

**EXPLORING POWER DYNAMICS BETWEEN SCHOOL
MALE MANAGERS AND FEMALE TEACHERS**

BY

JEROME KHULEKANI ZULU

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Supervisor: Professor Vitallis Chikoko

Supervisor's Statement

This dissertation has been submitted with my approval.

.....

PROFESSOR VITALLIS CHIKOKO

.....

DATE

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Jerome Khulekani Zulu, hereby declare that this dissertation “Exploring power dynamics between school male managers and female teachers” is my work and that all the sources used have been acknowledged by means of references. In the case of failure to comply completely with the mentioned declaration, I apologise and confirm that it was not my intention to do so. This dissertation was not previously submitted by me for a degree in another university.

Signed Date.....

Jerome Khulekani Zulu

Signed..... Date.....

Professor Vitallis Chikoko

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Edgewood Campus

Durban

DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to my father, the late Richard Fikathi Zulu and to my elder brother, the late Christopher Dumsane Zulu. Their dedication and commitment to education has always been a pillar of strength to me. May their souls rest in peace. I miss them.

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“how good it is to give thanks to you, O Lord, because of what you have done I sing for joy” Psalm 93.

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to explore power dynamics between school male managers and female teachers. This is a qualitative study located in the interpretivist paradigm. This study adopts a case study research design that utilises interviews to generate data. The data was analysed using qualitative thematic approach. The study is underpinned by two theories, namely, political theory and gender and power theory. The study's findings suggest that the relations between male managers and female teachers are not good in the researched schools. Traditional Zulu culture is used by male managers to sideline female teachers. Male managers seem not interested in the programmes that are meant to improve their managerial skills. The study recommended that both the female teachers and the male managers work together to improve their relations, amongst other things, by attending workshops that are designed to encourage communication, tolerance, trust and respect between them.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCING THE STUDY

1.1 Background and purpose of the study

This chapter introduces and gives background to the study that focuses on exploring power dynamics between male school managers and female teachers.

South Africa advocates gender equality through various acts and policies. The Gender Equity Act (1996), Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act no. 108 of 1996), the Employment of Educators Act (Act no, 76 of 1998), the Employment Equity Act (Act no. 55 of 1998) and White paper on Affirmative action in public service (1998) are some of the Acts that are meant to promote gender equity. In spite of these Acts and policies that promote affirmative action, male school managers seem to marginalise female teachers. Female teachers are not allocated duties that will empower them with management and leadership skills.

1.2 Rationale

The rationale behind the choice of this topic emanates from the observation I have made in my teaching career. My experience as a teacher has taught me that the old patriarchal forms of control still exist. I have also observed that marginalisation of female teachers occurs to the extent of not giving them an equal chance with men of becoming senior managers. These female teachers are also deprived of the opportunity to show case their talent in terms of chairing small committees in schools. It is a common understanding in these school situations that committees are chaired by male educators irrespective of how qualified and capable female teachers are.

The existing literature has covered reasonably well the question of gender equity and how female teachers are deprived of opportunities to be promoted to senior positions (Mathonsi, 2005, Nandraj, 2003) but we still have not enough knowledge about how male school managers and female teachers understand and explain the existing power dynamics.

Such knowledge will be useful towards finding ways of improving power relations for school effectiveness. This study will also contribute to literature that deals with gender and management related issues in schools. This study was guided by the three research questions below.

1.3 Focus of the study

The focus of this study is to explore power dynamics between male school managers and female teachers.

1.4 Key research questions

- How do male school managers understand and explain power dynamics between themselves and female teachers?
- How do female teachers understand and explain power relations between themselves and their male school managers?
- What strategies can be employed to promote positive relations between male school managers and female teachers?

1.5 Research site

This research was conducted in one secondary school whose school management team (SMT) is dominated by males (in terms of numbers). This school is within EThekweni Metro, approximately 60 kilometres from Durban and 30 kilometres from Pietermaritzburg in the province of KwaZulu Natal South Africa.

It is situated in a semi-rural area where there prevail very strong beliefs in Zulu African Tradition. The school was chosen because its management comprises five males and only one female. The way of life outside the school suggests that females are regarded as inferior and are subordinate to males.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study strives to contribute to literature that deals with gender and management related issues in schools.

