

**EXPLORING WOMEN SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' MANAGEMENT
EXPERIENCES: EVIDENCE FROM MAFUKUZELA-GANDHI
CIRCUIT IN PINETOWN DISTRICT**

by

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This dissertation has been submitted with/without my approval

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, **Ntombikayise Ngcobo**, hereby declare that this dissertation is my work and does not contain any materials, which have been submitted before for any degree in any institution. Use of any published material has been duly acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to my young sister Sihlengiwe Fiona Nkosi who is now in the hands of the Lord. She knew me as a heroine.

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to explore eight women school principals' management experiences and challenges that these women encounter in their day-to-day management duties. It used semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis as its methods of data collection. The findings revealed that women principals encountered the challenge of being caught in the middle of having to balance domestic chores (being mothers and wives) and work responsibility (as school principals). The simultaneous demands of domestic and work responsibilities ensured that the women principals were inequitably pressured in their roles as school managers compared to their male counterparts. Other challenges related to gender stereotypes (perceptions held by some teachers and parents that women are care-givers, nurturers, and therefore not suited for management positions) and lack of women role models in school management positions.

Even though women principals were challenged in their management duties they engaged in empowering management approaches by means of involving all the staff members in the decision making processes. The study highlighted the challenges that women principals encountered in maintaining their identity as women (feminine) in a male orientated field of school management. In managing the schools they used different approaches of management depending on the situation, and these included the adoption of masculine and authoritarian management strategies. By and large, these women principals insisted on using management strategies that are associated with femininities, such as empathy, cooperation, pastoral care and so forth. These strategies seemed more appropriate in promoting democratic participation in schools, as stipulated in South African education policies. The study recommended that holding induction programmes, building women networks, workshops and seminars could be a useful strategy in supporting women school principals.

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CHAPTER 1

THE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and purpose of the study

This is a qualitative study of women principals in eight primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. The study sets out to investigate the experiences of women principals in these schools, how these experiences affect the women principals' styles of management, and the impact of these styles on these principals' identities as women. It used semi-structured interviews, document analysis and observations as its methods of data collection.

This chapter provides a brief history of women's discrimination in South Africa, and the current educational policies regarding the challenges of women managers in South African schools. It also provides the rationale and focus of the study followed by key research questions, and the significance of the study. It concludes with an outline of the organisation of the entire dissertation.

Black South African women have been historically disadvantaged in the sense that they never had equal opportunities of education with their male counterparts and other women of colour Kotechea (1994). They were not offered the opportunity to be educated to upper grades. They were encouraged to grow up, get married and have children. As a result, men tend to define the role of women as housewives and mothers, nurturers and caregivers, expecting women to operate within the limitations of these positions. Patriarchal views, based upon the notion that men are superior to women, are evident in African traditions. According to Thindziambi Phendla (2004) in her study of life stories of black women leaders in South Africa, black women school leaders are compelled to learn how to find the way across the tension created by culture, language, and customary laws. She therefore advises that it is essential to understand black women's position as a complex environment of domination that requires peeling off the multiple oppressive layers to reveal their lived experiences. Educational leadership in apartheid South Africa was characterized by extreme authoritarianism, as schools had to reflect the ideology of the state. Therefore the answers to the many problems

that women today face are rooted in a complex mix of historical forces related to the apartheid government, cultural beliefs and gender perceptions within the society.

In 1994, South Africa became a new nation, born out of national democratic elections. New democratic values emerged and signalled the end of the apartheid government. This new South Africa represents a fundamental shift from the social, political and geographical landscape of the past Preece (2000). Unity has replaced segregation, equality has replaced legislated racism, and democracy has replaced apartheid. Indeed the shift in social power has brought about transformation in the South African education system. The main aim of this process was to reconstruct the South African education system, and to redress the imbalances of the apartheid era. The new democratic values filtered through schools. The Bills Of Rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996, assures equal benefit of the law and declare clearly that: *Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law* (Section 9.1).

The Constitution requires the equal treatment of all citizens. The Government is trying hard to eradicate the imbalances of the past through affirmative action. A Gender Equity Task Team was established to redress issues relating to gender inequalities in education (including in education management) The Employment of Educators Acts No. 76 of 1998 and the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998, Gender Equity Act 1996 facilitated the entry of women into a “previously all male domain of educational bureaucracy” Chisholm (2001:387). These Acts prohibit unfair discrimination in employment and ensure that women are equitably represented at all levels of employment.

Hence in South Africa women are now being given full opportunities to become school managers, in order to uphold the constitutional values such as human dignity, social justice, democracy and equality of opportunities on which schools are expected to operate. The role of managers in the school is to provide such opportunities for educators, learners and parents in schools. As former minister Kader Asmal puts it, “the challenge facing us in South Africa is to create an education system that liberates human potential and enables our citizens to take their rightful place in all spheres of life” (The Star, 6 June 2000). The White Paper on Education and Training (1996) calls for an increase of the numbers of women in leadership in

order to counteract authoritarianism, and to ensure that schools are governed in a manner that reflects the ideology of the state. The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 created a new approach to leading and governing public schools. Despite these constitutional and policy changes, researchers such as Shakeshaft (1987), Adler et al, (1993) and Bennett (1992: 101) found that women in management positions still experience a number of challenges in practice, as compared to their male counterparts. Discrimination based on gender continues to exist, as researchers worldwide have discovered.

When a woman takes a management post in what was previously a male domain, whether in primary or secondary schools, this perceived intrusion leaves her exposed and vulnerable. Inevitably she faces challenges to her working styles and leadership based on sex stereotypes and unease about women in leadership positions. Bennett (1992: 101)

Emerging from the literature is the fact that democracy has been gradually implemented in South Africa. What is clear also is that although women are seen climbing the management ladder, they are extremely challenged in pursuing their management tasks as a result of the past history and patriarchal society. In order to understand the ways in which women in management positions could be supported, research is required to study women principals' experiences of their management positions. This would help unearth the unfortunate price that women have to pay when given the opportunity to lead as well as the implications of the promotional gates for women to become school principals. For instance, are women principals expected to become masculine in order to manage effectively in traditionally male dominated school management positions? What management curricula are appropriate to equally ensure women principals' effectiveness as managers and to affirm their identities as females? What are the implications of these for the traditional male biased management styles in schools? These are the critical issues that this dissertation explores in an attempt to shed light on how schools in South Africa could be enabling for women in management positions.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the strategies that eight women principals employ in managing their duties as school principals and what challenges they face in the process.

1.2 Rationale for the study

As a woman deputy principal, my personal experience has made me aware that while a number of women are being promoted as school managers, they are challenged in all directions within and outside the school. In order to maintain their positions, they tend to act like their male colleagues in order to be respected and heard in the schools that they manage.

I have acted as principal in the absence of my school principal. Certain circulars I received during this time from the Department did not give me an opportunity to apply my own approach of managing the school, as they will come with management plan, which does not give an opportunity to empower the staff members. In order to meet the due dates I had to be autocratic to ensure that things are done on time, which is not my style of management. I therefore propose that women be studied from the perspective of their own experience so that we can better understand what they are going through every day in their lives, and to inform effective management practice to accommodate women's femininities.

This study therefore intends to capture the lived experiences of women in school management positions and how they come to terms with the feminine styles of management. The following questions collectively intended to address the main question namely: Exploring women school principals' management experience.

1.3 Research questions

In order to investigate the women principals' actions, this study is guided by the following questions:

1. What are the women principals' experiences and challenges in managing their schools?
2. How do these experiences and challenges affect women principals' styles of management?
3. How these management styles impact on women managers' identities as women?

Semi-structured interviews with eight women principals; document analysis and observations were used to investigate these questions.

1.4 Significance of the study

Against the above background, it is evident that an investigation into the experiences of women in school management positions should be embarked on. I am hopeful that the findings that will emerge from my research will contribute to our understanding of the management style of women managers. Their experiences can be incorporated in management training materials, which can be beneficial to other women who are challenged to take this role and those who aspire to be in school management teams.

1.5 Context of the study

The study took place within the Pinetown District Office of the Department of Education in the province KwaZulu-Natal. It was conducted in the Mafukuzela-Ghadi Circuit, which comprises of 296 schools. Among schools there are five pre-primary schools, 191 primary schools, 77 secondary schools, 15 combined schools and 6 special schools. The Circuit is divided into 8 wards.

In 2002, when I was promoted as a Head of Department I started attending principals' meetings and I noticed that women principals were fewer than the male principals. Most of the women are principals of primary schools, very few are in the high schools. Amongst six schools in the area there is only one woman principal, the rest are male principals. However amongst the staff in the school where I am working there are many more women than men. In my school we are a staff of 38. There are only five males and 33 females. Therefore one tends to wonder what happens to these women when principalship positions are advertised.

1.6 The scope of the study

The study is confined to the following areas: it investigates the management experiences of eight women principals' in eight primary schools and the kind of challenges they encounter in their management practice, as well as how they address these challenges.

1.7 Limitations of the study

This is a small-scale study involving only eight women principals; therefore findings are not easily generalisable to other situations.

1.8 Definition of key terms

In this study, an endeavour is made to define the terminology that features prominently in it.

Educational management

In categorizing the terminology, it was found that writers in the United States of America (USA) use the term 'educational administration', whereas the term 'educational management' is prevalent in both the United Kingdom (UK) and South Africa (SA) (Greyvenstein 1989:15). These terms are, however, used to denote essentially similar roles accorded to persons who function within the management hierarchy in all three countries.

Circuit

In this study the circuit refers to the Mafukuzela-Gandhi Circuit, which comprises three wards. A ward manager heads each ward and a circuit manager heads the circuit.

District

Circuits are combined to form a district; there are six districts in the province. In this study the circuit refers to Pinetown District, which is headed by the district manager.

