by a pre-planned interview protocol. Moreover, following the reading of the transcripts, several themes emerged from the data and were grouped into smaller units. Before listing the identified themes, the following steps were followed: "data collected was read through and different responses were considered; data was grouped and narrowed down according to the similarities of the responses; data was broken down into smaller groups; and possible themes were identified" (Tuckett, 2005: 78).

Finally, these patterns are "theme-oriented" (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In analysing the content of this study, the researcher refers to the following six steps according to Braun and Clarke (2006):

i.   **Familiarise yourself with the data**: This involves transcribing the data, reading and rereading the data, and noting the first idea that seems to be dominant in the data.

ii. **Initial code generation**: This means that the data is searched to identify sections of the data that exhibit semantic consistency. Coding reduces the data into smaller blocks of data. Theoretical coding was performed considering the type of research question, theoretical coding was performed. For example, information about the challenges elementary school principals face is not grouped with information about the strategies they employ to address those challenges.

iii. **Search by topic:** Themes occur when you group related code. Mainly descriptive themes were developed to describe the patterns (codes) in the data relevant to the research question.

iv. **Review topics**: Researchers then delve into what is known about the subject by revising the relevant data. We considered whether the themes were meaningful, whether the data really supported the themes, whether there were any overlaps between themes, and whether there were sub-themes within the themes. A literature survey of the collected data was then categorised into topics and subheadings according to the content obtained.

v. **Define topics:** Researchers sought to identify the essence of each theme and ultimately name the themes according to their relationship to the main topic of research was being studied.

vi. **Cover letter:** The researcher wrote the final report. The topic scope includes a topic description, relevant data supporting the topic, and relevant literature supporting the topic and analysis. After reading all collected data, researchers performed proofreading to ensure that the analysed data were consistent with the content of the study as a whole and did not deviate from the topic. In this case, the researchers ensured that all the texts were relevant to the answers to the research questions, and also covered the overall theme of the research.

3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE FINDINGS

3.8.1 Credibility

Leedy and Ormrod (2015) defined data triangulation as the process of collecting data, using two different methods in order to achieve consistency in responses through different investigation methods. In this study, discussions, interviews, and conversational analysis were used in tandem. Cope (2014) defined credibility as the manner in which the researcher represents the true views and experiences of the participants, based on the data. The researchers' credibility is enhanced by

describing their own points of view and validating the research findings with the participants. As a result, the researcher used member checking and triangulation (Saunders et al., 2009). Member checks are regarded as the most important strategy to improve. Participants examine their transcripts to see if it correspond to what they have said during the interview (Braun, Clarke, & Gray, 2017).

3.8.2 Dependability

Cope (2014) defined dependability as the consistency of data under similar conditions. A research study would be dependable and reliable if the findings were replicated using other participants (Cope, 2014). A researcher's process of dependability should be based on reporting the findings in detail, as this will assist future researchers in repeating or improving on similar findings (Shenton, 2004). An investigation review is one method for improving the dependability of qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The researcher provided a detailed account of the study design and method, and approaches were clarified specifically to help the reader understand the research context, the interviews, the document analysis, and the study's recorded analysis.

3.8.3 Transferability

Transferability is concerned with findings that can be applied to new settings or groups (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; Polit & Beck, 2012). The degree to which the findings of a study can be applied to a new situation is referred to as transferability (Shenton, 2004). The researcher provided the readers with enough information gathered as evidence, in order for the findings of the research study to be transferred and to be relevant to other contexts and populations. As a result, the report included a detailed account of the environment surrounding the research, as well as a rich description of context. Based on the information provided above, the researcher gathered enough information about school female leaders' experiences and challenges to help the reader understand the nature of the working environment.

3.8.4 Confirmability

This is a measure of the extent to which the research study's findings could be confirmed by other researchers (Creswell, 2013), as well as the extent to which the data and interpretations are not

speculative, but based on the research findings. Confirmability refers to a researcher's ability to determine that the gathered information accurately represents the responses of the participants and is not influenced by the researcher's bias (Cope, 2014).

To establish confirmability, steps were taken to ensure that the findings were derived from the participants' responses and ideas. Furthermore, an audit trail provided a record of all research decisions made throughout the study. This aided the researcher in determining the findings by examining the research process and the product of inquiry. The researcher created a record of research activities, and devised methods for keeping the research journal and documenting all data collection. These documents included raw data or recorded interview transcripts, as well as school documents such as policies and minutes.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This essentially means that studies must be conducted with honesty and integrity; it also provides an added benefit of recognising and protecting the participants' human rights.

3.9.1 Permission and ethical clearance

This aspect deals with obtaining approval from various stakeholders to conduct research at selected schools. After approval from the University of South Africa Ethics Approval Committee, the researcher submitted a research application, one month prior to her fieldwork, to the Gauteng Ministry of Education, seeking permission to conduct the research at the schools in the Ekurhuleni South District. I applied for permission to conduct research at the school and conduct interviews with the staff. In addition to documentation of approval, a list of schools with female principals, as well as their contact details, was provided. Four principals were contacted by phone and asked for their email address. This allowed researchers to send invitations to participate in the research. An informed-consent form was also given to the participants. At these meetings with the participants, procedures were explained and, of course, stakeholders were informed of matters affecting them. Twenty participants were informed of their rights, as research subjects (Creswell, 2008; Christensen & Larry, 2011):

They were not allowed to tell anyone that they have been chosen as participants in a research study and they were meant to remain anonymous. Their participation was voluntary and free of charge. This was an educational study. Their contributions should contribute to the system "through ideas". Researchers would not reveal what participants had said during the study, so their responses and views were confidential. Participants and other persons could verify the validity of the approval to conduct the study by accessing the Gauteng Department of Education approval letter. Participants could, for any reason, withdraw their participation at any time during the study, if they chose to do so. They could also request research results prior to completion, so that they could approve or reject the results.

3.9.2 Informed-consent form

'Informed consent' is one of the basic principles of research ethics. The intent is that human participants should be fully informed of what it means to participate freely (voluntarily) in research. Consent should be obtained before participants (predictably) participate in the study, and their consent should not be unduly influenced. The minimum requirement for informed consent is that the participant understands and consents to the study. Participants were asked to communicate their decision to participate in writing. Additionally, the form made it clear that participants could refuse to answer any questions they felt uncomfortable with and that their participation in the study was voluntary.

3.9.3 Anonymity and confidentiality

Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the investigation. All participants were promised that the information they provided would not be publicly reported in a way that could possibly identify them. This challenge consisted of two components – to protect the privacy of participants and their identities, names and specific roles; and to keep what is shared with researchers confidential. Participant's real names should not be used or disclosed. Privacy is concerned with what personal information is shared or withheld from outsiders. According to Diener and Crandal, as cited by Cohen et al. (2007), privacy can be viewed from three perspectives – dissemination of information that affects the confidentiality of information, the circumstances under

which it is observed, and the ability to match research participants' identities with their personal information. The right to privacy ensures both confidentiality and anonymity.

3.9.4 Protection from harm

By adhering to the no- harm rule, researchers ensured that no harm was done to any of the study participants (Salkin 2018). In this context, Leedy and Ormrod (2015) define harm as an unwanted event that can affect the well-being of participants. This was accomplished by following appropriate research protocols, protecting identities, and maintaining the confidentiality of information. Principles of anonymity and confidentiality are followed to protect participants from harm, while also respecting their right to privacy (Salkin 2018). According to Salkind (2018), participants' identities should be kept confidential, unless they consent to be identified, and clues that could lead to their identification should be avoided.

In accordance with the principle of harmlessness, researchers use pseudonyms to protect all research-related information. According to the principles of honesty and integrity, researchers should be impartial, unbiased, and honest in their research, regardless of personal views (De Vos et al., 2017). I ensured that participants were not exposed to physical or psychological harm. During the interview and collection of data I was honest, respectful and sympathetic towards all the participants, and if by any chance the participants required a briefing after the interview, I provided referrals to professionals who could assist them in facing any traumatic event.

3.9.5 Voluntary participation

As recommended by Cope (2014), participants should be informed of their rights before they are interviewed. In this case, at the beginning of the interview with the participant, the researcher should mention the data-collection tools used, give a brief description of the study conducted, and state that the interview is voluntary and that the participant has the right to withdraw. The right to withdraw is a principle of scientific ethics, and participants in research have the right to withdraw from the research at any time, and they are not expected to disclose the reason for their withdrawal (Edwards, 2005). In this study, the informed-consent form indicated the participant's right to withdraw from the study at any time, and that the data provided by that respondent would not be used thereafter.

3.10 MY ROLE AS A RESEARCHER

The researcher's role is the collection and analysis of data, with the primary purpose of enhancing understanding. However, asking relevant questions is "like probing, which should be used to obtain the maximum amount of data and confirm that what you hear is actually what the person intended to retrieve (Maree, 2007: 79). Furthermore, researchers need to document these changes in real-world conditions, so it is important for researchers to participate and immerse themselves in these conditions. Joubert (2005) noted the following characteristics of the researcher's role: assisting in editing questions; managing psychometric equipment; preparing, structuring, and conducting interviews; analysis of data; reliability and verifiability. I have put together a research plan with semi-structured questions. The researcher's role is also to attempt to understand the concerns and emotions of the research participants. This is certainly not an easy task, because participants need to share information that might be uncomfortable to them. Therefore, an important duty of researcher is to protect participants and the data they share. In this regard, I have kept a copy of the audio recording safe to protect the information collected (Sutton & Austin, 2015). My role as a researcher was to conduct interviews and analyse data.

3.11 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter describes the design and methodology of the qualitative research used to collect the data in this study, *Experiences of teachers with female leadership in secondary and primary schools in Ekurhuleni South District, Gauteng*. Semi-structured interviews were chosen over other methods, because they fit well with this qualitative approach, which focuses on developing a deeper understanding of the challenges women leaders are facing, and developing strategies to counter them. Study types, populations and samples, data analysis methods, ethical considerations, and issues of validity and reliability were identified. The next chapter presents the findings, analysis and interpretation.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Three, the researcher described the research design, paradigm and methods, as well as the data-collection instruments, sampling methods, and strategies. This chapter is a discussion of the data analysis and the findings from the interviews, with the intention to explore teachers' experiences with female leadership in schools, and to develop a model to improve female leadership in schools. In line with this, Simon (2014) emphasised the importance of comparing and/or synthesising the analysis with other studies, so that other researchers may not be hampered in carrying out similar research in the future.