It also seeks to highlight the power relations between male school managers and female teachers. The findings may be important for the school to help them improve their power relations. This is significant because other schools can benchmark themselves from the findings of this study.

1.7 Clarification of terminology

For the purpose of providing a clear understanding of the discussions in the study, terminology that features prominently is defined and explained within the context. The following concepts will be defined and explained; Management, leadership, gender and power.

1.7.1 Management

Management activity is about achieving particular goals or objectives within minimum delay and inconvenience (Bush, 2003). Management is about efficiency and effectiveness (Clarke, 2007). Clarke continues to say that management is more about implementing policies and decisions, operational issues, transactions and doing things right (Clarke, 2007).

1.7.2 Leadership

Another important concept in this study is leadership. According to Yulk (2002) leadership involves processes of influence exerted by one person or group over other people or groups to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organisation. Leadership is about direction –setting and inspiring others to make the journey to a new and improved state for the school (Davies, 2004).

1.7.3 Gender

The gender of a person is described by Arbecrombie (2006) as socially and culturally constructed, not biologically determined like the sex of a person. This view differentiates between sex and gender.

According to Kimmel (2000), gender is not simply a biological determinant of roles but gender speaks of hierarchy, power and inequality not just sex differences. Kimmel (2000) states that despite the differences that exist between sexes, they co-exist in workplaces, classrooms, families and society at large.

1.7.4 Power

Power is defined by various authors in various ways. This study uses the following definitions of power: Power is a relation between forces which are not static but highly contested (Jorgensen, 2007, Foucault, 1993). “Power is a relation between forces, and every relation between forces is a power relation” (Jorgensen, 2007, p.79).

1.8 Limitations

This study was limited to a particular school in a particular community therefore the findings cannot be generalised to all schools in different contexts. In one school the principal refused me permission to interview female teachers. As a result I could not interview even the management because I could not balance that information with the views of the female teachers. This could have given me an opportunity to interact with the primary school teachers and get their views.

At Mageba High School I could not secure interviews with the group of females I initially wanted to interview.

1.9 Outline of the reports

This study comprises five chapters. Chapter One introduces the study. It provided the background of the study, the purpose of the study, the rationale, the research questions, the significant of the study and its limitations. Chapter Two is literature review and theoretical framework; it reviews literature that forms the bases of the study and also outlines the theories that are used to understand the study. The literature review includes the following issues: power in an organisation, management and gender. Political and gender and power theories forms the theoretical framework that underpins the study. Chapter Three is research methodology and the research design.

The study takes the form of a case study of one school using interviews to generate data. It also outlines how the participants were selected and the methods used to analyse data. Chapter Four focuses on data presentation and discussion. The discussion is based on the findings from the interviews. Chapter Five presents a summary of research findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the literature that sheds light on the power dynamics between school male managers and female teachers. I will review literature organised around: Power in an organisation, management, gender, strategies to improve relations and theoretical framework that underpins the study. I will do this by first defining power and discuss its sources. Further, I will define and discuss management, management functions and theories. I will also review literature on gender. I will conclude by discussing theoretical framework that underpins the study: Political theory and gender and power theory.

2.2 Understanding power

“Power is a relation between forces, and every relation between forces is a power relation” (Jorgensen 2007, p.79). In the words of Foucault (1993, p.336), “where there is power there is resistance”. According to these authors, power is everywhere. For the purpose of this study, I will define power as a relation between forces which is not static but highly contested (Jorgensen, 2007, Foucault, 1993). I see both male managers and female teachers having power coming from different sources. These sources will be discussed and explained in the coming paragraphs.

Power relations differ from one situation to another. Power does not automatically grant authority but it is contested (Foucault, 1993). According to Bush (2003), authority is defined as legitimate power which is vested in leaders within formal organisations.

Bush (2003) further asserts that power empowers leaders with legal rights to make decisions which may be supported by sanctions.

In the school situation, power is highly contested amongst the groupings that exist within the school community; managers, teachers, learners and school governing bodies.

In the process of policy formulation, all these groupings seek to influence the process in their favour because the policy will help them exercise power.