Management experience

Management experience refers to the nature of activities someone has undergone and the accumulated knowledge or skills of controlling the organisation that result from direct participation.

1.9 Organisation for the study

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is an introduction to the study. It describes the background and purpose, rationale and focus of the study, key research questions, and the significance of the study, context of the study and limitations of the study. Chapter two reviews literature. It examines theories of management and gender. Chapter three explains the research design and methodology of the study. It reports that the study used semi-structured interviews, document analysis and observations for the collection of data. Chapter four presents and discusses the findings. Chapter five summarizes and concludes the study as well as makes recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on school management; the focus is on how women act once they occupy school management positions in South Africa. First it is important to define the concept of management as the women in this study are expected to take part in this major role. Secondly, I review three theories of management that I found to have a bearing on this study. These theories are: collegial, political, and bureaucratic. Thirdly this chapter discusses a distinction between feminine and masculine theories of management since this distinction assists in determining the types of management styles that the eight women principals' participating in this study adopted once promoted to school management positions. Lastly, I discuss the experiences and challenges of women in school management positions.

2.2 The concept of school management

The concept of school management is complex. Therefore there is no single, simplistic definition of school management. It is about holding the school together and ensuring that all aspects, all set goals; objectives, missions and visions are successfully achieved and sustained.

According to Bush et al. (1994) managers monitor and control the organisational activities, make decisions and allocate resources. Bush goes on to say that generally managers are expected to lead. West-Burnham (1992) states that management is concerned with planning, organising, controlling and leading the institution. The Task Team on Education Management Development (1996:30) adds, "Management creates the opportunity for negotiating targets for action and provides guidelines for the most advantageous effective working of individuals."

Theron et al. (1990:179) define management as "A social and technical process, which utilizes resources." A manager utilizes physical as well as human resources in his/ her organisation. The school management teams are not the only people with management skills

but other colleagues as well. There are those whose positions have been identified and approved by the department like the heads of departments and deputy principals. However some managers often make a mistake by only recognizing the management abilities of those who have been officially appointed. The reason for such a mistake could be that they want power to be centred only on them. It is for this reason that they find it difficult to delegate power and authority to other members of staff. A school that is well managed has different committees that are responsible for different functions such as finance, assembly roster, timetable and fundraising committee etc.

Management is concerned with the pulling of human resources together in order to bring into being quality work. It is one of the expected key responsibilities of those in school management positions to develop staff in order to work as a team. As there is no single all-embracing approach to school management, several perspectives maybe valid simultaneously. Each approach has something to offer in explaining attitudes, behaviour and events in educational situations. These approach form a frame on which management base their practices and decide what actions to take.

The following discussion presents some of the approaches to school management. The framework of this study has two folds namely the management theories and masculine theories.

2.3 Management theories

Theory serves to provide a rationale for decision-making. Leithwood et al. (1999) indicates that theory provides “mental modes” to help in understanding the nature and effects of practice. Owen (1998) asserts that theories are useful for influencing practice, for predicting future events under given circumstances and for thinking about ways to exercise control over changes. Therefore management theories are important for this study of the management experiences of women school principals.

2.3.1 Collegial theories

The collegial model includes all those theories that emphasize that power and decision-making should be shared among some people or all members of the organisation. According to Bush (2003) collegial models assume that organisations determine policy and make decisions through a process of discussion leading to consensus. Power is shared among some or all members of the organisation who are thought to have a shared understanding of the aims of the institution.

Shared decisions are likely to be better informed and are more likely to be implemented effectively as all in the organisation were involved. This open decision-making process will lead to equity and fairness among educators (Task Team on Education Management Development 1996). Collegiality as a management approach is closeness that grows out of an understanding and caring for one another, resulting in group members getting to know one another, listening to one another, being interested in one another's values and most importantly wanting to be together. According to the literature, features of the collegial model seem to be closely linked to the characteristics of the feminine and democratic leadership style, which is mostly associated with women managers.

Collegiality can produce the unity that a good school requires beyond the reach of formalistic rules. Collegial models have been popular in educational management for a number of years, however according to Bush (1995) critics point out that decision making tend to be slow and cumbersome since participants may have lengthy meetings before reaching the decision. It requires a considerable investment of time, and usually meetings take place after hours when educators have been working for long hours and are tired. Collegial models are normative and vague; the model is unrealistic in assuming that decisions can be reached through unanimity. It underestimates the significance of conflict.

The effectiveness of collegiality entirely depends on the attitude of the staff. If the staff is supportive, it may succeed. If they display apathy or hostility, it will certainly fail. Wallace

(1989) argues that teachers may not welcome collegiality because they are disinclined to accept any authority intermediate between themselves and the principal. Principals may limit the scope of collegiality as it reduces their power. Hoyle (1986) concludes that its dependence on the principal's support limits the validity of the collegial model.

While this benefits the organisation and empowers the staff it leads to those in management being underestimated and regarded as weak Bush (1995). The collegial theory might help us in understanding management in South Africa, as it has much in common with the democratic approach. However the collegial approach fails to deal adequately with the problems of conflicts that precede consensus. Its effectiveness depends primarily on the attitudes of the principals who have to cede power to empower colleagues. Within this study's the dynamics of women principals' experiences is explored, the study includes a focus of the collegial styles, as well as the implications for effective school management and for the identities of female principals as women.

Attention to conflicts in the organisation is however given by political theories, as discussed below.

2.3.2 Political Theories

Members in an organisation have their independent objectives, which might clash with the others and causes conflict. According to Morgan (1997) conflict will always be present in the organisation since all members are concerned with what happens in it.

Political theories according to Daft (1999) are strongly interested in individuals and group power and conflict in an organisation. They are based on the assumption that the aims of the organisation are not clear, for example, in the case of the school, women principals and educators may spend some time debating on issues related to the contested goals of schooling. As a result, they may not reach agreement. In this context, decisions emerge after a process of bargaining and negotiation Bush (1995).

The concept of power is central to political theories. The outcomes of the decision are determined according to the power of individuals involved in a debate. In the case of a school, the women principals or the school management team, whose official duties place them in positions of power, might impose a change of duty allocations without involving educators. Alternatively, the unequal gendered relations in a school which accord power to males might make it difficult for women principals to bargain favourably, and this might lead to women principals being unable to influence decisions. This theory implies that in a school, staff may form groups around those who believe that women can manage the school and those who do not. The women principals may then become preoccupied with having to prove that they can manage, as a means to counteract the political pressure exerted by those who do not believe that women could become effective school managers. Dalin (1998) adds that a more appropriate approach would be for educators to engage in genuine debates about the change of duty allocation in the school, as they are the agents of implementation. Yet the dynamics of inequitable gender relations in schools are likely to predispose women principals to experiencing more challenges in the bargaining and negotiation processes.

2.3.3 Bureaucratic theories

Bush (1995) indicates that the main features of the bureaucratic theory are hierarchical authority structures with formal chains between the different positions in hierarchy. In the school context for example the power would rest with the principal and his management teams. The level one educator cannot simply go straight to the principal; she has to follow the necessary protocol of starting from the head of department then proceed to the deputy principal before speaking to the principal. The principal would exercise the top-down approach whereby instructions come from those in position of power and others are not involved in discussion.

Implementation could be more successful and fast when led from the top as opposed to bottom up as the latter is time consuming (Bush 1995). In dangerous workplaces where procedures save lives, a bureaucratic management style can be effective in the enforcement of health and safety rules. The complex schooling processes, however, may render this approach ineffective.

Female principals in schools are leaders of professionals (teachers) who exercise relative authority of expertise in their fields of specialty. So making decisions which do not involve teachers or at least have their support, may be counterproductive as teachers may decide not to implement things that they do not endorse. This management style has a potential to fail in schools where educators are creative and independent professionals. Professionals are likely to despise a system, which encourages them to simply perform like puppets. This theory is also not aligned to women principals who may believe in empowering others to be able to look for new areas in order to develop.. Besides, this approach is closely associated with the core values of masculinity, which embrace domination, control and competitiveness (and the sole mandate of power to stronger individual (Broverman, 1972; Gray, 1989). Such an approach may not be acceptable to women principals whose feminine essence may incline them to more collegial approaches to school management. Masculinity as I described later in this chapter, is associated with males' management styles.

The viewpoint of this approach is that power rest in individuals. Individuals can decide to take any action at any given time and in a school situation, instructions come directly from the principal without consultation. This approach is consistent with the autocratic leadership style, which emphasizes the values and powers of people who hold formal positions of authority. On the other hand, the collegial approach views the importance of involving others in the decision making process, and further emphasizes that it is important to allow individuals to have powers in the organisation even if they do not hold positions of authority. The South African Schools Act of 1996 encourages school managers to share powers and involve all stakeholders who have interest in education, including educators, in the decision making process in an attempt to make school management less bureaucratic. This policy provides room for women principals to become less authoritarian, by allowing others to participate in managing schools.

Despite the opportunities for women to lead and many policies in place to support them, the context of schooling in South Africa continues to predispose women principals inequitably to many challenges compared to their male counterparts. These challenges are partly related to the bureaucratic (and male oriented) nature of schooling, which undermines the core values of femininities in school management. The next section discusses management theories as related to gender attributes (masculinities and femininities).

2.4 Feminine and masculine theories of management

2.4.1 Feminine theories of management

I have drawn from the work of various feminist theorist including Acker (1994) and Weiner (1994). They describe a difference between three standpoints within feminist theory. These standpoints are radical feminism, socialist feminism and liberal feminism.