According to Creswell (2014), researchers take a large amount of data and reduce it by observing similar patterns, testing hypotheses, and categorising the data into themes. They then interpret the analysed data, producing meaningful information for readers to comprehend the study and apply the findings to future research. This chapter explains the researcher's goal of understanding experiences by observing feelings, social interactions, and phenomena as they occur in the real world. The chapter's main goal is to analyse and discuss the research participants' experiences in words and statements. As a result, the researcher used verbatim responses to enrich the discussions and tie the subsequent themes back to the research questions and existing literature.

The researcher used her own words to clarify and interpret what the participants in the study had said. According to Hogan, Dolan, and Donnelly (2009), it is critical for the researcher to further interpret the words of the research participants to accurately and holistically align the research participants' feelings, emotions and words. As a result, this concept guided the inquiry qualitatively throughout, especially as the researcher studied the research phenomena in their natural settings. In Chapter 3, the researcher also mentions that in this study a thematic analysis of the data was used, in which the themes within the collected data were examined and recorded. Interviews yielded a wealth of information. This was done in the sampled schools where female teacher's experiences were examined.

4.2 Meaning of the codes

Code	Meaning
1. SCHL1P	Principal school 1
2. SCHL1D	Deputy principal school 1
3. SCHL1HoD	Head of Department school 1
4. SCHL1T	Teacher school 1
5. SCHL1TM	Male teacher school 1
6. SCHL3T3M	Male teacher school3

4.3 BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Position	Gender	Age group	Qualifications	Experience	School
1. Principal	Female	50-54	Diploma in teaching and Honours degree in Management	34 years	Primary School
2. Deputy	Female	40-44	Diploma in teaching	20 years	Primary School
3. HoD	Female	35-39	BA LLB & PGCE	14 years	Primary School
4. Teacher	Female	50-54	Diploma in teaching	32 years	Primary School
5. Teacher	Male	25-29	BA Psychology & PGCE	2 years	Primary School
6. Principal	Female	50-54	Bed Hons	26 years	Primary School
7. Deputy	Female	55-59	Hons Educational Law and Management	22 years	Primary School
8. HoD	Female	45-49	Bachelor of Education Honours	15 years	Primary School
9. Teacher	Female	60-64	Diploma in teaching	27 years	Primary School
10. HoD	Male	55-59	Diploma in teaching	35 years	Primary School
11. Deputy	Female	45-49	B Hons in Educational Management and Law	23 years	Primary School
12. HoD	Female	45-49	B Hons in Educational Management and Law	15 years	Primary School

13. Teacher	Female	55-59	BA Languages, Bed Honors	34 years	Primary School
14. Teacher	Male	35-39	Bachelor of Education Degree	5 years	Primary School
15. Teacher	Female	25-29	Bachelor of Education Degree Senior & FET	9 years	Primary School

4.4 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section is a discussion on the research findings. The analysis and interpretation of the data gathered through interviews with female school principals and deputies, findings are then interpreted from the data collected through interviews with post-level one and two teachers – both male and female – in three primary schools.

4.4.1 Introduction of themes to be analysed

Semi-structured interviews, were used to gather data. The participants' experiences helped to clarify the nature of their roles as primary school principals and deputies in the Ekurhuleni South District. Data were processed by using the thematic analysis procedure. It was used to identify themes related to women's leadership experiences. Important themes highlighted in this study includes, positive work experiences, how they prepared for leadership, factors they believed could either disturb or enhance participation of women in leadership, and their future aspirations. Other important themes included the factors that contributed to women principals' appointment, their administrative and personal challenges, and how they have impacted the management of the school.

4.4.2 Summary of emerging themes and related sub-themes

The following are the categories of themes and sub- themes derived from interviews:

Table 4.4.2

EMERGING THEMES	SUB-THEMES
4.4.2.1 Theme 1: The advancement of female school principals.	
4.4.2.2 Theme 2: Difficult climb to leadership positions.	4.4.2.2.1Management expertise 4.4.2.2.2 Motivational factors 4.4.2.2.3Leadership preparation and mentoring. 4.4.2.2.4Dedication and self-confidence
4.4.2.3 Theme 3 :Work encounters	4.4.2.3.1 Policy implementation
4.4.2.4 Theme 4 :A positive work history	4.4.2.4.1 Caring and nurturing
4.4.2.5 Theme 5: Future objectives	4.4.2.5.1Enhancing women's participation in leadership roles
4.4.2.6 Theme 6 :Favouritism at the workplace	
4.4.2.7 Theme 7: Lack of support	
4.4.2.8 Theme 8 :Home and work conflict	
4.4.2.9 Theme 9 : The leader's gender influences the discipline style and the school environment	

4.4.2.1 The advancement of female school principals

One of the objectives of this study was to find out how teachers feel about female principals leading their schools. With regards to the first research question, which related to teachers' experiences with female leaders, study participants discussed how they handle their leadership roles and how they are treated, and principals talked about the challenges they faced when they were promoted.

As a first point of reference, they described the types of leadership positions they held before being promoted to the position of principal. While one participant did not hold a leadership position when she was promoted to the role of principal, others served as deputies and department heads for their respective learning phases prior to them being promoted to school principal.

The interviews with the female participants revealed that, during the process of being promoted to the principal, they had traumatic experiences, related to gender bias in the internal and external environments of their schools. The following sections explore these encounters.

4.4.2.2 Difficult climb to leadership positions

Before their appointment as principals, the female principals in the study had a long road to leadership. They began their careers as PL1 teachers, which implies that they are experts in educational programme at first level (the lowest rank) within the school system. The data from this study show that female principals took longer than their male counterparts to reach their leadership positions, and had been in the field for 14 to 23 years before being appointed. However, SCHL1 P's and SCHL2P's roads to leadership took as long as 25 years to 31 years. Most of the female principals' qualifications were obtained through distance learning. These women did not have easy paths to attaining their leadership positions. Their respective paths were challenging for several reasons; the most important of which was that they had to prepare themselves physically and mentally. Secondly, they had to apply for positions previously held by men. This is consistent with the argument of Moorosi, who stated that "the reality of women principals' experiences suggests that women face a constant struggle against discrimination at two different levels," despite the fact that "South African

policy guarantees equal treatment of all people before the law…at the social and organizational levels" (2006:251).

The hypothetical structure that supports this study is women's liberation. It is important to note that a theoretical framework is merely a tool for understanding data analysis and not the primary goal of the study. A feminist theory that seeks to understand the nature of gender inequality, by examining women's experiences and gender roles, has been the foundation of liberal feminism. "Liberal feminism understands freedom as personal autonomy-living by one's own choice," according to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2007:2), "political autonomy as co-creating the conditions under which one lives." According to this theory, women's ability to exercise their personal autonomy depends either on a lack of conducive conditions in their lives or on social arrangements that do not respect women's personal autonomy and other aspects of women's well-being.

Furthermore, they argue that the conditions in which women live do not adequately reflect their needs and interests, and that these conditions lack legitimacy, because women are not adequately represented in the processes of democratic self-determination. Finally, they guarantee that these deficits in independence are due to the orientation framework, citing Okin (2003), who says that the male-centered nature of acquired customs and foundations and that women's development should seek to distinguish and heal them. After a thorough evaluation, the researcher found that the personality traits of female principals deviate from gender stereotypes. In light of this, SCHL1P commented as follows:

> "I firmly believe that God maps out a path for you. Mm-hmm… um, when I started teaching 34 years ago, um, I was privileged and blessed to have an inspection every year for my first four years, which is not something people like to do, but I considered it an absolute blessing because, in those days, the inspectors would come from the outside and then they would give you credits. And then when you got to a certain amount of credits, you were able to apply for a head of the department. Yes. So I considered myself very lucky. Um, four years in a row I had an, had inspections, and then, um, in my fifth year of teaching, I was made head of the department. Yes. Which is, um, phenomenal because normally you have to do a whole lot more work and you have to work a whole lot longer before that opportunity.

So I was very blessed in that I became a head of the department at the school I was at, uh, had to take, a very important leadership position because we had no male teachers in the school. Yes. Um, I qualified as a physical education, uh, specialist with 14 coaching certificates, of which, um, also a professionally qualified tennis coach. Um, yeah. So what happened was I grew a favourite amongst the school, amongst the parents, and especially amongst the learners. Yes Um, because I had to do all the boy sports. There were enough. Uh, ladies to do the lady sport. So I had, uh, I went and qualified as a soccer coach and referee, um, and did all the boys' sports, uh, introduced softball.

We were a small school, small field, and I think, you know, you can make things work for you if you are innovative and you have a drive and a passion. Um, so my drive and passion were not only for sport, um, but it also the academic side of things. Mm. Uh, but, I found my journey was so much better with the sport because you see children in a very different light when you deal with them in the classroom outside and when you deal with them outside. Mm, So I had a very good rapport with the children. I was young and fresh and excited and that's it. And, and the children and the. Grew. We were in, a predominantly Portuguese community. And when I say Portuguese, not just white Portuguese, We had a lot of the African, Portuguese from Mozambique and that kind of stuff.

And, um, our community, you know, thrived, um, and yeah, what we gave out. So I was the head of the department for 14 years.   And then, um, I applied, for a deputy principal's post at two schools. And it might sound a little bit arrogant. Uh, I'm very confident that it might come across as arrogant, but it wasn't. I applied to the school. I went to the primary that I used to go to because I wanted to give back to them. Um, it became sort of an underperforming school and I wanted to get in there to make a difference. And then I applied at another school, which at that moment in time was seen as a much, um, more affluent school and, uh, better facilities."

SCHL2P: I started off in as a teacher. It's just that now I, I'll be forgetting dates. But after that I applied for a post as a Head of department, I got it. Then also in the same school, I was lucky to become the deputy principal, but with the deputy principal, it took very long, I was about 15 years at Deputy, so we must have patience, But I was not also interested to apply to other schools

cause I felt I'm content where I am and uh, my children were also learning in the primary schools near me, so for me being working here it was privileged. So after that and I applied for the principal, and when it became vacant, like for the first time, I did not get it. I must say maybe also the lack of experience and lack of knowledge, which you know, how management do so and It was a, what you call an independent panel .After that, , three years ago mm-hmm, I was appointed to become the principal at the same school.

4.4.2.2.1 Management expertise

In this study, women principals not only had the relevant required qualifications, but they also had years of experiences as teachers. They gained managerial experience during the time they had worked at the school as HODs and deputy principals. Their teaching experience ranged from 21 to 31 years, and they had been principals for the last three to five years.