Radical feminists view masculine power as the root cause of all forms of inequality. The notion of shared oppression is connected with a strong emphasis on sisterhood regardless of the race, class or ethnic group membership that any woman shares with any man. The feminist position is that women are biologically equal to men but are historically denied equality. Hence, today there are numerous women in management positions, particularly in schools. However, while women in school management positions appreciate the opportunity, they experience challenges in executing their day-to-day management requirements. Weiner (1994) posits that there are two important concepts within radical feminism. These are “patriarchy” which she describes as historical dominance of men over women, and the “universal political oppression of women” which makes men the oppressors and women the oppressed. These dynamics may have a bearing on how women principals are viewed and respected in schools, as they give pointers to the nature of the challenges that women principals are experiencing in schools. A school is an organisation, which requires harmony and good relations in order to be successful. It is not surprising that if some members of the staff are to be dominant over the others it will cause unnecessary mismatches, tensions and resistances, and therefore undermine the effectiveness of women principals in carrying out their duties.

The second standpoint within feminist theory is socialist feminism. This approach focuses on women’s position in the economy and the family. The assumption here is that school is responsible for gender inequality, since women are expected to carry their motherhood role to school. In a school where a principal is a woman the staff may expects her to quickly understand their problems. For example, if the teacher reports that a child is not feeling well, the teacher might expect the women principal to grant her leave immediately, because since the principal is a mother too, she knows what it is like when a child is sick.

Socialist feminists advocate widespread economic and cultural changes to dismantle both capitalism and patriarchy. They propose equal opportunities for both men and women workers and advocate policies to increase childcare and family leave programs and men's involvement in domestic work. The view of women principals as mothers also means that women principals are burdened to perform both their domestic chores and their official duties. Striking the balance between the two may be very challenging for women principals.

The third standpoint is liberal feminism, which aims at removing all the barriers to education that cause inequality between women and men. Women are encouraged to work up to their fullest potential. This standpoint disregards the structural and social barriers that impede women principals' effectiveness, and thus reinforces gender inequalities between men and women as it expects women to compete for excellent school management even though they are not on equal footing with their male counterparts – for instance, most dynamics with the schools and society favour of male principals. Weiner (1994) asserts that liberal feminists explore the apparent failure of females to achieve in schools, higher education and work places, in contrast to their male counterparts. She argues that liberal feminism campaigns for equal rights in education. In this perspective the individual women should be free as men to determine their social and educational roles. Liberal feminism in education aims at removing all the barriers that prevent women as a disadvantaged gender from working towards their fullest potential. It argues against sex stereotypes and sex discrimination, and argues for equal opportunities.

The radical feminist and socialist feminism standpoints aims at major transformation to eliminate inequalities while liberal feminism persuades individual women to make use of their full potential in education. Delamont (1996) says that the place of a woman in education should be that of equality, but that can only be achieved when a man's place in the house is of equality too. This study attempts to explore whether the women in school management positions have an opportunity to act as themselves (that is to embrace femininities – the women principals' essence of being) once they are promoted.

Many researchers of women in management such as Kganye (2002), Madlala (2007) and Ngcobo (1996) conclude that most women in management prefer democratic leadership. This is so because democratic leadership styles are closely aligned with the core values of femininities such as nurturing, empathy and consciousness of others' feelings with allows for tolerance of diversity and enhanced participation, involvement and communication.

2.4.2 Masculine theories of management

For many years approaches to leadership entrenched a male culture in organisations by ignoring women by making the assumption that all leaders were either males or gender-free (Adler, Laney and Packer 1993; Ozga 1993). Studies by Coleman (2001); Ayman (1993); Chisholm (2001) highlight the difficulties women in leadership positions experience as a result of the masculine character that permeates organisations. Greyvenstein (1989) advises women in management and those aspiring to management to seriously consider the consequences of adopting masculine behaviour and traits, and they should not take on a male image because it will mean devaluing their character.

The two perspectives (feminine and masculine) can be better understood in comparison to one another. Gray (1989) characterizes the feminine and masculine perspectives as follows.

Feminine Perspective

- Caring
- Creative
- Intuitive
- Aware of individual differences
- Non- competitive
- Tolerant
- Subjective
- Informal

Masculine Perspective

- aggressive
- Highly regulated
- Insensitive
- No individual differences
- competitive
- intolerant
- Objective
- Formal

Gray (1989) cites the feminine approach as being characterized by being creative, tolerant, subjective and aware of individual differences. For example in the school context women principals may understand the problems of the staff to a certain extent, they may also be able to bear with them rather than being intolerant and aggressive. Yet the effectiveness of this is central in understanding the role that women principals could play in school management. Women principals are likely to succeed in the democratic frame since they are able to communicate the vision and goals of their schools. Everyone in the organisation is clearly made aware of the aims and works towards achieving them.

Gray (1989) further characterizes the masculine approach as being normative, highly regulated and conformist. These are the kind of managers who consider rules as being fixed irrespective of the situation. Such characteristics may mean domination but hardly will constitute success. It is ultimately unnecessary in a school context to exercise this kind of power since one deal with professionals, whereby decisions are reached through consensus. Rather masculinity can probably work in professional sports stars where there is authority.

Broverman (1972) in Wilson (2003) compared the characteristics of masculinity and feminine stereotypes as follows:

2.5 The masculine and feminine stereotypes compared

Feminine stereotype	Masculine Stereotype
Incompetence	Competence
Not at all aggressive	Very aggressive
Not at all independent	Very independent
Very subjective	Very objective
Very submissive	Very dominant
Warmth/ expressiveness	Very hostile
Does not use harsh language at all	Uses harsh language
Very tactful	Very blunt
Very gentle	Very rough
Very aware of feelings of others	Not at all aware of feelings of others

Source: Adapted from Broverman et al (1972). Similar findings on stereotype can be found in Bem (1974) Loo and Thorpe (1998) Whitehead (1994) and Williams and Best (1990).

Broverman (1972) asserts that femininity-inclined approaches are warm, subjective, tactful and gentle. School principals who engage in these approaches are friendly towards their subordinates and maintain good relationships. Yet in the masculinity-inclined approaches there is no strong relationship as managers are independent and do not care much about other people's feelings. Both women and men are perceived as having feminine characteristics by Broverman (1972), even though women tend to be more feminine than men. Women

principals are likely to be warmer, gentle, understanding, aware of others' feelings and helpful to others. This view is further supported by many researchers of women in management positions, such as Madlala (2007), Coleman (2000) and Kganye (2002). Such a view about women principals should, however, be understood with the context of South Africa schooling, which seems to require masculinity-inclined management approaches in order to contend with the urgency to implement complex policy guidelines in a highly patriarchal society. These factors make it highly likely that woman principals have to compromise their sense of femininities in order to carry out their duties as school managers effectively.

The principle of democracy requires school managers to involve the staff in managing the school. Women are slightly more likely than men to be "transformational leaders" Kganye (2002), serving as role models, helping employees develop their skills, and motivating them to be dedicated and creative. This approach is relevant in managing schools presently. But not all workplaces are alike; the participatory style may backfire in traditional male settings such as schools where the imperative to adhere to prescribed policy guidelines and deadlines from the Department of Education may require someone who is controlling and dominating. On the other hand, as stated above the command and control style which is more typical of men may backfire in social institutions like schools with professionals who are experts in their work.

Historically men were regarded as being natural leaders. The characteristics of masculinity imply being dominant which seems to be closely linked to the autocratic and bureaucratic approaches, whereby power rests in a principal or the School Management Team only (Broverman, 1972). This kind of approach is likely to fail since if the principal or the management team is weak at certain issues the whole school will follow that route leading to the organisation being unsuccessful. Masculinity while challenged and contested continues to maintain its domination by positioning all forms of femininities as weaker. Therefore if women are regarded as having more feminine approaches they seem to align with the democratic values. Consequently in this time of transformation, women principals possess strong qualities of a successful manager. A positive influence whereby members of the staff are encouraged to take an active role in activities at school remains a key strategy for contemporary efforts to transformation.

2.6 Women in school management positions: Experiences and challenges

The literature points to various challenges that women principals face in their duties as school managers. These challenges mean that although women are seen climbing the management ladder, particularly in schools, their management experiences are uniquely peculiar as compared to their male counterparts. This section discusses the experiences and challenges of women school principals. Greyveinstein (1989), Pifford and Tonsenn (1993) concur with Coleman (1997) that challenges facing women in management may be internal or external. Whatever the source of these challenges, their implications concern the effective management of the school

2.6.1 Internal challenges

Internal challenges are issues within women themselves, which hamper their progress in education management.

2.6.1.1 Multiple roles

Pifford and Tonsen (1993) call this barrier the role conflict that starts from an inner pressure. Women find themselves trapped in multiple roles of balancing work and family life. Van der Westhuizen (1991) endorses this position when stating that family responsibilities are regarded throughout the world as the most important barrier to women's progress. It is not easy for women to delegate their family duties. The stereotypic myths about women in management as potential wives, mothers and care takers of children and not potential managers has wasted a lot of women's time Khathi (1997). Madlala (2007), in her study of the challenges facing school level women managers, revealed that women's progress in management is hindered as a result of multiple roles.

My experience as a woman manager concurs with the above assertion. During the day at school I am faced with teaching and management duties and when I go home I have to attend to my children and husband. At that time of the day I feel exhausted and have no time to relax. While my husband is supportive, he does not take a fair share of domestic duties. I feel strongly challenged to balance my work and family responsibilities.

2.6.1.2 Gender stereotypes

Despite innovative advances in South African education, gender stereotypes and women subordination continue to pose a challenge. According to Madlala (2007) gender stereotyping is transferred from one generation to the next in an unquestioned way by means of socialization, disseminating gender unfairness. The stereotype view of women teachers was one of nurturing and caring. This idea promoted patriarchal system in schools. Teaching children is associated with motherhood and the caring aspects of femininity Adler et al (1993).

Coleman (2001) acknowledged the power of masculinity as an institutional force in operation to exclude women. This was as result of the difficulty-stereotyped idea of men to separate the associates of women with family and career. Men and women can do the same thing, but if they are both assertive, women are rated as less effective because we expect men to do that. They can exhibit the same results and accomplishments and the perception of their effectiveness is different. Coleman (1997) states that the recognition of women as having supportive roles and of men as having management roles is a stereotype, which leads women into believing that the public domain is not suitable for them because they have been socialized into the private domain. Women principals might end up allowing themselves to be oppressed because they believe what they do is not what they are meant to do their duty, thereby propagating the stereotypes about gender roles in society Moorosi (2000). Alternatively they may receive little support from male teachers who construct themselves as superior to women and thus having to be the ones who should operate in school management positions.

2.6.1.3 Feminine touch

Feminine touch refers to the kinder, gentler approach associated by Gray (1989) with feminine style. Most women are naturally caring, care givers and considerate tactful. Madlala (2007) asserts that while participants in her study agreed that they have all these characteristics, they are also decisive and assertive to be able to manage effectively. If women were only to be people orientated rather than task orientated it will mean that schools will lead to poor performance. The parents, learners and educators might take advantage of the situation and ask for favours continuously, knowing that the principal will be sympathetic. For example the teachers can make up stories and ask for early leave now and again. When the principal grants the leave, she will be granting it at the expense of learners who are not going to be taught at that time. Therefore it is a challenge for women to bring their mothering skills to schools.

2.7 External Challenges

External challenges are issues existing outside women themselves but hindering their day-to-day school management duties. According to Madlala (2007) external challenges show environmental factors which influence the progress of woman into the previously “male domain” world.

2.7.1 Mentors and Role Models

Within organisational challenges, mentoring and role models are alluded to as one of the most important factors that have a positive impact on women in management positions and those aspiring for management positions. However Govinden (1999) draws attention to the lack of mentoring programmes for women in school management positions. Further, Coleman (2001) observed that in most cases men would not be willing to mentor women because they think women are not interested in management, while other women in high positions fail to mentor other women.

Greyvenstein (2000) states that cross-sex mentoring often results from the lack of women role models, which is also a challenge to women in management positions.

Furthermore, Madlala (2007) reports that the absence of such role models puts women into a situation whereby they have only the existing men to look up to and relying on them for support. As these male mentors remain the only support system for women in management, this clearly has implications for the perpetuation of the masculine organisational culture of management. Greyvenstein (2000) argues that women have few or no role models to look up to and are left with men whose styles of management are regarded as the model.

2.8 Conclusion

Women's typically more mentoring, coaching style is associated with femininities and collegial styles of management while most men's typical "command and control" style are associated with masculinities and autocratic management styles of management. While women are working hard to climb the management ladder to the male dominated world; their cultural expectations and patriarchy seems to be exposing them to challenges when executing their management duties. Consequently, they tend to act like males, whose style of managements is accepted by the society. This study set to explore the challenges women principals experience as well as the implications for the effective management of the schools.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the management experiences of women principals and how their management duties affect their characters as women.

This chapter commences with a description of the research context of the study, the participants and the study design and then discusses the three methods used to collect data, namely semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis. The chapter moves on to outline procedures for obtaining permission from the Department of Education to access the primary schools in Mafukuzela-Gandhi Circuit. Finally I discuss how the study ensured accuracy of the findings.

3.2 Context of the study and participants

The study took place in eight primary schools in Mafukuzela-Gandhi under the Pinetown District. In the communities where the schools are located men are regarded as the head of the family and the only person with authority. The patriarchal tendencies in Zulu culture promote the interest of men over women to the extent that some cultural practices often influences the preference of men over women; for example when men speak, women are expected not to answer back to them. Women are also expected to take care of all the house chores and nurturing children while males are expected to be the ones going out to work and bring food to their families. These expectations when put into practice have the effect of limiting considerably the freedom and rights of women. Hence the eight women in the study when they take principals' positions and move out of traditionally subordinate position and begin to show capability and independencies are faced with conflicting expectations in the communities where their schools are situated, one of being a mother and the other of being a manager.

All women principals in the study are mothers with more than one child and seven of them are married. Therefore after school they have to switch their roles and become full time mothers. The schools that they manage include more than twenty educators, both female and male educators.

Seven women principals in the study have postgraduate degrees and they believe that studying further has assisted them in managing schools, as they are aware of current educational issues.

3.3. Research design

This study was located within the broad area of qualitative research. The principal focus of the research was to understand the experiences of women principals and how they interpreted the world in which they find themselves. This is a feature of a qualitative approach “which places an emphasis on explaining and understanding the unique and particular individual cases rather than the general and the universal” Cohen, et al. (2008:8). The qualitative approach stresses the importance of the subjective experience of the individual; hence semi-structured interviews were utilized as was also successfully done by other scholars such as Ngcobo, (1996) Leedy and Ormord (2001), Nair (2003), Madlala (2007) and Zwane (2008).

Holland et al (1995) argue that qualitative methods are consistent with feminist values. The understanding is that many aspects of women’s experiences have not yet been articulated or conceptualized within the social science. According to Holland et al. (1995) quantitative methods do not clearly capture women’s real experiences through their ‘mechanical’ nature. This has led to the support of qualitative methods, “as methods which offer a more human, less mechanical relationship between the researcher and the researched” Holland, et al. (1995:221). Hence, qualitative methods allow women to express themselves. Cresswell (2003:10) concurs that a compelling reason for a researcher to choose a qualitative approach as a means of data collection is to study the individuals in their natural settings. Therefore the case study approach was suitable for this study as it focuses on women principals.

Within the broad area of qualitative research this investigation was conducted with eight women principals in Mafukuzela Gandhi Circuit, hence this is a multi-site case study, Khuzwayo (2007). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), a case study is a technique the researcher uses to observe the characteristics of an individual unit, for example a school or community. Supporting this viewpoint, Cohen, et al. (2000) describes a case study as an approach in the field of research, which seeks to provide a unique example of real people in real situations, and it enables readers to understand how ideas and practice can be incorporated to make living meaningful. However the case study is criticized for its dependence on a single case and therefore of its being incapable of providing a generalizing conclusion. This study averted this by investigating women principals' experiences across multiple schooling contexts.

The advantage of a case study design is that it is "a step to action". Its approach may be directly interpreted and put to use, for staff or individual development, for within institutional feedback, for formative evaluation and in educational policymaking (Cohen, et al. 2000). I considered the disadvantage of a case study design and employed triangulation of three instruments to gather the data namely: interviews, document analysis and observation as means to concretise results.

3.4 Sample and sampling procedure

Sampling refers to the process used to select the participants of a study. For the purposes of this study, purposive sampling was used to select participants. The purposive characteristics of the study were the schools, which have women principals, as the study is focused on the experiences of women principals, with the total of eight schools and eight participating women principals. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:478) state that selecting trustworthy data also involves an awareness of my assumptions, predispositions and influence on the social situation. The power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information- rich cases for study in depth Patton (2002:53). Cohen, et al. (2000) recommends the strategy of targeting participants for particular purpose; in this case the women principals were selected as suitable for the purpose of this study.

The schools and the participants were chosen using the following criteria:

1. Easily accessible
2. Women principals of primary schools
3. They belong to Mafukuzela-Gandhi Circuit
4. They were willing to participate
5. They have served more than three years as principals.

3.5 Methods of data collection

Three methods of data collection were used in this study, namely, interviews, observations and document analysis. The main data collection method used was the semi-structured interviews; observations and document analysis were supplementary. McMillan and Schumacher (2000:478) explain triangulation as the cross-validation among data sources, data collection strategies, times and theoretical schemes. As mentioned earlier, the study used three instruments to collect data as it needed to verify data. It is important to check the truth (validity) and the accuracy (reliability) of the findings and explanation offered. The interviews come first as it was assumed that for the researcher to fully understand the management experiences of women she needed to speak to them. Goodson (1992) indicates that it is imperative to listen to the voices of women managers because they carry the exact tone and feelings of their daily management practice. Second and third were the observations and document analysis respectively as they verified and substantiated the data that the researcher collected during interview.

Each of these instruments is described below.

3.5.1 Interviews

In this study, I used semi-structured interviews with eight women principals. I chose the semi-structured interviews because they can be flexible and allow me to probe for more interesting information that could be relevant to the study while being guided by the interview schedule. One of the greatest advantages of the semi-structured interview is flexibility; according to Patton (1989: 57). Jegede (1999) advocates that the semi-structured interview is one of the best instruments for data collection that could provide valuable data that could not be obtained by any other means. Semi-structured interviews are sometimes referred to as guided interviews; the guides allow the researcher to develop the “area of inquiry” during the interview.

In this study, to ensure confidentiality and to give each interviewee free opportunity to articulate her management experiences without being influenced by others, each participant was interviewed alone. The interviews were conducted face-to-face seating for about an hour each. The seating arrangement assisted me to get each respondent's views on school management experiences and to be able to read the interviewee's unspoken language such as body gesture, which deepened my understanding and interpretation of data collected. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) assert that it is the crucial objective of the researcher to understand the meaning people make about their experiences and the interviews are the best instrument for this objective.

An interview schedule was used for the interviews, which constitute the major form of data collection. The interview schedule is divided into three sections. A copy of the interview instrument is given in Appendix A.

Section A required the background information of the principal. This information is vital to show women's lives and to explain some family difficulties and about the staff. An insight into these relationships is intended to reveal the attitudes of the subordinates and their implications to the women principals' management experiences. Section B requires information about principals' management experiences and the management approaches they employ in carrying out their day-to-day duties. In this section the researcher aims to find out how these approaches affect women principals and make them alter their identity. Section C simply called "miscellaneous" aimed at giving the respondents the opportunity to speak about any area that they feel it is not covered during in the interviews.