"*When I started teaching 34 years ago, um, I was privileged and blessed to have an inspection every year for my first four years, which is not something people like to do, but I considered it an absolute blessing because, in those days, the inspectors would come from the outside and then they would give you credits.*

Mm-hmm. . And then when you got to a certain amount of credits, you were able to apply for a head of the department. Yes. So I considered myself very lucky. Um, four years in a row I had an, had inspections, and then, um, in my fifth year of teaching, I was made head of the department. Yes. Which is, um, phenomenal because normally you have to do a whole lot more work and you have to work a whole lot longer before that opportunity. So then, um, I, uh, did a lot of work heading up the deputy principal's post. Um, I was there for 20 years and, you know, um, I was, I won't say angry, but um, in my 20 years I was able to, to really learn every aspect of governance, three years ago I was made principal here and that's where I have been for three years. ' – SCH1P

"*I started off in '96 as a teacher. It's just that now I, I'll be forgetting dates. But after that, I applied for a post as a Head of the department. Yes, I got it. Then also in the same school, I was lucky to become the deputy principal, but the deputy principal, it took a very long, I was about 15 years at Deputy, so we must have patience, But I was not also interested to apply. To other schools*

because I felt I, where I am and uh, my children were also learning in the primary schools near me, so for me being working here it was privileged. So after that and I applied for the principal, and when it became vacant, like for the first time, I did not get it. – **SCHL2P**

My journey up to now has been, it's obvious, it's been, of course, fun, but it's been, uh, an amazing journey in terms of What I've always wanted to be and leading towards is part of my journey where I am now. So it's taken a lot of hard work and dedication. I started teaching in 1999, and I became permanent in 2001 I became a PL1 one teacher immediately after I was appointed as a Head of the department in 2001   in 2014 I became deputy principal. I actually wanted to go through all of them. – **SCHL3D**

At least four participants, as revealed by the aforementioned data, had demonstrated leadership qualities in previous leadership positions before becoming principals and deputies. On their journey to become principals, teachers had prior experiences as administrators and HODs, indicating that they were knowledgeable about the official obligations at their schools, and if there was an opportunity to do so, they were able to lead the school, e.g. while their principals were on leave. As a result, they were so accustomed to leading schools that they were recommended as the best candidates, and eventually successfully applied for their current position as principal. Nevertheless, according to the findings of Lumby's study, "although women generally appear confident in their abilities and preparation experiences, the majority of them are primarily engaged in stereotypically feminine areas such as curriculum, personnel, and pastoral care, rather than stereotypically masculine areas such as facilities and finance" (2010:17). Moorosi agrees, but emphasised that "job preparation for certain women leaders has largely focused on regulatory encounters, as opposed to the broader expert experience required for advancement" (2010:7).

4.4.2.2.2 Motivational factors

The underrepresentation of women in positions of authority at schools prompted researchers' to investigate the possible elements/ factors that led to women being appointed as leaders. Local and international researchers like Lumby (2010) have carried out a lot of research. Moorosi (2010; 2011), Arar & Queder; and Parsaloi (2012), reported that academic credentials, self-confidence, dedication,

managerial experience, familiarity with the school community, and external motivational factors account for the representation of women in school management positions. Women principals in this study also confirmed these findings.

According to Priola & Brannan (2009), the certificates, diplomas, and degrees of the female principals in this study are prior to their appointment as principal or deputy principal, and even in some cases, after such appointment, most of them acquired their management qualifications through private study (2006 Moorosi). Financial constraints may have contributed to some of the participants acquiring the qualifications through part-time study. The female principals in this study are highly qualified, but they did not enter the teaching profession with these qualifications. They acquired them throughout their careers. According to Moorosi (2006), most black African women are forced to seek employment before completing school, because of their economically disadvantaged backgrounds. For those who aspired to leadership positions in the first place, this advantage made their journeys even more difficult, since they could not afford a good education. In addition, this could be seen as a barrier to advancement into leadership positions. They were motivated to advance to leadership positions by their qualifications. Four of the individuals who participated in the study had earned a university degree. When being asked about their qualifications, these female principals responded as follows:

"*I hold 14 coaching certificates including soccer coaching and an Honours degree in Educational Leadership and Management.*"– SCHL1P

"*I have a teaching diploma and I have finished my BEd Honours in Education and Management.*"– SCHL2P

"*I have BEd Hons in Educational Law and Policy.*' – SCHL3D

Requirements for a school principal in a secondary school in South Africa used to be REQV 14, which required a university degree, a tertiary education qualification, and at least six years of teaching experience. At the moment, anyone with at least five years of teaching experience and a certificate, diploma, or university degree in educational leadership and management can be appointed. This could assist female leaders to plan and set goals plan in order to reach their leadership aspirations.

"Societies have consistently organized themselves into public spheres, considered masculine, and private spheres, considered feminine," according to Awad and Eldon (2015:8). They asserted that the public sphere is associated with the broader society, including the political sphere, while the private sphere is associated with the household and the home. Women in the past were limited to the private sphere, which supported their exclusion from full participation in society. On the other hand, men were able to dominate the public sphere. Based on these descriptions, the researcher has no doubt that the female principals in this study chose to move from the private sphere to the public sphere. They gradually procured the necessary skills for the chief position. In this way, they moved away from supporting the patriarchal culture's insistence on traditional feminine values. By taking on roles normally reserved for men, they used their academic credentials to break away from stereotypes. All of this demonstrates courage, bravery, determination and self-confidence. The collected data shows that female principals are willing to help their society and the world as a whole, this takes into account liberal women's rights rather than women's liberation.

4.4.2.2.3 Leadership preparation and mentoring

Female principals' academic qualifications and leadership experience contributed to them being prepared for their leadership roles could. They confidently applied for the position of school principal because they had relevant qualifications in leadership and management, and these qualifications proved that they were well-equipped. They had already served as principals, assistant principals and department heads. According to Priola and Brannan (2009:379), "training, experience, and self-determination could help female principals feel well prepared before applying for leadership positions", which is consistent with female principals and deputies assertion.

In addition, female principals in the interviews indicated that the Department of Education (DoE) organised leadership conferences and workshops for them. In addition, their districts held introductory workshops for SGBs to help them distinguish between management and leadership roles. Some members appreciated these initiatives. They also said that the DoE held workshops to inform principals about new policies and curriculum changes. It can be inferred that the Department of Education was aware of some of the difficulties principals face as they moved into leadership roles.

4.4.2.2.4 Dedication and self-confidence

According to Greyvenstein (1989), barriers to career advancement may arise as a result of a person's lack of work experience, lack of self-assertion and self-confidence, poor self-image, excessively emotional reactions, dependence, or fear of success. Greyvenstein maintained that extrinsic barriers "indicate environmental mutable that influence the entry and progress of women into the management hierarchy of the teaching profession. These obstacles are inextricably linked to the intrinsic variables. Some of the extrinsic barriers that prevent women from obtaining promotional positions in schools are chauvinism, nepotism, a lack of mentors or role models, and a lack of networking, family commitments, social attitudes, organizational structure, and bureaucratic characteristics." (1989:22)

The data also shows that the female principals were their own motivators, which is another factor that appears to have increased the number of women in leadership positions. The female principals in the study relied not only on their credentials and leadership experience, but also on their confidence and determination. In addition, the fact that the women applied for promotion, indicates that they were confident in their leadership abilities and confident in the fact that they were qualified for these positions. They were selected, interviewed, and then entrusted with these positions. Two participants applied for the position of the school principal, and two participants applied for the position of assistant principal.

"*The school operated without a principal. Um, for that period of time. And, um, yeah, then out of the blue one day, you know, I received a phone call and they said to me, I need to come for an interview. And, um, then three months after the interview, still hadn't heard anything. And then, um, one day a phone call came, I was actually taking a rest on, on my bed and the phone call came to come to the department to fill in the documents and MEI all of that. And I said, why have I got the post? And then they said to me, we can't disclose anything, just come through.'*

So I immediately fell to my knees and just prayed and thank God. And I went through the department and there was still nothing because your first three candidates were awful in the same documentation because it's obvious. Um, equity redress, all sorts of things like that. And uh, yeah,

three years ago I was made principal here and that's where I have been for three years." – SCHL1P

"I applied for the principal, and when it became vacant, like for the first time, I did not get it.

Yes. I must say maybe also the lack of experience and lack of knowledge, which you know, how management does so and It was a, what you call an independent panel Oh, okay. So you didn't know anybody. Uh, was there too, for the support. To, for your support. Support to, to do in the, and then, then after that, uh, three years ago I was appointed to become the principal at the same school." – SCHL2P

"I was called for an interview and that was an interesting interview, mm. There were four males and I was the only female there but with the determination and dedication that I always have I had to go in that room and show them that women can lead and yes I was appointed as a deputy principal here in 2017." – SCHL3D

This shows that some participants already planned to become principals and deputy principals when they started their teaching careers. They worked hard to achieve their dreams, and the realization of their goals could be attributed to their ambition. Parsaloi (2012:22) cited Kelly (2008) when saying that women had sought-out leadership initiatives, as they were compelled to do so by an inherent passion for leadership. As they advanced in their careers, their interest in leadership intensified. The participants emphasised that interest alone is not sufficient, and that leadership is earned by means of an individual's hard work, commitment and dedication. This is in line with Lindo's viewpoint, who maintains that "apart from self-actualization women remained attracted to the principalship because of the desire to serve and create positive change" (2012:66).

This also shows that they did not listen to the discouraging stereotypical messages, such as "schools need male leaders…women are weak…women cannot lead…women cannot make bold decisions".

They refused to be influenced by their oppressed patriarchal mothers, sisters, fathers, brothers and husbands, who propagate the male dominance theory.

4.4.2.3 Work encounters

This section presents some of the coping mechanisms that female principals used, challenges that they have identified in their working environment, and how these had an impact on the school management as a whole. According to the data, female principals and vice principals faced a variety of obstacles in their respective environments. For example, the women in the study expressed dissatisfaction with the pessimistic attitudes that some stakeholders often displayed, but this varied depending on the contextual differences among the women.

This is consistent with post-structural feminism, because it recognises the differences in age, religion and social class that exist between women of the same race. Furthermore, this theory emphasises that there is no universal truth about women's experiences. According to Fenwick (2006), women's experience-based knowledge is a distinct discourse that is culturally and historically unique. Furthermore, Grogan and Shakeshaft asserted that "if we consider orientation as an essential perspective, women's voices and encounters are more significant and it is necessary to draw from them" (2011:456). Thus, this study identified organisational, personal, societal and administrative barriers.