3.5.2 Observation

Observation is the organised method of recording the behavioural patterns of participants without questioning them. Observations are appropriate for this study as they enable the researcher to gather data on physical setting and human setting Cohen, et al. (2000). A copy of the observation schedule is given in Appendix B. I had the opportunity to gather the information that the participant might have been uncomfortable to discuss during the interview. During the interview the interviewee has the luxury to choose what to tell or not, however with observation the researcher can find valuable information for the study.

Through the observation the researcher has an opportunity to gather the first information in real life situation. Observational data according to Cohen, et al. (2000) affords the researcher the opportunity to gather “live” data from “live” situations. The observational data is recommended by Patton (2002) as it enables the researcher to enter and understand the situation that was being described.

The observation schedule gathers information on the school infrastructure and organisation and this enables the researcher to gather data on the kinds of relationships and attitudes that exist in the organisation. I aimed to observe such events as the staff meeting and to note how the female principals chair the meetings, for example if they give subordinates an opportunity to be actively involved in the activities that happened at school.

3.5.3 Document analysis

Document analysis is an instrument of data collection in which a researcher studies written communications of an institution that are related to the study in question. Document analysis is used because some incidents may have happened before the study took place; therefore it is not easy for people to remember exactly how it happened. Hence, analyzing written information is more reliable. In this case, documents that are analyzed are the timetable, duty roster, record of policies, time book, minute books, log books and communication books. The analysis of documents enables me to find challenges in the management of the school and to find out the management approaches that women utilize in their management style to attain the goals and objectives of the school.

The rationale for analyzing the communication book is to find out the style of management that the women principals use. The logbook assists me to find the things that happened in the past that are useful to answer some of the questions in the study and to analyze the kind of data was recorded. The minute book is an important document in the school; it assists in representing the actual actions that have happened in meetings. The minute book shows if the principals in the school provide the other staff members with the opportunity to take part in decision-making. For answering some questions in this study, it is important to know how meetings are conducted and how the principal reacts when staff tends to be resistant to her

authority and so forth. The rationale for analyzing the time book is to find out if teachers come to school on time and leave at the end of the day or if their teachers ask for early leave now and again. This kind of information assists the researcher to see if teachers take advantage of the principal's management approach.

3.6 Access to schools and participants: some ethical considerations

Permission to conduct the research was requested and granted by the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and the Department of Education granted permission to work with the eight chosen primary schools. Respondents signed the letter of informed consent; pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of respondents. Clarity on what the study entailed and how it benefits all the stakeholders in education was given. Women principals were made aware of their voluntary status in participation in this study. Cohen et al. (2008) state that the research participant has the right to refuse to take part or to withdraw once the research has begun (see Appendix C for details).

3.7 Validity and reliability

In this study to ensure that the findings are accurate, the tape recorder was used to record the interviews. According to Patton, (1989:137) the tape recorder is indispensable to increasing the accuracy of data collection and allows the interviewer to be more attentive to the interviewee. During the interviews, the researcher ensured that all the participants had a clear understanding of the questions they are asked, for example, if the participant was unclear with the meaning of a certain word, it was explained. I used triangulation (more than one method of data collection) to ensure that the information is valid and can be relied on. Denzin and Lincoln (1998: 7) state that qualitative research is inherently multi- method in focus and the use of multiple methods of data collection was an attempt to add richness and depth to the inquiry of this study.

3.8 Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted according to the three methods of data collection used in this study. The responses from the interviews together with the evidence collected through observations and document analyses were categorized in the way they talk to my research

questions. Data collected through the qualitative methodology were categorized into themes and analyzed according to those themes.

3.9 Summary

Qualitative data analysis is the first and foremost inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns among the categories (McMillan and Schumacher 2001:461). Therefore this study adopts the qualitative description as the method for data analysis as it aims at providing a holistic picture of what it is like to be a women manager. The next chapter will discuss and present data collected through interviews, observations and document analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to analyze and interpret data collected to investigate the management experiences and challenges of eight women principals. I begin the chapter with the experiences and challenges of the school principals. Next I move on to the management approach and strategies of women principals. This is followed by the dynamics of women principals' strategies. Finally I conclude by presenting the summary of the findings.

4.2 Experiences/challenges facing school principals

This section discusses the challenges of women principals in the schools studied. The challenges related to the dynamics of balancing domestic and formal work responsibilities, gender stereotypes and the lack of role models.

4.2.1 Caught in the middle: balancing domestic and work responsibilities

Women managers in the study mentioned that some of their experiences relate to balancing domestic and work responsibilities. They claimed that they are constantly confronted with having to navigate pressing demands to perform domestic chores in their families, as well as their official management duties. My interview with (Mrs Ngwiri) below illustrates:

... As a mother first, before you are a professional or a principal at home you are a mother; I try very hard to separate the two portfolios. The principal of the school and me as a person when I leave school I have children and a husband that do not deserve to be frustrated by my work problems. It is difficult to be a woman because I must fit in all these roles perfectly at the same time, it is really not easy.

Mrs Nkosi had the following to say:

We tend to lose focus of our families and focus at school more. By the time you reach home you are tired, you feel like your husband is ending up doing some of the things that are supposed to be performed by you, for example you were supposed to be in a child's school and you did not attend and your husband end up attending frequently. You end up being able to face the challenges you meet at school whereas your family suffers.

These responses clearly show that women managers experience a lot of pressure as they are expected to perform well in career and as mothers and wives. As mentioned in Chapter 3, in the Zulu culture women are expected to play a leading role in growing up children and doing all the housework chores. Therefore if their husbands had to do what is culturally expected to be performed by them as mothers it becomes a challenge.

To follow up the issue of balancing the work and family life more, I looked at educators' personal files and realized that female educators absented themselves on regular basis at school due to family responsibilities. In two schools I found that most of them have exhausted the family leave responsibility as each educator is granted five days in a three-year cycle. Most principals mentioned that at times they face problems when educators are on leave because it is difficult to find a suitable replacement. In one school I found that a female deputy principal was on maternity leave and she was the only computer teacher in the school. The principal complained that she is experiencing problems as the person acting as a deputy is inexperienced especially because they were computer competitions which were part of the sponsor's agreement. The deputy principal had to sacrifice her leave and come to work to prepare the learners for competitions. I feel this problem made the deputy principal to be caught in the middle of work and family life. In the first place she had a responsibility of being a mother who had an infant who needed to be nurtured and cared for which cannot be denied. Secondly she was expected to play a contributing role in her career. Women do have a dual role to play, this is indeed a challenge.

4.2.2 Gender stereotypes: men are the heads, women cannot lead

Four women principals in the study reported gender bias in the management of schools. They mentioned that as women they are expected to go an extra mile when executing management duties. Members of the society expect them to behave differently from what they do, for example to perform at school the duties that are associated with mothers at home. I asked them how they managed dealing with parents.

This how Mrs Nzo responded:

Some of the parents expect to get special treatment, to an extent that some of them even ask if there is no tea that is being offered in this school. Some of them will be saying “sisi, eyi manje sisi” and I have to call them into order and say I am not sisi (sister) I am a school principal, so that we will continue to talk knowing very well that I need to be treated professionally not like a sisi as they say.

While I was at Mashiya Primary I observed a member of the staff dealing with a parent who wanted to report a case of learners who were fighting. He came and asked for the deputy principal first who is a male when the secretary questioned him on what was the matter. He mentioned that it is a man’s issue, as he believed a woman principal couldn’t handle fighting boys. While women have the opportunity of managing the school it appears that the communities around the school do not automatically accept them as managers with authority and power. Patriarchal views, based upon the belief that men are superior to women still exist and expose women to all forms of challenges.

With regard to parents, one principal further mentioned that there are situations where they are being compared to previous male principals.

Mrs Shiba said:

Some will even mention that when Mr Ngamla was here, if this happened, he would say this and that. At times I feel they think they are issues that I cannot handle.

When I asked her why she thought so, she said:

At first I thought it is because of the experience they had at school, the first principal and the second principal were a male. They expect me to behave like a man.

This seems to show that the society has low expectations for women to be good leaders. Most women in the study had to earn respect and acceptance through hard work and prove themselves. In addition they are expected to act as someone else to be recognized. Therefore women managers have additional difficulty in their management role because of the conflicting attitude about the stereotypes of what it means to be a woman and what it means to be a manager.

Women principals mentioned that even when they chair staff meetings they are facing challenges as some colleagues perceive them as mothers who are supposed to behave like traditional woman and be submissive. When I asked them their experiences of chairing staff meetings, these were some of the responses:

Mrs Zefu responded

I must have a big heart to accommodate everyone as a mother and I am supposed to treat them like my own children....

Mrs Ngwiri

Mostly women are having a problem of other women pulling them down, they don't want to see us as women succeeding, but then again, there are some males who don't feel comfortable if they have to work with a woman. It is more discouraging when female colleagues do not support another woman as I thought they are the ones who will be influential to others to respect me.

Four women managers encountered negative experiences in dealing with some male and female educators they interacted with, as they tended to define the position and role of women as that of housewife and mother, and expect them to manage within the parameters of

that position .In staff meetings they would ask many questions that are expressing doubts about the capabilities of women as managers.

.... Sometimes opinions on ability, they are always right and women are wrong. Women are not firm enough; those are some of the things one hears. When issues are discussed in the staff meeting they tend to get angry and overly express themselves and somehow I have a problem with that because they don't challenge males like they do with us (Mrs Nzo).

When I probed as to why women are challenged more than males in school, Mrs Nzo responded:

Maybe it is because I was promoted in the same school I was working in and I competed for this post with some of them. Now they want to prove that I was not capable from the first place, it is really unhealthy.

This non-acceptance of women managers seems to be caused by stereotype of different roles performed by men and women in society. Consequently this stereotype is seen as an obstacle for women in education management. In the past males have been the only visible managers and when women are now given a chance to manage they seem not to have a space to be themselves.