4.4.2.3.1 Policy implementation

The participants discussed their experiences with the implementation of policy. According to SCH2P, educators are reluctant to adjust to changes in the DoE's policies and education system. As the accounting officer at her school, this has an impact on the school's smooth operation, and also puts her in an awkward position. It has been reported that some educators are uncooperative.

> *"Whatever ever happens must not drive you or derail you away from the policy, that's what I always tell my staff members, one thing that we cannot change, change is the policy. When you signed your pam document, you signed rules and regulations, everything so that you're going to go like this. You cannot manipulate a system, that's unfortunate. And then when, if a teacher is*

an absentee or a late coming as much as I understand the situation but then at the end of the day, much as I understand your pre-choice to come at home Yes. Or wherever, and why are things happening this way you have to sign the leave form." SCHL2P

School female leaders acknowledged that some measures are difficult to implement and often face significant resistance from educators and parents. This confirms the findings of Pillay (2005), Moorosi (2006) and Makhaye (2012). However, according to Eagly and Karau, "female principals face challenges when they exhibit masculine characteristics because they are judged to be contrary to the stereotype when they exhibit feminine characteristics; because they do not fit the description of a leader, they also face difficulties" (2002:518).

4.4.2.4   Positive work history

During school visits, positive aspects were observed and discussed, despite the difficulties that women participants encountered in the workplace; which principals either were aware of or were ignorant of. The researcher discovered this during observation sessions.

4.4.2.4.1 Caring and nurturing

Bosch, quoting Grady (1992), stated that a good school is "a nurturing, child-centered institution" (2015:21). Some of the participants' schools were observed to be clean, and students' school uniforms were neat. The school's cleanliness may be due to the fact that the principals are also mothers. The display of uniformity regarding dress code could indicate that the school maintains order and discipline. And by improving the cleanliness of the schools, they create a setting that is ideal for effective learning and teaching.

Wrushen and Sherman (2008) said that it was common for female principals to emphasise caring relationships and pastoral work as means of effective change. It was noted that female principals made an effort to organise award ceremonies to reward, support and encourage students who work hard and to demonstrate that hard work pays off. Recognising the accomplishments of students demonstrates that they care about the interests and development of learners. According to Grogan and Shakeshaft, this is in line with their "approach of prioritizing student learning" (2011: 34). Smith

(2011: 140), which sought to ascertain female teachers' perspectives on secondary school leadership, discovered that "tremendous satisfaction derived from working with young people and seeing them develop" emerged as the predominant theme. The principals' primary concern was to promote the 'students first 'philosophy within their school. Principals, deputies, and teachers shared their views on nurturing and caring as female leaders:

"I'll work on everything until the LTSM is restructured. The whole LTSM, the whole SBST process, the QMS and I still teach. I believe you have to be involved. In the classroom to understand how is the feeling Yeah. Do you really go to class? Yes, I go to class I teach grade four PSW. Um, the reason for my choice in grade four is because of the transition between grade three and four subjects and grades.

And I believe that they need to, have some calmness about the transition. So my choice was specifically, um, to go to grade four. Uh, my subjects are math and science, but I chose to go the grade 4 um, uh, to get in there, to try and just to nurture them, they and I need to be on the same page with my teachers. I can't tell them you know what to do. Whereas you don't know the feeling.

Furthermore, Um, but, you know, the sport has been in my blood and in my nature and, you know, closes Barriers that close gaps, that brings boys, girls together, together. We got to the point where now at school here and, and previously in, in my deputy position, we allowed the girls to play the boy's sport with the boys because there wasn't enough to do girls' team, boys' team, soccer, cricket. But you know, we've got in all of our teams here currently we've got a girl in a girl or two in each of the teams. And it's not, they're not there because of gender. They're there because of their ability." – SCHL1P

"Often I find those female leaders take on this job as their home life. This becomes what they are, this becomes their life whereas a male has got a different perspective on that. They can distinguish between, now close my door and I'm going home. Females don't do that. I know I'm a female I take my work home. Yes, that's how, that was my head and in my heart. I take my children that are in my class that goes back in today, I take them home with me and I worry about them. I

think a female's much more empathetic and we are able to find why the child is behaving like that."– SCHL1T1

"*I found that the male principal, although he was very kind and delegated a lot, whereas the female principal that we've got is very hands-on and won't expect anybody to do anything that she's not capable of doing. And I like the fact that she can, with us as staff. She knows what you go through as a mother, as a woman. So a lot more understanding in a lot of aspects.*"– SCHL1HOD

"*In my situation here, most children, fall pregnant, and they were drinking alcohol. They're the syndrome of what, whatever. Because I was about to ask about the environment that you are in. The children cannot write. The children in this environment need to be nurtured and helped from all angles so if you are going to come and think that teaching is just a game you won't make it I once had a teacher who left the job, but she couldn't. No. She won't be able with these children. So, she's living in this cloud of being well-urban. So a good teacher, English teacher, good teacher, do everything according, but the environment wasn't for her previous i's, and she'll, she left the job. I could understand. She resigned. She said, no, I've had it. I'm not coming back to that place. Ma'am, where are you? No, no, no. Try to convince her, but say, no ma'am, I'm just not right for the environment, she went back, and she left. So when you want to be happy, what I'm saying. , especially if you're going to teach children, must have that heart. You must know that our fun, it's very hard, and even the ones who cannot write, they have a good spot. Mm. There's something good. Those who like to hug you. Mm, I'm they always, yes. They always have that.*" – SCHL2P

"*A leader is a person, who understands, who can, um, accommodate as a mother, and who understands people's situations. I'm saying being a mother who has carried somebody, you know, different feelings. And how to cater to each of us.*"– SCHL2HOD1

"*I can say females, what I can say they have that thing, what can I say, mother motherly meaning they have a good understanding of people's dynamics.*" – SCHL2 HOD2

"So, I think I'm more comfortable with female leadership because I feel that they understand the challenges. I might have a female teacher, which means that they're more empathetic." – SCHL3T1

4.4.2.5 Future objectives

4.4.2.5.1 Enhancing women's participation in leadership roles

Women's participation in leadership could be increased, according to some suggestions made by participants. The following question was put to participants of the study: What would, in your opinion, encourage women to take on leadership roles? Their responses were as follows:

"I would say it's an absolutely wonderful job to come into because you're touching the lives of so many others. It also equips you with so many skills to raise your own children. Um, I, I think. You need to work hard. You need to reach for the stars. And even if you fall, you know, um, it's not how many times you fall, but whether you stand up again and, and try, you're going to have challenges that you're going to face in your life, um, all the time.

But you must not give into doubt. Uh, you must believe Uh, you know, God has a path for each and every one of our lives. And, um, you know, there are ways that you can upskill yourself if you are not dynamic or if you're not, um, energetic or if you're not, um, you can go on courses that can help you to become a lead too, to understand. I think, the, biggest advice. That you must have empathy towards your teachers, your staff, your learners, and your parents. You must listen and you must communicate well, you know with them." – SCHL1P

"A big thing there is that respect is earned. Yes. You can't just walk in and expect people to respect you is earned. Mm-hmm and I think that's where the older teachers also need to guide and mentor the young ones, And I, I'm too old for all of this. I just want to teach, I just want to do what I need to do. They are younger people that have got brilliant Leadership skills, they get looked over because they don't have the, I don't know, experience. But if you are not going to

mentor them then and you're not going to guide them, then how are they ever going to get up there? Or even give them some opportunity." – SCHL1T1

"Sometimes some women, don't really have the confidence to say, one day I want to be a principal or one day I want to be a HOD, one day I want to be a deputy. They just feel like I'm fine where I am. I know my place, I think it's the environment. If you are in a school like this where you are encouraged to improve yourself, you are encouraged to take that step. I'm sure there are other schools where there's a male in charge. But in my experience, I just think, you learn by looking at other people's examples and you can see somebody has achieved, they've worked hard, they deserve it, and you have guidance on the side." – SCHL1HOD

"I would say train more. Especially giving them an opportunity, like, although the, with the, there's. Uh, workshops with regard to curriculum coverage and all those things, but with the deputy principals train more. Train them more and expose the females, because that's where they get the opportunity. That's where they can so that they are ready you understand. We cannot just say, Okay, there are too many men then replace them with females. But we are saying train them or give them those opportunities. Give the females opportunities to even study further, which is like GDE is doing inviting them you know, to improve upon their mini reality skills.

It's a stable profession. You will never be rich, I always tell people, people, if you think you are paying to be rich as a teacher, you will never be rich. Even when you retire. They won't give you, maybe you say you, and they'll give you a little money and every month. But what I can say, is it's a guarantee."– SCHL2P

"You know, truth be told, females have a lot to work on in order to be respected. Uh, the only way I can say is just to keep on working on it. Keep on striving so that the results show for themselves. But other than that, the world does still look at us females as under men and we can't. But in actual fact, even men in leadership, survive because there's a woman somewhere who's assisting." – SCHL2HOD 2

"It's an awesome job. It's good, it's a nice job. Mm-hmm. , it's a lot of hard work. But when you get your things done on time and you set your goals like if you have a management plan,

your own timeframe for doing things, I don't think it'll be a fault. No, no, no, no. Also, it depends on how disciplined you are, and how motivated, you are."– SCHL3D

"Be embraced, embracing female leaders. We have lived in years where we've been preaching that females should be treated equally in everything and even with the years that have gone by. Mm-hmm. I still feel as a country we are, lacking in that department. Because we do not have a certain confidence in certain female leaders. As a woman, you are charged as a woman. If you are a female leader. Mm-hmm. , you are judged as a person that is going to be pregnant, and you are going to take another leave. You have children and you are not treated as a person. Yes, you are a leader and yes, you are a woman. So if we were to embrace that women can actually pave the way and be better leaders."– SCHL3T2

"So I think it's, it's all about, uh, giving them opportunities really. Because remember, you cannot become perfect until you try. You try and you've been guided. So my, my feeling is that I think women have been, uh, looked down upon for a very long time, for a very long time. So now once they're there in a top position, I think there is a belief In order for an organisation or whatever to be successful, it has to be a man always, or, which is not the case. We have got organisations that are led by women that are doing very well, doing very well. And uh, recently we heard that they, there are a lot of businesswomen. , uh, who are now millionaires and billionaires? Yes. Do you understand? So that shows that, uh, women indeed, got capability that they can lead. So I, I think, um, just to, to put everything in a nutshell, I can say that women, they just need to be given an opportunity, opportunities to be leaders." – SCHL3T3M

4.4.2.6 Favouritism at the workplace

This section presents teachers experiences regarding favouritism shown by leaders, at the workplace. They commented as follows:

"I know women, I think, I think it's, there's favouritism everywhere. Yes. II, I tell the kids, oh, okay, well, I shouldn't tell the kids, but the kids can see the way you treat certain kids. You have a better relationship with kids compared to another one. I think it may come across it as favouritism when certain when management is closer to other teachers and you, you would do the same thing, but you would be shouted at for certain things instead, and their friends would just be like, okay, no, don't do that next time.