Another challenge that the school principals identified was teacher discipline. I observed a female principal in one school who was unable to discipline a male educator who was coming to school late and leaving before the school finished. According to the Department Leave Measures and Procedures, when the number of hours total to seven, he is supposed to fill in a leave form. The educator refused to fill in the leave form, which was an indication of insubordination. These actions indicated that some male educators feel threatened by the presence of women managers. They feel that they are trespassing in their grounds and make it difficult for women managers to effectively manage the schools. Most female principals pointed out that they are expected to understand educators' reason of not coming to school because they are mothers too, so they know what it is like to have a family problem.

At times I am expected to close my eyes while learners do not have a teacher because I understand where that person comes from. Maybe as a woman because I know that a person is undergoing a divorce and then when that person does some odd things I will be expected to understand and not issue leave forms (Mrs Ngwiri).

The above responses show that it is still going to take a long time to eradicate gender stereotypes in education irrespective of gender policies and the constitution of the country as women managers are challenged because of who they are. This raises the need to strategise around the eradication of gender stereotypes as part of the processes of empowering women to perform effectively in school management positions.

4.2.3 Lack of female role models: a case for feminine values in school management

Given the historical background of women in South Africa, as mentioned in Chapters 1 and 3, women in the study alluded that they are experiencing a challenge to find female role models as there are few female principals. Some women felt it was important for them to learn from other women. Mathipha and Tsoka (2000) also regard the presence of female role models as crucial to the inspiration of both women in management and those aspiring to it. The absence of such role models leaves women with no choice but to have men to look up to. My observations during data collection indicated that there are few women principals in the area of the study, and as a result I had to collect data in more than one ward. None of the women manager in the present study had a female role model or mentor. Two participants reported having problems with being mentored by males.

I had a problem with a male mentor, he was behaving badly. Each time I asked for his assistance he would want me to pay back by either giving him a lift during principals' meetings or collect his school circulars now and again, if I refused he won't help me. I decided to stop asking for his help as he ended up making negative comments that destroyed our relationship (Mrs Nkosi).

There were no official mentoring programmes for women in the study. The lack of female role models will obviously perpetuate the masculine qualities such as being aggressive and dominant in management of schools. This was confirmed by women managers' assertion that they depend on males for advices and support.

From the experience of male principals I network with in the area, I learn from them because they have been principals for a long time so they know most of the things that are happening in schools. There are times when I feel I need to speak to other principals about certain issues (Mrs Mashiba).

The above response indicates that while women are in school management positions, they are challenged, as these male figures remain the only role models whom women principal's can consult, their approval of what later to do is also significant to women management practice. Although few women did indicate dislike of the management approaches that men practiced, such as lack of collaboration and democracy, they still admired them as their role models. This means that we need more women principals in the school management positions so that we can have more women with relevant school management experience and expertise to act as role models to aspiring and inexperienced women principals.

4.3 The management approach and coping strategies of women principals

This section discusses the management approaches and coping strategies that women principals employ in addressing the challenges they are faced with, as discussed in the previous section. The participants mentioned the people-centred management approach, which demonstrated their strength as women (as per the dominant feminine stereotypes in Chapter 2). The feminine attributes according to Gray (1989) include attributes of approachability, nurturing and caring. These have assisted these female managers to employ the people-centred management approaches in ways that made it possible to overcome some of the challenges they face. They employed a variety of management and coping strategies as experience has taught them that no one strategy is effective in the management of schools. These included a half-democratic/half autocratic, collegial management approach and being a good listener while being firm, assertive, calm and knowledgeable.

4.3.1 Management approaches/strategies related to balancing domestic and management responsibilities

Women principals in the study claimed that they have adopted an open door policy and the strategy of working together with the other members of the staff and sharing power, in order to lessen the pressure of balancing the social expectation of being a mother and a school manager.

I work with my staff like I work with my family, teamwork is very important as it leads to success. To me, listening and caring for my staff is very important because I get a chance to know what they think (Mrs. Ngwiri).

Women principals claimed that they focus on creating a democratic practice at their schools. They listened and allowed other members to be actively involved in the management of the school. The eight women principals in the study were more likely to allow other members of the staff to participate in decision-making and were less dominating towards colleagues. Women principals indicated that they were empathetic to their staff members and also firm and fair depending on the situation at that particular moment. Through maintaining the open door policy and collegial management style, they were able to establish teamwork and co-operation with the staff and learners. Through co-operation they wanted to ensure harmony at school so that they would lower resistance and build a sense of family where there is trust and respect.

Another coping strategy that was mentioned was delegation. Delegation according to Kganye (2002) is an important means that school principals can utilize to promote democracy and participation in the school as an educational organisation with the aim of promoting co-operation, teamwork and collegiality. Delegation, which can be viewed as sharing of powers and responsibilities, gives all members in the organisation the opportunity to express their interest in educational issues. Therefore managers who remain the only authority have little chance to succeed in today's management of schools. Subsequent to attending the principals'

meeting, women principals come back to staff and give the feedback on the issues discussed in the meeting. In this way they are able to share duties and lessen the pressure on them. One principal mentioned that her school was nominated to enter for the Provincial Excellence Awards whereby they were expected to give evidence on exercising the eleven principles of Batho Pele. She mentioned it was a massive and tiring exercise as each of the eleven principles had to have evidence showing that it is really being practised at school. Members of the staff were divided into eleven groups according to the principles and they worked concurrently as a team, in that way they were able to meet the due date of the competition. Therefore females' attribute of empowering others has assisted some women principals to succeed in this situation.

During the data collection in one school, I observed the exercise of the open door policy when one teacher came and suggested to the principal that they should wait to ring the bell for the break since the food that was to be given to learners (Primary School Nutrition Programme) was to arrive late. This act indicates that the principal allowed the staff members to contribute in the effective management of the school.

Another coping strategy that was reported was being a good listener and being calm when it comes to stressful situations. Women principals reported that it is important to listen carefully to what educators and parents are saying because you learn from what they are saying. One principal mentioned that listening to others gives you a deep understanding of what is going on around and enables you to respond appropriately.

4.3.2 Management approaches/strategies related to alleviating gender stereotype about women principals

Women managers maintained that they allowed parents to be active members in the smooth running and effective management of schools. Parents are allowed to come to school at any time of the day to raise issues. However, while dealing with parents, women principals claimed to be challenged by gender stereotype in their day-to-day management of school, if

there are issues parents feel they can only be handled by males and their acts are compared to previous male principals. Hence, I asked how they managed the challenges they experience when dealing with parents. They mentioned that they have adopted the strategy of being assertive and firm to ensure that they are treated as effective managers.

Parents are welcome at school at anytime. However I make sure that they know I am a principal. I deal with school matters and I am a professional not a “sisi” (sister) and I do not serve tea (Mrs Nzo).

During the data collection as previously mentioned I observed a male parent who was gender stereotyped as he claimed that the woman principal could not handle the issue of fighting boys. To alleviate these gender stereotype attitudes the woman principal had to be firm and explain to the parent that she is the head of the institution and has the authority to decide what to do with misbehaving learners.

From the above response and my observation it is still not easy for some community members to accept women principals as effective, worse if they are expected to act like someone else in order to be accepted.

Still on dealing with gender attitudes in staff meetings, women principals claimed to have adopted a half democratic and half autocratic management approach whereby staff members are allowed to share ideas and be the part of the decision making while the principal firmly guided the meeting proceedings to achieve the aims and objectives as planned. They have adopted the strategy of speaking from a knowing position. Four participants in the study reported that they find it important to further their studies since it makes them knowledgeable and aware of new developments. One principal mentioned that studying makes one ahead of staff members; therefore it is not easy for staff members to challenge her during staff meetings.

I know the curriculum and policies. When I speak, I speak from a knowing position and I think that is the greatest strength one can have as the manager. I consult if I do not know (Mrs Zefu)

In dealing with non-acceptance as they are perceived as mothers and wives who are expected to be carrying their nurturing and caring attributes from home to school, they adopted the strategy of being confident and believing in themselves and ensuring that the school is effectively managed.

You need to correct things at school whether it is against your beliefs and personality but if you want to correct things you need to do it as a corrective measure. Be exemplary, so that educators will know that you mean business with teaching and learning (Mrs Nzo).

When dealing with the challenges related to teacher discipline on absenteeism, women principals mentioned that they believe in sitting down with their educators and listening to their problems. This had the potential to alleviate the challenges associated with teachers coming late to school or not being committed to some school activities, as they would have fully participated in all decisions the school takes.

I take care and understand my educator's personal problems. To a certain extent, I treat them like how a mother treats her own children at home. We sit down and talk about things and then correct where we can as a family (Mrs Nkosi)

The above responses indicate that women principals balance their nurturing and caring nature with work to ensure that the aims and objectives of the organisation are recognized.

In one school I noticed in the time book that there is a teacher who has been referred to the Employment Assistance Programme (EAP). According to the principal, she has adopted the strategy of referring the educators who are frequently absent at school to the external structures of the Department of Education. She mentioned that they are disturbing the smooth running of the school as their classes have no teachers and learners are losing out on teaching time. Another coping strategy that the women principals in the study reported was that they prefer to use the Department of Education and South African Schools Act policies.

If educators break the rules they refer to the policy guidelines for the disciplinary procedures as they felt it covers their back when educators report to the unions and ensures consistency.

They mentioned the importance of implementing policies and ensure that all staff members adhere to them at school, as it does not make a disciplinary issue personal when the need arises.

The women principals in this study reported the strategy of adopting partially democratic and partially autocratic approaches as means of coping with the challenges they are facing when dealing with educators, parents and learners.

This finding suggested that women value their activities of care and understanding their staff members while being vigilant about the aims of their organisations and ensuring that they do not downplay their feminine qualities in order to fit into the bureaucratic and “masculine” nature of schools as this study initially identify as an issue. Although women are experiencing stress as a result of conflicting professional and personal roles, they are making a paradigm shift with regards to their place in society.