Like I think, I think it's, it may come across as favoritism, but from MA side, like especially then, but at the same time, everyone experiences favoritism differently. Differently. So I think, yeah, as I say, I do think in my eyes I do see favoritism, but that's maybe because I experience favor differently." – SCHL1T2M

"So theirs is favourites, definitely. So in, in your point of view, when you are in leader and favoritism. Does it work? No, it doesn't. Because you cause so much animosity and hurt. And people feel they're just not good enough. That's not what you need. You need to be a unit Yes. To work together as well." – SCHL1T1

"I can't say my experience that I've, I've seen favouritism, um, and probably more when there was the male principal. Strangely enough, he had his favorites that you could see." – SCHL1HOD

"No means they don't treat every there in favor. Is it? Even in my decision, I've observed those things if somebody can say this, no, the leader will say, oh yes, it's true. Yeah, can do that. But if somebody else does what and then something else." – SCHL2T1

"In our school, I think it's different because you would find that even in other schools you find maybe there are teams where they are going out for lunch and stuff, and the principal is part of that group in our school. No, she doesn't go with anyone. She says she doesn't want to be

looked at as someone who favors others, events she attends the school's events event where everyone will be there, and I have not seen any favouritism.' – SCHL2HOD

"Favoritism depends on the person, that's my opinion. It depends on the person and not on gender. So in every gender, you will find people that favour some people. It does not depend on gender but on the type of person." – SCHL3T1

"It depends on a person's character and personality. In some cases, yes, they will treat people, as people that know what they hear. For people that know what their job entails, they would actually have to have that. And remember, with females, we always feel that there's a lot to prove. So you would want to make things as fair as possible or in other cases, while you are trying to prove yourself, you're actually shooting yourself in the leg. So I think it'll be it for me it depends on the person." – SCHL3T2

"We cannot run away from that favouritism is always there irrespectively being a male or female, uh, most of the time I will say it's, it's caused by I think if you lack some leadership skills in a way, you find that in most of the time, this teacher, so and so will come to you as a principal and then, uh, okay. Saying or maybe negative address, or maybe he's trying to address things, but then at the same time, it's like nailing somebody else. And then at the end, you feel like, okay, this is the right person whom I can consult in case I need to understand exactly what is happening so now at the end you find out this person becomes your favorite, Because this person can tell you one, two, and three apart. So and so, and then this, so and so did this.

And then sometimes you find, as he even suggests to understand, so it's more or less like gossip, because if you can allow one teacher to tell you something about teacher A without the teacher's presence meaning it's gossipy. Because remember, if you are a leader you are always interested. In finding out how do people feel about you so now you'll always have that person whereby you can, you know that if I can go to this person, I know you get all the information. And then at the same time, this person, all obvious is going to become come your favourite." – SCHL 3T3M

4.4.2.7 Lack of support

Barriers to promotion, according to Greyvenstein (1989:22), are all the factors that prevent women and men from achieving their full professional potential. It should be noted, however, that any scientifically selected set of barriers is not necessarily applicable to all women at all levels of promotion. Greyvenstein (1989:22) divided barriers into two types: intrinsic and extrinsic.

In addition, it was reported that some qualified women were discouraged by their families, especially their spouses, to apply for leadership positions; others have admitted that they do not want to travel long distances to work, because doing so will financially disadvantage their family; and many women impeded their own career development. The liberal women's activist hypothesis proposes that the absence of help and support is a consequence of the generalisation that ladies should not seek further duties than kitchen tasks and they ought to be decent spouses. According to Amondi (2011), this assertion is supported by the fact that domestic chores receive a lot of attention, which is a factor in the gender gap in leadership and education.

"I had a teacher who, retired end of last year, 42 years at this particular school in a PL one position. She wasn't interested in going to PL two or three or four. She wanted to teach and her entire teaching career, 42 years was at the school as a PL one teacher. So it depends on the person I can personally say the barrier is yourself. Because the sky is the limit, and in the department now they are trying their utmost to try and uh, get women into positions of authority and that redress and that whole mindset and that so, you know, your barrier is yourself.

If you are confident enough and you believe in yourself and you engage and you work hard but then again, you know there are different cultures, there are different races. In a lot of races, women were traditionally not seen on the same level as a male. So it is much more difficult for them to get that status than say, for example, another culture, which allows women equally, you know, to be equal." – SCHL1P

'Predominantly it's males, but we feel that as females, we are not given an opportunity. And if you check, uh, though we are mothers, did they take us as therapy mothers? But we make sure things happen.' – SCHL2P

'That's the biggest barrier. Um, I would always also go back to, as black people, we are also our own barriers. Barriers we don't look to uplift each other. Instead, we look to compete. Yes. So even with a female, there's that competition that we have. There's a certain stereotype that just goes around. The barrier is the stereotyping that we have against females and everything that comes with being a female.' – SCHL3T2

4.4.2.8 Home and work conflict

According to studies by Wrushen and Sherman (2008), Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011), Wachera (2013) and Uwizeyimana and Mathevula (2014), female principals face numerous challenges in balancing their professional and family responsibilities, because they are expected to perform well in both. The research participants also acknowledged that their leadership and administration of schools are negatively impacted by family obligations and responsibilities. A lot is expected of women in their respective roles as wives, mothers and school administrators. Smith J.M. explained that "female gender roles imply that women should primarily be wives and mothers" (2011 :). Women are viewed critically when they break these rules in their attempts to succeed professionally. They all have children to care for, according to the data. They also have to live up to cultural expectations. Because of the high demands of both roles, these factors pose challenges for most female principals. In addition, the data revealed that they experience feelings of inadequacy, frustration, conflict, and commitment both at home and at work. The following conversations support this:

"That was the nicest change from Deputy because I was obviously in the deputy position, I applied and I was like, you're successful here. But it was, that's that move over was nice. That was nice in terms of I could be close because I was traveling 80 km a day and then going to school. So my son was just born. And then I used to wake up in the morning, he was sleeping. Go to school sometimes I have a meeting, I come back, and he's sleeping already. I wake up the next morning, he's still sleeping. I go to school and I come back. Suppose that my biggest thing was when I had my son and had a challenge.

Yeah. I had him in 2016. So only for two years. Yeah, that was hectic. And then I came here in 2017, which then was close to home and so much better." – SCHL3D

4.4.2.9 The leader's gender influences the discipline style and the school environment

In addition, participants in this study have their own views regarding discipline and the creation of a warm environment. Short et al. (1994:8) encouraged students and teachers to participate in school management decisions. Many disciplinary problems arise in schools under autocratic and egotistical principals. According to Allie (2001:114), school discipline is influenced by the attitude of the principal. The perception of teachers in this matter, is as follows:

"*I think a female's much more empathetic and we are able to find why the child is behaving like that, but then once again, I think a male If the boys are acting out, I teach grade sevens. So they sometimes need that male figure in their lives to open up and say that there's this problem at home or this is a problem.*" – SCHL1T1

"*I don't think it does a great deal. Um, but it does in a way because yes, I've worked with the male principal before and everything was like you have to explain from page one to the last page where until he years until he gets to understand exactly what you're talking about. But with the female, she's on your page. You are on the same page. In terms of discipline, the males that we have here at our school are too kind to maintain discipline.*" – SCHL2HOD2

"*It definitely affects the school environment. I feel that male leadership is much harsher and sometimes males in leadership will not try and find out why the issue exists. They will just start shouting. Whereas female leaders are much more understanding and they try and figure out, they try and understand the issues behind the situation. Female leadership females tend to maintain discipline much more, but in a gentler way, which leads to healthier discipline because discipline is not only shouting and addressing an issue, but it's addressing the whole situation and all the issues behind the situation. So discipline is healthier when there are females in leadership.*" – SCHL3T1

"*I would say male leaders have a sense of masculinity in a no never-pleasing way , but female leaders have a sense of empathy so people will misinterpret the softness for weakness and the masculinity for power. So yes, it does affect the work environment and how people perceive you as a leader. Discipline depends on a person's character, remember we say leaders*

are born, not made. So whether you are a male or female and you are born to be a leader, discipline is nothing to you. Because you possess the skills and the knowledge." – SCHL3T2

"Remember the person who's leading the school, if that person is not well informed or doesn't know anything about leadership, it becomes a problem. Because remember, if you are a leader, you are dealing with different people. Uh, who, um, who affiliated in different unions and people who are intelligent. So now, if you are not, uh, aligning yourself with the policy, because what is going to combine these different people is the policy. So if that, uh, the leader is not aligned with the policy and then it teachers goes with the feeling and then it, so I respectively, if you are a male or a female, of course, you must have those leadership skills because the other thing is that, remember If the principal is good, uh, in leadership Automatically that school will out outperform, will outperform other schools. So that shows good leadership." – SCHL3T3M

In conclusion, it is shown that the gender of leaders does affect the school environment, as well as the culture of discipline.

4.5 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Female principals, substitutes, and teachers spoke, and this section summarises their perspectives. According to the data, both internal and external factors were responsible for their appointment as principals. Participants aided their own development by being confident and committed, by obtaining academic and professional credentials, and by gaining experiences within the familiar environments of their school communities. Externally, they also were encouraged by others and receive support from GDE, through e.g. different training opportunities. Some participants' journey to leadership was not easy, as it took longer for them to be appointed. Their dedication, confidence and hard work helped them to reach the top of the career ladder. Their efforts to ignore society's expectations were also striking. Some of these women are more than qualified; you can that tell they are dedicated to their leadership positions. Others deeply care for the children in their classes and go above and beyond teaching, as part of their core duties, according to PAM, as determined by the Minister of Education in terms of the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (the Act).