4.3.3 Management approaches/strategies related to navigating the dilemma of lack of female role models in school management positions.

In order to manage the challenge of lack female role models in school management, women principals in the study had no formal established mentoring programmes to help them manage the lack of female role models. What came out of my findings is that women principals in the study did not choose their mentors as there was no one else expect those who were around them, the reliance on men for support is crucial and worth pursuing in further research.

The other coping strategy that women principals reported was that of ensuring the understanding of complex matters in managing the school was drawn on experience and continuous learning. As mentioned in chapter 3, most of the participants in the study possess bachelor and postgraduate degrees and therefore formal study gives them greater confidence in managing the schools.

All of these women principals are graduates and over the age of 40 years and 7 of them had over 5 years of management experience as principals of schools. During the data collection

period when I interviewed principals I observed that they answered the questions with confidence and showed pride in building democratic schools. The number of years spent in the principalship position has made them strong and empowered to face the daily management challenges at ease. Principals ensured democratic decision-making structures, which involve maximum participation of staff.

Women principals in the study claimed that the feminine quality of intuition and emotions assisted them in being more understanding and successful as school principals.

I think the motherly instinct of being more accommodating; you suck the situation and read into whatever. I think as females we have certain instinct that tells us, the kind of spirit and nature that one has helps us. We become little bit calm in addressing the situation (Mrs Zefu).

The data suggests that women principals focus on participatory and collaborative management approaches. They value practices of care and emotional connection with staff members while vigilant of the aims of the organisation. They are likely to work in a co-operative way and use power and authority to empower colleagues.

What also surfaced was a need for capacity building workshops, seminars, forums, formal mentoring programmes and trainings especially for the newly appointed women principals. There was an urgent need for professional development, which would include adequate management skills and create opportunities to be able to obtain necessary management experience. The women principals reported that training of newly appointed women managers, by experienced and successful women who can provide deeper understanding of the expectations and challenges in the world of school management, was of vital importance in the success of women managers.

With the world of work being transformed and women breaking the glass ceiling it is important to understand how women as managers construct their identities and experiences in management if they are challenged from all sides.

4.4 Dynamics of women principals' strategies: implications for women principals and their identities as women

It is an indication of the success of the legislation and policies that women are being promoted to school management positions, particularly as principals. However the dynamics of institutional practices and gendered social relationships in schools adversely affect the effectiveness of female principals. As discussed in the previous section, women principals in this study employed a repertoire of coping and management strategies in order to deal with the challenges they faced. This section discusses the implications of these women principals' coping/management strategies on their identities as women, and their likely effectiveness in the schools. Scholars in the field of gender and education management (Adler, Laney & Packer 1993; Ozga 1993) have associated certain management strategies with feminine and masculine attributes, as if to suggest that certain management strategies are more suited for men and women respectively. Understanding the phenomenon of management strategies and their likely implications on female managers' identities as women is one of the purposes of this study, as indicated in Chapter One.

The findings show that the use by women principals of a variety of management and coping strategies has implications on how they identify themselves as women. Given the dominant discourses of gender (femininities and masculinities) in their schools and communities the women principals in this study felt that the strategies they employed to manage the school either affirmed or devalued their social identities as women. For instance, employing more of the authoritarian management strategies necessitated some form of disassociation from the essence of who they are, while they generally felt affirmed by the use of collegial management or coping strategies.

This section discusses these complex relationships of management strategies and femininities with the view to illuminate how women's assumption of school management positions could be a source of both empowerment and disempowerment. Kganye's (2002) research on educators' perceptions about effective principals in secondary schools concludes that the imperative for effective management cannot be ignored in any discussions about management strategies in schools, as this is the foundation of effective teaching and learning in schools. As such the section also attempts to link various management strategies to their likely impact on effective policy implementation, teaching and learning, as well as teacher and learner discipline in the schools. It argues that the micro-political relationships in the school and the imperatives to attain the goals of effective teaching and learning (as directed by the Department of Education), as well as discipline are conceptualized along patriarchal lines. These generally devalue women principals in addition to putting them under pressure, which their male counterparts are less likely to experience.

4.4.1 Collegial management strategies and women principals' identities as women

In this section, I discuss the implications for the use of collegial management strategies on women principals' identities as women. Contemporary management theories encourage people to work together as a team in order to successfully achieve the aims and goals of their institutions as stated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The Constitution (1996) set out to establish a democratic and open society while recognizing the injustice of those who suffered in the struggle against the autocratic apartheid government. Accordingly the characteristics of empowerment and honesty affirm the women principals' identities since culturally women are mother figures in the community associated with raising children and teaching them good values. In isiZulu culture it is a disgrace to disobey one's mother and women principals found it relatively easy to exercise discipline successfully, especially on learners in the schools.

In one school I observed that the problem of bullying was severe and the male educators found it difficult to discipline the bullies. During my data collection period three of their cases were reported to the principal. Upon speaking to the principal, she reported that male educators had tried to use aggression (i.e. corporal punishment) to discipline them.

It was reported that boys saw this as a challenge and fought back, as a result male educators could no longer have authority to discipline the boys. This meant being women principal had the likelihood of being effective in the context of the schools I studied, especially where collegiality (or less autocracy) was required to deal with matters.

I make it a point that all teachers are given a chance to share their ideas. I know their individual potential. My style of management is very open as I allow staff members to be part of the decision; I put emphasis on teamwork and consultation. It allows everyone to feel important as I value their ideas and use them (Mrs Ngwiri).

The above response shows that women principals allow and value the ideas of staff members therefore motivating them to be dedicated and committed to school work. While this approach affirms female principals' identities as women, by virtue of its close association with the core values of femininities Priola (2007), it also had the potential to assist the women principals to empower the staff. With such collegial and empowering context, decisions are taken as a collective effort. And this is likely to induce commitment on the part of the staff members to implement new ideas (and policies) as they take the ownership of the process and the decisions undertaken.

However women principals mentioned that being democratic at times had its limitations as well. Mrs Ngwiri had this to say:

I want to believe that sometimes being too understanding will want to tamper with my management duties. That's one thing I hate and cannot stand for. I now force my teachers to do their work at school before they leave.

The above response indicates that at times being understanding and approachable leads to situations whereby educators take advantage of a principal. Three women principals in the study mentioned that during the staff meetings at times they waste a lot of time before reaching a decision as a result of attempting to be collegial and that some teachers take advantage to sabotage the aim of the meeting.

One principal mentioned that the staff feels she is weak and afraid of them if she delegates them to do certain things like chairing the staff meetings. This indicates the autocratic values that underlie the social relationships in these schools. It is not understandable why the staff associated the virtue of delegating duties to staff with being weak.

4.4.2 Authoritarian management strategies and women principals' identities as women

Historically, as mentioned in Chapter One, management in the Republic of South Africa has been associated with men and characterised by authoritarianism. Authoritarianism is underpinned by characteristics of aggression and domination and these are closely associated with the core values of masculinities (Blackmore & Sachs 2000). Women principals' entering into the traditionally men's world of management might have an adverse impact on their identity as women and their managerial identities, due to the predominance of masculine practices and values within schools. Priola (2007) advised that working practices and construction of workers' identities are influenced by the dominant culture. The dominant culture within schools that participated in this study was patriarchal. According to Priola (2007) this culture mainly pressured women principals to perform masculine behaviours by adopting authoritarian management strategies, which are closely associated with men (masculinities). This was antithetical to the women principals' identities as females who are largely emotional, caring and nurturing (Thomas & Davies, 2002). The data show that women principals sometimes engaged in autocratic management styles when they felt that they were being systematically dominated or undermined.

When I asked one principal about her experience on dealing with parents, she pointed out that some parents have a tendency of comparing her with the previous male principal. In as much as in tackling issues at school they will expect her to do things like her ex principal. She mentioned a case of learners who were fighting after school. When she as the principal tried to counsel the learners, the parent felt if Mr X was still a principal he was going to punish them without asking lot of questions.

Mrs Shiba added her experience of dealing with teachers.

I've got the feeling that some teachers thought I could not cope from the emotional point of view. Because of the problems in school many had doubts, but I think this makes me more determined. I don't want to be seen as soft, it is almost a shame for me to show that I could be soft.

The above response shows how the women principal felt devalued when conditions compelled them to act like men. It appears that the autocratic nature of these schools which necessitated women principals to employ authoritarian management strategies were seen as problematic by some women principals. Another interpretation is that the social and structural dynamics in these schools dictated that unless women principals are prepared to mirror male behaviour, as a means to survive their positions, then they have only themselves to blame. Additionally it emerged that the maintenance of masculine ideals and practices was deeply associated with downplaying women principals' achievement. Everard et al. (1990) state that while the authoritarian style of management cannot be denied its benefit of saving time and ensuring that work is done accordingly, it has the potential not to succeed in workplaces like a school where teachers are mainly unionised professionals with knowledge, authority of expertise and rights. Another reason is the legally binding democratic dispensation in which schooling in South Africa is supposed to function.

Rather than modelling themselves after men, women principals must be encouraged and supported to affirm their own identities as women in school management positions by employing collegial management strategies. Collegial management strategies are effective management strategies appropriate for the South African schools and they are more affirming for women principals as they are profoundly based on the core values of femininities – the inherent way women do things.

Despite all the policies in place, the pressure for certain bureaucratic requirements is privileging masculinist forms of management.

Consequently that changes the culture of the organisation as women claimed to practise democracy and personal contacts to establish team spirit to becoming more directive, much more controlled. Flexibility and empowerment, which are also, the values associated with women, are not a priority in the manner in which schools are expected to run. There is much more structure, much more rigidity. This change in management style to authoritarian management styles that is associated with males devalues women's identity. The most pressing issue for managers at the time of my interviews was to ensure the increase of learner enrolment as it determines the post provision norm (PPN) in the school. Therefore principals were under pressure and rushing educators ensuring that quality of teaching and learning is effectively delivered, as it is one of the main reasons parents choose a particular school. Again women's identity is compromised in the behaviour because of the nature of a school, which necessitates authority as a matter of survival.

Mrs Nkosi said:

We implement new policies everyday, at times you receive a new policy before implementing the one that you have just receive, it is hectic. We don't find time to motivate our staff, I have cut down what I feel is good to do really to catch up with the management plan one has to be hard and control everything.

The above response shows that the Department of Education exercises the top down approach whereby policies are rigidly implemented because of certain bureaucratic requirements. Undoubtedly it also compromised the women's identity that believes in bringing clarity and making sure that everyone understands the policy before implementation. Ensuring the understanding of all those involved reduces the chances of resistance as everyone knows what to do and expected. However if Department expect things to be done rigidly and principals are expected to be dictators and meet the time frames, the situation devalues women's identity in that they have to change their management strategy. It is likely that teachers would be frustrated and stressed and resort to resistance as there were not given a full understanding of the process.

The Government Gazette of 2006 states that reading should be done for 30 minutes everyday in the morning. Therefore educators cannot negotiate policy matter with the principal. Bush (1995) challenges this approach, and contends that the organisation should not underestimate or overlook the role of the individuals within the organisation. As a result the campaign is likely not to succeed; the situation would have been different if educators in the given situation were given the opportunity to share their ideas on policy implementation. As agents of transformation they would have shared their experience of learners late coming, for instance.

4.5 Conclusion

The above data illustrate that there are powerful organisational directives that dictates management styles. There is also a norm for success and everyone has to conform to certain core value of masculinities, which is likely to be at odds with women managers who mostly embrace feminine attributes Collard (2001). Particularly in the Department of Education, schools are expected to implement policy as they are, and departmental officials visit schools at any time and unannounced and may check on these. Therefore managers need to obey the rules consequently changing women's management style of being collaborative to being autocratic, directive and mimicking men's masculine behaviours. This study found that women are not given opportunity by society to be "themselves" once promoted to top management of schools. If women have to be helped to be like a man, then such initiatives do not constitute equal treatment but an unfair advantage to women. Women in the study rejected that they have to act like men in order to be successful in managing the schools. They believed in claiming their rights, working harder and striving to be more competent, but still keeping their core values as women.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises and draws conclusions and recommendations about the study. The conclusions and recommendations are reached in the light of the findings. It was the aim of this study to find out if women act as ‘themselves’ once they are promoted to management positions or they have to act like a man to be regarded as successful.

5.2 Summary of the findings

This study intended to investigate the experiences of women principals in Mafukuzela-Gandhi Circuit about the management strategies that these women adopt in managing schools, the challenges they encounter in their attempt to manage schools and how they address these challenges, as well as the implications of these factors on their identities as women.

The results from this study show that women principals experienced challenges first in balancing domestic and work responsibilities, for example as managers they are expected to attend Department of Education meetings. Thereafter principals are required to communicate the information from the meeting to staff members. When they reach home they are expected to be full time mothers and take care of the family and household chores. In that way they find it difficult to get time and prepare for the following working day. Secondly, women principals experience gender stereotypes whereby they are perceived as wives who are supposed to be submissive and not have authority as managers of schools who give instructions. Thirdly, women principals lack female role models, who can affirm their identities as women in school management positions.

To rise above the challenges women principals adopted management styles that allow the active participation of staff members. For example staff members took part in the decision-making processes at school. Staff members are encouraged and motivated to use their potential as their inputs are regarded as important in the effective management of the schools.

This implies that women principals as school managers did not give away their identity as women and mothers.

They used their characteristics of empowering and being approachable to manage and encourage staff members to be committed and dedicated to teaching and learning hence their schools are successfully managed. On the basis of these findings, the following conclusions can be made.

5.3 Conclusions

Women principals experience many challenges when managing schools. Findings revealed that the key challenges that women principals experience include the challenge to balance work and family responsibilities, gender stereotype and lack of role models.

Women principals view decision making as a collective process in their schools and therefore endeavour to involve all staff members in order to promote collaboration and collegiality according to Davidoff and Lazarus, “decision- making process relate direct to issues of power” (2002: 104). Hence they had a good quality management experience of their schools. Although masculine virtues of decisiveness and strength are idealized in management and women’s style of management, which is identified as the ethics of care can be seen as positioning women as self-sacrificing when they have to negotiate to arrive at certain decisions, these women principals ensured that their personal vision and beliefs were communicated to parents and staff members. They showed a commitment to sharing power as means for potential growth and development. The strategy worked well for women principals; however, they did not hesitate to take the lead when the situation demanded.

The following challenges were identified with the use of this approach within the context of the schools under study:

➤ Women principals in this study placed emphasis on transparency and openness; hence a positive relationship with the parent community was welcomed in order to improve learner achievement and behaviour. However it does not necessarily determine a feminine working environment, it can, on the contrary create dynamics that reiterate the masculine culture.

Some challenges related to the strategy that the women principals in this study experienced were gender stereotyping.

They were taken advantage of as they were expected to be ‘understanding’ in situations, which were compromising the effectiveness of school management.

- Balancing the domestic chores and work responsibilities as school principals.
- Lack of female role models to look up to for advises.

Interestingly, the study concluded that women principals did not compromise their identity as women in managing the schools. However they opted to use different approaches depending on the situation. This was so because in their management duties they made certain that everyone was involved and worked towards achieving the aims and objectives of the school. The findings of this small-scale study were not meant to generalise however they indicate that this issues could be common in other schools.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions it is evident that women principals in this study are negotiating their personal characteristics as women in order to be effective and successful in managing schools. Therefore given the context of the schools I studied the democratic and collegial management styles can be implemented successfully and efficiently through:

- The establishment of networks at ward, circuit, districts and national level. Such networks will assist women managers to share their challenges and experiences in order to find solutions and bring new information for mutual support.
- There should be more induction workshops undergone by newly appointed principals before they assume their duties. Policy makers should provide facilities where principals could acquire management skills required for effective management of schools.
- Members of the society should be educated to focus on the transformational roles of women in order to change the traditional hierarchy of organisations. This will allow women as school managers to influence change in school cultures and therefore eliminate gender stereotypes.

There is a need to organise workshops and seminars on gender equity and affirmative action to prepare males to serve under female managers so that women’s work can be respected. Women are becoming more established and determined to succeed however there is a need for a more enabling environment for their voice. Large-scale studies will inform us more about women school principals’ management experiences.

Research on the management styles of women principals in South Africa should be encouraged and supported so as to investigate the effectiveness of women's management approaches.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Schedule

A. Background information

1. Age
2. Highest qualification
3. Marital Status
4. Children and ages
5. How long have you been a principal?
6. How many teachers/staff do you manage?
7. How many of them are men and how many are women?
8. How many women and how many men are there in the SMT?

B. Women manager's experiences of management

1. What experiences do you have in implementing the school policies?
2. What experiences do you have in chairing the staff meetings?
3. What experiences do you have in dealing with teacher discipline?
4. What are your experiences in dealing with parents in the school?
5. How do you manage challenges related to implementing the school policies?
6. How do you manage challenges related to chairing the staff meetings?
7. How do you manage challenges related to teacher discipline?
8. How do you manage challenges related to parents in the school?
9. What strengths do you have as a woman to deal with the challenges you face in your role as a manager?
10. What weaknesses do you have as a woman to deal with the challenges you face in your role as a manager?
11. Explain how do these challenges and experiences affect you as a woman?
12. Do you think men who are in the same position face the same challenges? Why do you think so?

13. What factors within your school do you think need to be addressed in order to support your role as a woman manager?

E. Miscellaneous

1. Are there any other issues you would like us to discuss?

APPENDIX B

Observation Schedule

To observe and take field notes of management experiences of women principals in eight schools. For example, observe the organisation of the school, staff meetings, and actions of educators and parents.

APPENDIX C

50 Barondale Place

Newlands West

4037

15 January 2010

Dear Colleague

Request for your participation in a study entitled:
Exploring management experiences of women in management positions

My name is Ntombikayise Ngcobo. I am a deputy principal at Waterloo Primary School and a registered Master of Education Degree student in Education Management in the Faculty of Education at the University of KwaZulu Natal. I am working under the supervision of Dr. V. Chikoko. For further enquiries you can contact him at the following address: Faculty of Education , University of KwaZulu Natal (Edgewood Campus) Private Bag X03, Ashwood, 3605 or phone him at (031) 2602639.

The study seeks to understand the experiences of women in management positions. I request to interview you once during time that will suit you. The interview is estimated to last for an hour. I don't envisage any discomfort that you may suffer, and don't envisage any hazards involved. I selected you on grounds that you are one of the women managers. Your school was randomly selected among those with women managers.

The findings of this study might assist women better to cope with their management duties. There are no costs involved and no monetary benefits involved in participation. I request you to allow me to tape record the interview session. The data will be kept under lock and key for 5 years and the scripts will be shredded and tapes will be incinerated. Your responses will be strictly confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Total anonymity of your participation is assured; I request that your responses be as honest as possible.



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09 December 2009

Mrs N Ngcobo
50 Barondale Place
Briardale
DURBAN
4037

Dear Mrs Ngcobo

PROTOCOL: Exploring experiences of women in management positions in 3 primary schools in Mafuzela Gadhi Circuit
ETHICAL APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0881/2009: Faculty of Education

In response to your application dated 20 November 2009, Student Number: **204516007** the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been given **FULL APPROVAL**.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Professor Steve Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE

SC/sn

cc: Dr V Chikoko
cc: Ms Rishandhani Govender