Teachers shared their experiences with female leaders, and the data showed that women in leadership positions have the ability to effectively manage their work, despite challenges. To get a sense of how male teachers feel about female leadership, they were surveyed and found to also support DoE's efforts to bring women into leadership positions, as women have too long been viewed with suspicion. The female principals also acknowledged that some of the barriers might discourage other female educators from pursuing leadership roles.

Last, but not least, the female principals in this study made every effort to overcome some of the obstacles, by using various coping mechanisms. They relied on their religious and spiritual beliefs, delegated tasks to subordinates, and even chose an authoritarian leadership style, while others chose a participative and democratic leadership style. Despite the efforts of female principals, they are still not taken seriously by the communities they serve, because of the lingering theory of male dominance and the belief that women are not created to lead. Unfortunately, other women who are supposed to support them also still hold the view that women belong in the kitchen. According to the data, women who are facing many obstacles in their schools are less motivated to advance to leadership positions, while those who are facing less challenges, have attempted to obtain more qualifications. To answer the research questions, this chapter presented data analysis from interviews, observations, and school records. The results of the data analysis are presented and discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Four described the nature of the participants' leadership experiences and how they interpreted them meaningfully. Chapter Five consists of a research overview, which provides answers to research questions, identifies a theoretical framework, outlines the policy implications of the research, highlights its limitations, and provides directions for future research and this field of study.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

. This occurs in South Africa, despite of the fact that the South African Constitution, as the supreme law of the land, provides for equality and non-discrimination on the basis of race, social origin and creed, and gender, among others. It also attempted to identify the challenges that female principals face in leading their schools. These difficulties are gender-specific, as men in comparable positions do not face the same leadership challenges. Many female educators with well-developed leadership skills are reluctant to enter the male domain of school leadership, resulting in the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. This is despite the growing global demand for change, innovation and transformation to achieve gender equality.

5.2.1 Overview of the study

The first chapter provided context for the research, by highlighting the research problem, the goal of the study, and the motivation for conducting the study. The chapter also described how the research would be carried out.

Because the study was rooted in this paradigm, Chapter Two began with a theoretical framework that provides perspectives of feminist theories, liberal feminism and radical feminism. Feminist paradigms have drawn attention to social aspects of life that other paradigms do not reveal, with the

goal of understanding the nature of gender inequality, by examining women's gender roles and lived experiences. The researcher mentioned liberal feminism, which is based on themes like equal opportunities, socialisation, gender stereotyping, sex discrimination, and the impact of structures that disadvantage women and establish exclusivity.

This chapter further focuses on a literature review of the selected research questions; thus, factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in management positions, as well as barriers to the advancement of women's participation in leadership positions. Women's challenges have also been identified, as has the extent to which these challenges impact their leadership roles. The leadership styles and strategies used by female principals were investigated. This chapter is concluded by describing teachers' attitudes toward female leaders.

The third chapter briefly described how the study was carried out; indicating the research method and research design.

Chapter Five is an extension of Chapter Four, which gave an overview of the study and provided a way forward. This study was set to explore and describe the experiences of teachers with female leadership in primary and high schools of Ekurhuleni South District. The study also sought to comprehend how female principals were appointed to positions of leadership, the challenges they face, and the coping mechanism they employ to deal with those challenges. The study was designed to answer the following seven specific questions about women's leadership experiences:

1. Can you elaborate on your journey to be appointed as a school principal?
2. Were there any challenges along the way?
3. Do you think there are enough women occupying the role of principal in schools? If not, how do you think this can be improved?
4. What do you think is the most significant barrier to female leadership?
5. There is a belief that females do not make good leaders. How has this belief impacted the role of principals?
6. What are some of the differences you have seen in how male leaders and female leaders are treated?
7. What advice would you give to young people, especially young girls, who are interested in the teaching profession?

The research also includes seven questions for teachers to answer about their experiences with female leadership:

1. How does it feel to be led by a female as opposed to a male?
2. Does the gender of leaders affect the school?
3. In terms of discipline there is a belief that males have more control than females. What is your view regarding this statement?
4. Is there any favouritism? Does she treat everyone equally?
5. Who do you think are more likely to be perfectionists – males and females in leadership?
6. In terms of respect, do you respect and take orders/instruction from female leaders?
7. How can a positive attitude towards female leaders be created?

To answer the above-mentioned questions, a qualitative research approach was used, which included semi-structured interviews. Additionally, a thematic analysis was used to analyse data which resulted in the study's findings. The researcher discussed the findings before drawing parallels and differences between the experiences of female leaders in Ekurhuleni South District and the experience of others that has been documented. Firstly, the findings concerning the factors that led to women being appointed as principals were discussed. These findings suggest that personal factors contributed more to women being appointed as principals than external factors.

5.2.2 Key empirical findings

The findings of this study appear to indicate that few women had a rather challenging journey before being appointed as school principals and deputies; that their qualifications played a significant role in motivating them to advance into leadership positions; and that it took between 10 and 20 years of teaching experience for them to be promoted to the position of principal. Except for one female principal with a college degree, all three participants in this study were appointed with at least one or two university degrees. This backs up Lumby and Azaola's (2011:17) findings that participants in their study had leadership and management experience, in addition to bachelor's or senior-level degrees. Furthermore, ladies acknowledged having the initiative to enroll for executive courses and to attend leadership workshops and conferences. According to the results of this study, female principals had previously served as HODs and assistant principals, indicating that they had

leadership experience. The findings of this study are consistent with those of Moorosi (2010), who asserted that the majority of the participants progressed through the stages from teacher to HOD, HOD to assistant principal, and eventually from assistant principal to principal. According to Moorosi (2010), there are a few exceptional cases where, for various reasons, stages in leadership were skipped. This was also observed in this study, in the case of SCH1D, who was promoted from PL1 teacher to deputy principal.

In addition, the research revealed that women were appointed as acting principals due to a vacancy. They then served as principals and were eventually permanently appointed and promoted. It should be noted that three of these women were appointed externally, and one was appointed internally. Two of the women principals were acting principals before they were appointed in the position permanently. This is consistent with Moorosi's findings that "familiarity of individuals with the school community appears to be critical to selection" (2010:9). It appears that the leadership role was unexpected, but the women saw an opportunity to lead and took it. This study also found that the participants were appointed at a later stage in their careers, as two of them were 40 years and older and the other two were 50 years and older. This is consistent with Moorosi's (2010: 9) finding thatthe experience becomes more complex as it is related to the familiarity of the candidates and, to some extent, the age of the candidates. She argues that the older the candidates, the longer their years of service, and the more likely they are to have served in the school. In addition, another study by Mollel and Tshabangu (2014) confirmed that women of childbearing age are often discriminated against, and their male counterparts are favoured with regards to appointments in leadership positions.

However, it appears from this study that some female principals, such as SCH1P and SCH2P, had planned their entire careers as principals; they had the desire to lead and serve their communities, and their ambition and confidence contributed to their appointment. In addition, two of the participating deputies stated that this was not the end of their careers as deputies. These assertions are consistent with previous studies, claiming that the desire to become a school principal was based on their own ambition, and they also described themselves as their own motivators (Lindo, 2012; Lumby, 2010; Parsaloi, 2012; Priola & Brannan, 2009; Zulu, 2001).

In addition, the results showed that they were also encouraged to apply for school principal positions by other sources, such as former principals, family members and district leaders. The women in this study valued these sources, as their motivators and mentors who contributed to their readiness for leadership roles. The findings confirm what Netshitangani and Msila (2014:262) asserted, even though some women received their promotion through the intervention of powerful men, they still state that they believe women can be adequate in these leadership positions.

On the other hand, the findings revealed that there are no formal mentoring programmes to support women principals, which is consistent with Lindo's (2012) findings. Moorosi (2007) argued that the absence of women in positions of influence suggests that women are viewed through traditional theoretical lenses and measured against ideals that have historically served men primarily.

Participants in this study indicated the various factors – individual, organisational, and societal – they perceive as barriers to women's advancement in leadership positions. The study found the lack of qualifications, as an individual factor, to be a reason why most female educators struggle to advance beyond the position of HOD or assistant principal. Failure to acquire relevant qualifications forces women to settle for the role of deputy head. Previous research has also shown that women are excluded from leadership roles due to a lack of academic qualifications, training and skills, and that women have little time to study, research, and write. This confirms the findings of Sperandio and Kagoda (2010:24) that the 2004 annual school census, published by the Ministry of Education, found that 29% of secondary school teachers in Uganda have an undergraduate degree with less than 2%.

Leadership is perceived by many educators as stressful, demanding and time-consuming. Mbepera (2015) and Gobena (2014) also confirm that participants have a general sense that women are more sluggish than their male counterparts in carrying out their professional duties. In addition in SCH3D one of the participants reported that after qualified women apply for promotion positions, they get shortlisted and interviewed, but they do not get the jobs, and no real reason for not being appointed or for not passing the interview, is given.

Furthermore, findings revealed that women lack confidence in their ability to lead schools, particularly in the presence of men. Women are also said to still regard leadership as a male-dominated role.

Previous research has found that many women internalise attitudes and role expectations; learning to neatly fit into stereotypes, which can be a major hindrance in the development of their individual personalities (Chabaya et al. 2009).

These findings revealed that, while society's perception of female principals is gradually changing, gender and cultural stereotypes continue to play a significant role in how women principals are perceived. Women principals continue to be perceived as less competent than their male counterparts. In general, society still does not take women seriously. There is still the widespread belief that women are incapable of making bold decisions. They are perceived as weaklings who easily cry, and as a result, they cannot lead as men do – they rather belong in the kitchen.

Women principals in this study confirmed that their leadership abilities are being questioned. Previous research by Ngcobo (2010), Mestry and Schmidt (2015) attested to the fact that, how women principals are perceived is influenced by traditional beliefs, because patriarchal culture continues to dominate in most school communities. Other researchers argue that the construed meaning of gender stereotypically classifies women's insubordinate roles and identifies them with the domestic arena, which is often seen as inferior to the public arena.

The study found that while there were some concerns and reservations about female leadership among teachers, most believed that gender was not a decisive factor in leadership effectiveness. According to the participants, female leaders are more approachable, collaborative, and empathetic than their male counterparts, which creates a positive working environment and enhance staff morale.

According to the findings, female principals are more flexible in their leadership roles; they use a variety of leadership styles to deal with challenges and manage their institutions. According to the evidence, female principals exhibited feminine characteristics, such as being caring and nurturing, having interpersonal relationships with stakeholders, appreciating good time management, and empowering and developing staff through consultative and democratic leadership styles; all of which contribute to transformational leadership. According to Marlene and College (2009), women principals are organised and efficient, they are policy implementers, and they are interested in learner

performance. According to the findings of Gura-Mutunhu-Mudiswa and Bolt (2012) and Swan (2014), women sometimes adopt authoritarian leadership styles as a strategy to deal with some of the challenges they face. Arar and Queder (2012).

As a result, female leaders are said to employ a mix of feminine and masculine qualities Ngcobo, 2010; Arar et al., 2011). Spiritual leadership is also noticeable (Dryer, 2011 & Lumby, 2010).

Women principals' work experiences ranged from personal challenges to administrative responsibilities. This study discovered many similarities and differences in the experiences of female principals over the many years they had spent in the teaching profession. Administrative challenges mentioned by women included a lack of staff, insufficient furniture and classrooms, a lack of funds, a lack of professional dedication and commitment, a negative attitude from stakeholders, unruly behavior from students, lateness, absenteeism from both students and educators, a lack of support from the DOE and parents, and resistance to policy changes. All of this supports the literature reviewed by Akao (2008), Moorosi (2010), Makhaye (2012) and Parsaloi (2012).

Women used strategies such as delegation to relieve themselves of other responsibilities. They included parents and staff in school decision-making, implemented various school policies to instill order and discipline, raised funds to alleviate financial problems, locked gates for late-arriving learners, and involved communities in school projects such as gardening, feeding schemes, and caring for the school environment, which served as a coping mechanism at SCH1P. Some female principals revealed that they relied heavily on their religious faith and, in some cases, the support of stakeholders to cope with difficult situations.

Women turn challenges into opportunities by continuing to show care and nurturing, developing and empowering their staff, improving learner performance; building teams and positive relationships with stakeholders where possible; and instilling discipline by encouraging learners and educators to respect people's time, the school's code of conduct, as well as other school policies. These are some of the changes they implemented in their schools. Despite the difficulties they have encountered throughout their careers, they remain confident and optimistic about their leadership as they achieve success in some areas. They overcame some difficult situations, which boosted their morale. This

backs up Diehl's (2014) findings that participants viewed adversity through the lens of pre-existing faith or beliefs, because instead of focusing on the negative outcome of adversity, participants who firmly held on to their faith, were able to focus on the benefits of adverse experience.

Teachers shared their experiences with female leaders, and the data revealed that women in leadership positions are capable of managing their work effectively, despite challenges. To get a sense of how male teachers feel about female leadership, they were polled, and it was discovered that they also support DoE's efforts to bring women into leadership positions, despite the fact that they have long been viewed with suspicion. The female principals also acknowledged that some of the obstacles may deter other female educators from pursuing leadership positions.

Overall, the study provided important insight into the experiences of teachers with female leadership and highlighted the need for further research and policy interventions to promote gender equality and support the advancement of women in leadership roles in the educational sector.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher makes the following recommendations to address the underrepresentation of women in management and leadership positions:

1. To apply for principal and deputy positions, women educators should obtain credentials by enrolling in management and leadership courses that will strengthen their leadership skills.
   I applied for the principal, and when it became vacant, like for the first time, I did not get it.
   Yes. I must say maybe also the lack of experience and lack of knowledge, which you know, how management do. Give the females opportunities to even study further, which is like Gde is doing inviting them to workshops to improve upon their management skills.SCHL2P

2. Women must gain confidence, which can only be attained through education and knowledge.

4. Preparation programmes for those already in middle-management positions should be made available to all female educators in order to empower them.

5. Stakeholders should be made aware of the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1997, which aims to address gender issues in governance and management, and they should be encouraged to

participate in the implementation of the Ministry of Education's strategies. This must be evaluated on a regular basis.

6. Leadership must be redefined to include a feminist perspective so that the process of socialisation becomes broader. This can help to change the perceptions regarding women principals who lead secondary schools.

Women principals require a district-wide network and support system in which successful female principals and deputy principals can serve as self-confident mentors for newcomers, aspiring female educators, and other serving female leaders.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Based on the Netshitangani study (2014:244) "Situated accounts: Qualitative interviews with women educational managers", when maintaining that the interviewer must be aware of contextual factors as these have an influence on research activities, particularly on qualitative interviews, it is possible that participants were biased when responding to interview questions.

2. The first limitation relates to the limitedness of the research sample. The researcher had issues with one school, which forced her to cancel all interviews scheduled at that school. She attempted to obtain permission from the principal, but the receptionist referred her to the PA, who told her to leave her information and that the principal would get back to her, but the researcher waited a week and called again to obtain an email address, in order to send the email, but there was no response from the principal. Another constraint was school number 3, where only four participants were interviewed, and due to the deputy's schedule, the researcher could not interview her.

However, despite the fact that only a small sample of participants was chosen for data collection, which could be considered as a limitation to the investigation, the collected data provided a rich source of information on the challenges of female leadership.

3. The study looked into the leadership experiences of female principals and deputies in primary schools at Ekurhuleni South District in Gauteng. As a result, this study's findings may not apply to all female primary school principals or female leaders in other countries, provinces, or rural

areas, as their experiences may differ. The findings should be regarded as guidelines for better understanding female leadership experiences in urban schools. However, these findings can help to understand issues in women's educational leadership in contexts similar to what was discussed in this study.

5.5 AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. Since this study focused the experiences of teachers with female school leaders in a predominant urban province in South Africa, further studies on the challenges faced by women in other provinces with more rural areas are suggested, to determine if there are differences in the challenges and experiences of teachers faced with female leaders in relation to rural and urban settings.

2. Parents' and learners' perceptions of female leadership should be studied.

3. The focus on only teachers working under female leadership.

5.6 CONCLUSIONS

The female school principals and deputies, who took part in this study on female leadership, applied for their positions as school principals and were successful due to their demonstrated competencies. Regardless of their experience as teachers, HODs or deputy school principals, they faced challenges as leaders, as a result of a long-standing bias against female leadership. These challenges had a negative impact on female leaders; they began to doubt their own leadership abilities, which then had a negative impact on their leadership journey.

Teachers' experiences with female leadership also had a significant impact on this study. The impact of female leadership on teachers' experiences was quite variable as it depends on various factors such as the leadership style, the professional background of the leader, the school culture, and the gender biases of the staff members. Some of the teachers feel empowered and inspired by female leaders who bring diverse perspectives, empathy, and communication skills to the table, while others may feel intimidated or threatened by their authority and assertiveness.

To address gender-bias-related challenges, female leaders must focus on their own professional development and the application of relational leadership, which might encourage stakeholder support and goodwill. Female school leaders will eventually, through their consistent good performance, based on knowledge, skills and resilience, counter deep-rooted gender bias and convince stakeholders of their contribution to effective school functioning with the accommodation of stakeholder input through humility, approachability; and by being caring, compassionate and tolerant.

5.7 REFLECTION ON MY RESEARCH JOURNEY

When I first started my journey, the task ahead of me seemed quite daunting. Understanding where and how to start was a big part of my struggle. When I started reading the journals and talking to other scholars and with great help from my supervisor, the problem began to shrink to a manageable size. I began to form my hypothesis and collected data to support it. The dissemination of your first idea to the dissemination of your last, is an iterative process. You will be constantly gathering data and reassessing your results. I would say that you would be lucky not to have to change your hypothesis at least once to match your data.

As time passed, I realised that I would have to do a lot of reformulating. I improved significantly in terms of gathering evidence and disseminating the findings. I began to comprehend how to read papers and what to look for.

I spoke with other graduate students, who explained that they had experiences similar to mine, Search is definitely a craft. You will be constantly adapting and honing your skills, as the audience becomes smarter and the problems become more difficult.

Although it may seem obvious to some, I believe it is worth mentioning – you may have frustrating days when you feel as if you have hit a brick wall, and when you are forced to reconsider your entire approach. However, when you achieve a good result feels sweet in comparison to the moments when you struggled the most. Research is a journey, and if you focus too much on the end result, you may miss out on all of the wonderful things you could find along the way. My research interest stemmed from my own upbringing, as I was raised by a strong single woman, whom I still admire today. I focused on teachers' experiences with female leadership, and I chose this title because I am a young

educator who has seen how females are not given equal opportunities in the education sector. Being a mother who worked and studied at the same time, there were times when I would break down and cry, but although it was challenging, I always pulled my self together and tried and tried again. Furthermore, I thank everyone who helped me to complete this study. I especially want to make special mention of the UNISA officials and my supervisor, who gave their input and added so much value throughout the research process.

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A: Clearance certificate from Unisa Ethics Committee

UNISA | university of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2022/09/07

Dear Ms NH Mngadi

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2022/09/07 to 2025/09/07

Ref: **2022/09/07/51426358/09/AM**
Name: Ms NH Mngadi
Student No.:51426358

Researcher(s): Name: Ms NH Mngadi
E-mail address: 51426358@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 0782138696

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof R. L Lumadi
E-mail address: lumadri@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 012 429 2123

Title of research:

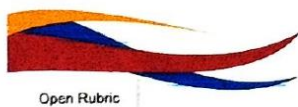**The experiences of teachers with female leadership in Ekurhuleni South District, Gauteng**

Qualification: MEd 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 2022/09/07 to 2025/09/07.

The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2022/09/07 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.

Open Rubric

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 **2025/09/07**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2022/09/07/51426358/09/AM** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,

Prof AT Motlhabane
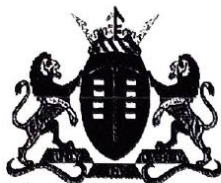**CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC**
motlhat@unisa.ac.za

Prof Mpine Makoe
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Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

University of South Africa
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PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
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GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	10 October 2022
Validity of Research Approval:	08 February 2023– 30 September 2023 2022/473
Name of Researcher:	Mngadi NH
Address of Researcher:	Unit 206 Summerton Place
	21 Webber Road
	Germiston
Telephone Number:	011 8730179 / 078 2138 696
Email address:	lelomgandi@gmail.com
Research Topic:	The experience of teachers with female Leadership in Ekurhuleni South District, Gauteng
Type of qualification	Masters
Number and type of schools:	2 Primary Schools and 2 Secondary Schools
District/s/HO	Ekurhuleni South

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.

11/10/2022

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below are met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:
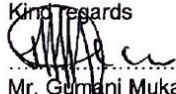
1

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

1. The letter 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. **Because of the relaxation of COVID 19 regulations researchers can collect data online, telephonically, physically access schools, or may make arrangements for Zoom with the school Principal. Requests for such arrangements should be submitted to the GDE Education Research and Knowledge Management directorate.**
4. **The Researchers are advised to wear a mask at all times, Social distance at all times, Provide a vaccination certificate or negative COVID-19 test, not older than 72 hours, and Sanitise frequently.**
5. 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 has been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
6. A letter/document that outlines 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.
7. The Researcher will make every effort to obtain the goodwill and cooperation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers, and learners involved. Persons who offer their cooperation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
8. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school program 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
12. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her 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.
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. 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.
16. 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 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

Mr. Gumani Mukatuni
Acting CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 11\10\2022

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Making education a societal priority

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GAUTENG PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enquiries: A. Hutton
Tel: 011 389 6220
Ref: ISSP: P&P 18/22

To: District Based Support Team

Subject: Research Approval

Please be advised that the Gauteng Department of Education has given Ms NH Mngadi permission to conduct research. The research is purely on a voluntary basis and the researcher would be interviewing educators at 2 primary and 2 secondary schools. The research at the schools will be conducted during Term 4 of 2022.

The research title is:

"The experience of teachers with female leadership in Ekurhuleni South District."

R.S Maboa .
CES: ISSP
24 October 2022

B.P. Luthuli
District Director
24 October 2022

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR: EKURHULENI SOUTH
02 Robin Close Infinity Office Park, Meyersdal Alberton 1447 I Private Bag X8001, Alberton North 1456
Tel: (011) 389 6000
Email: Busi.Luthuli@gauteng.gov.za
www.gautengonline.gov.za I Hotline: 08600 11 000

APPENDIX D: Letter requesting permission from my principal to conduct research

Unit 206 Summerton Place

21 Webber Road

Germiston South

1401

15 November 2022

School address

Dear Principal

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Nompumelelo Highness Mngadi an educator at your school. As you are aware that I am a Masters student at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in the department of Education Leadership and Management under the supervision of Professor Israel Lumadi. As part of my studies I have to conduct research interviews to fulfil the requirements of my dissertation. I would like to use the 21st November 2021 to conduct interviews at our neighboring school. You are welcome to contact me at lelomngadie@gmail.com / 0782138696.

My interview schedule is as follows:

21 November 2022   School 1 Principal and Participants.

01 December 2022   School 2 Principal and participants.

05 December 2022   School 3 Deputy and participants.

I will inform you in writing with other interviews.

Yours Faithfully   Principal Signature: _____

Miss N.H. Mngadi   Name & Surname   : _____

APPENDIX E: Letter requesting female principals to conduct research

Unit 206 Summerton Place

21 Webber Road

Germiston South

1401

15 November 2022

SCHOOL ADDRESS

Dear Principal

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I, **Nompumelelo Highness Mngadi,** I am registered for a Master's degree in Education Leadership and Management at the University of South Africa. I hereby request to conduct research at your school. My research project seeks to explore the ''experiences of teachers with female leadership in schools ''. Your participation will construct an important part of this research project.

Please keep in mind that the research will not infringe on any human rights or privacy. The confidential information of those who participate in this research will not be disclosed to anyone other than myself and my supervisor, Professor R. Lumadi .The information provided by participants will be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for the purposes of this research.

I commit to sharing the study's findings with the school because I believe they will have a positive impact on the role of female leadership.

Your interest and support in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully   Principal Signature: _____

Miss N.H. Mngadi   Name & Surname   : _____

APPENDIX F: Letter to participants

UNISA

Unit 206 Summerton Place

21A Webber Road

Germiston South

1401

15 November 2022

Dear Participants

RE: LETTER REQUESTING TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I, Nompumelelo Highness Mngadi am conducting as part of my research as a master's student entitled" **The experiences of teachers with female leadership in Ekurhuleni South District, Gauteng Province** at the University of South Africa. Permission for the study has been given by Gauteng Department of Education and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic.

I would like to tell you more about this project and what your involvement would entail if you agreed to participate. In this interview, I would like to hear your thoughts and opinions on the subject. The study's significance is that it investigates female leadership in the education sector.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It will entail a 60-minute interview in a mutually agreed-upon location at a time convenient for you. You have the option of declining to answer any of the interview questions. Furthermore, you have the option to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

The interview will be audio-recorded with your permission to facilitate the collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. I will send you a copy of the transcript shortly after it has been completed to allow you to confirm the accuracy f our conversation and to add or clarify any points. All information you provide is kept
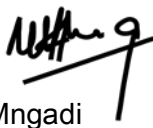
strictly confidential. Your name will not be published as a result of this study, and any identifying information will be removed from the report. However, anonymous quotations may be used with your permission. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 0782138696 or by e-mail at lelomngadie@gmail.com or my supervisor at lumadri@unisa.ac.za/ 0715322761.

I look forward to speaking with you very much and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, I will request you to sign the consent form which follows on the next page.

Yours Faithfully

Signature:

Miss N. H Mngadi

APPENDIX G: Informed- consent form

UNISA

INFORMED-CONSENT FORM

I_____ agree to contribute to the research project titled THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS WITH FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN EKURHULENI SOUTH DISTRICT, GAUTENG, which is being conducted by Nompumelelo Highness Mngadi, who has discussed the project with me.

I received, read, and kept a copy of a letter to the participant informing me about the research and my role as a participant. I had the opportunity to ask questions about this research and received reasonable responses. This research's overall objectives, risks, and methods are clear to me.

I agree to participate in the research project and have been informed of the following:

What is expected and required of me. My participation is entirely voluntary on my part.

My right to withdraw from the research at any time without consequence. Whom should I contact if I have any questions about the research or the way it is being conducted? The research may not directly benefit me. I will be given a copy of my transcript and research findings. My personal information will be kept secure and confidential.

In addition, I agree to: an audio recording of all research activities; and publication of study results under the condition that my identity is not revealed.

_____   _____

Researcher signature   **Participant signature**

_____   _____

Date (YYYY/MM/DD)   Date (YYYY/MM/DD)

APPENDIX H: Letter requesting permission from District Office

UNISA

Ethics ref: 2022/09/07/51426358/09/AM

Unit 206 Summerton Place

21A Webber Road

Germiston South

1401

October 2022

02 Robin Close Infinity Office Park

Meyersdale

Alberton

1447

Dear Sir / Madam

RE: REQUEST PERMISSION TO CONDUCT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN EKURHULENI SOUTH DISTRICT, GAUTENG.

I, Nompumelelo Highness Mngadi am doing research under supervision of R.I. Lumadi, a Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management towards a Master's Degree at the University of South Africa. We are requesting permission to conduct research in a study entitled **Experiences of Teachers with Female Leadership in Ekurhuleni South District Gauteng.**
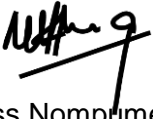
The aim of the study is to explore the experiences of teachers about female leadership on the perception of female leadership in Gauteng with a focus on Ekurhuleni South District. The study will entail: the experiences of teachers with female leadership on the perception of female leadership.

The benefits of this study: are female teachers stand to benefit from this study as policy changes informed by the policy could advocate for their rights in leadership positions in the education sector.

Potential risks: In this study there is no potential risk and harm that will befall the participants because the researcher will be a passive observer of daily marginalization based on gender in the workplace.

Feedback procedure will entail copy of the dissertation will be given to each of the schools that took part in the research and a summary of the findings and recommendations will be discussed with the female participants of the schools that took part in the research.

Yours faithfully

Miss Nompumelelo H. Mngadi
Researcher

Ethics ref: 2022/09/07/51426358/09/AM

<div align="right">

Unit 206 Summerton Place

21A Webber Road

Germiston South

1401

October 2022

</div>

7th Floor

17 Simmonds Street

Johannesburg

2001

Dear Sir/ Madam

RE: REQUEST PERMISSION TO CONDUCT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN EKURHULENI SOUTH DISTRICT, GAUTENG.

I, Nompumelelo Highness Mngadi am doing research under supervision of R.I. Lumadi, a Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management towards a Master's Degree at the University of South Africa. We are requesting permission to conduct research in a study entitled **Experiences of Teachers with Female Leadership in Ekurhuleni South District Gauteng.**

The aim of the study is to explore the experiences of teachers about female leadership on the perception of female leadership in Gauteng with a focus on Ekurhuleni South District. The study will entail: the experiences of teachers with female leadership on the perception of female leadership.

The benefits of this study: are female teachers stand to benefit from this study as policy changes informed by the policy could advocate for their rights in leadership positions in the education sector.

Potential risks: In this study there is no potential risk and harm that will befall the participants because the researcher will be a passive observer of daily marginalization based on gender in the workplace.

Feedback procedure will entail copy of the dissertation will be given to each of the schools that took part in the research and a summary of the findings and recommendations will be discussed with the female participants of the schools that took part in the research.

Yours faithfully

Miss Nompumelelo H. Mngadi
Researcher

APPENDIX J: Interview schedule for female principals and Deputies; interview schedule for HODs and teachers

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: For Female Principals and Deputies

1. How was your journey to becoming a school Principal?

2. Were there any challenges along the way?

3. Do you think there are sufficient woman occupying principal roles in schools? If so, how do you think this can be improved?

4. What do you think is the most significant barrier to female leadership?

5. There is a belief that females don't make good leaders. How has this belief impacted on the role of principals?

6. What are some differences you have seen in how male leaders and female leaders are treated?

7. What advice would you give to young people, especially young girls, who are interested in teaching profession?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: For HODs and Teachers

1. How does it feel to be led by a female as opposed to males?

2. Does gender of leaders affect the school?

3. In terms of discipline there is a belief that male have more control than female. What is your intake on this statement?

4. Is there any favouritism / does she treat everyone equally?

5. Whom do you think is the perfectionist between males and females in leadership?

6. In terms of respect do you respect and take orders / instruction from female leaders?

APPENDIX K: Editor's letter

Mrs J Kalamer (LLM & Certificate in Editing)
CatchPhrase Editing and Proofreading
PEG Membership no. KAL003
SAFREA Membership no. SAF000891
Cell number: 083 4433434
Catchjeanne@gmail.com OR
Jeanne.kalamer@gmail.com

21 January 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby confirm that I, the undersigned, have language edited the Master's thesis, entitled,

The experiences of teachers with female leadership in Ekurhuleni South District, Gauteng

written by

Nompumelelo Mngadi

The responsibility of implementing the recommended language changes rests with the author of the thesis.

Yours truly

Jeanne Kalamer
EDITOR, PROOFREADER & TRANSLATOR

The experiences of teachers with female leadership inEkurhuleni South District, Gauteng

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