One example is the election of the disciplinary committee at school. This committee will preside over disciplinary proceedings and processes in the school. Therefore all groupings want to dominate it in order to have an advantage over others in terms of issuing sanctions. In other words they will have power. As Jorgensen (2007) states that every relation between forces is power relation, it is therefore important to establish this power relation between the school male managers and the female teachers.

“Power is culturally embedded and embodied, largely unquestioned and unreflected and present in every perception in every feeling” (Jorgensen, 2007, p.14). This means that when a person exercises power culture reflects in that person’s actions. For example if a principal grew up in a culture that does not allow women to take leadership position, he is likely to sideline the female teachers from playing leadership roles in the school. Jorgensen (2007, p.14) further explains that “power is embedded and embodied in the contextual rules of the game by which we do and say whatever we do and say”. This view illustrates the role that is played by power in human relations. It states that every human act, whether by doing or saying, depicts power that is present in that context. If two or more people are brought together their actions will be controlled by the amount of power they possess.

In the case of the relations between school male managers and female teachers power is central; they are wittingly or unwittingly contesting power. This means that the power that is possessed by each group defines the relations between these two groups. The amount of power present in this relationship determines the nature of the relationship. In terms of contextualising power, culture is cited as one aspect that determines the nature and amount of power that prevails in an organisation. According to Kotecha (1994) discriminatory practices against, and the oppression of women, can be traced back to the patriarchal character of society.

The context and the cultural background, in which school male managers and female teachers operate, largely influences power dynamics between the two.

For example, I was teaching in a deep rural area and our principal was the son of the induna (headman). He could not tolerate views from female teachers that were different from his. He would say these views were undermining his authority.

This kind of behaviour was also evident amongst other male teachers who grew up in this area, even though they could not be explicit about it. “Power is the name that one attributes to complex strategically situation in a particular society” (Foucault 1993, p. 334). Power exercised in different contexts and different communities cannot be defined in the same words. While all schools may belong to one Department of Education, their environment, way of operation and cultural background is different and so is their understanding of power and its use or abuse. This leads to a scenario where one Departmental policy is implemented differently by two schools in different areas. Power is therefore not easy to generalise about but it needs to be understood in a particular context.

According to Hardy and Leiba-O Sullyvan (1998, p.458) “power is a network of relations which captures the advantaged as well as the disadvantaged in its web”. Everybody in an organisation has power, but the value and authority of that power varies. Both school male managers and female teachers have power but their power is not equal and does not command the same level of authority and influence. Female teachers normally have power that emanates from their expertise. Foucault (1993) argues that power is dynamic, power is not static. It does not only rest at the hands of those who are in authority but all people in the organisation do have power; for an example an expert in mathematics wields power based on his/her expertise not on a managerial position. Being a manager or being in authority does not mean that the subjects or people under authority do not have power, they do, but on different levels and areas of competence. It does not mean that the manager is omnipotent, but as a school manager it calls for respect, tolerance and execution of duties in a manner that shows that an understanding that other people can usurp power the manager wields.

2.3 Sources of power in education

Bush (2003) states that power may be divided into two sources: authority and influence. Authority as a source of power is defined as legitimate power which is vested in leaders within formal organisations (Bush 2003). He further says that power empowers these leaders with legal rights to make decisions which may be supported by sanctions (Bush, 2003).

Influence, as a source of power, is defined as the ability to affect outcomes, and solely relies on personal characteristics and expertise (Bush, 2003). Everyone in the school has this source of power; it doesn't have to be someone from the management. The determining factor here is personal characteristics and expertise (Bush, 2003). In a school situation managers are vested with authority by virtue of their positions. They implement policies using the authority they have as representatives of the Department. They also exercise a great deal of influence over their subordinates. Influence is another source of power that both managers and teachers have in the school. Teachers and managers alike draw a great deal of strength from this source of power and are able to influence policies within the organisation. These two sources of power, authority and influence, manifest themselves in six forms of power as asserted by Bush (2003, p.98) which are: "positional power, authority of expertise, personal power, control of rewards, coercive power and control of resources". Each of these sources of power will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

2.3.1 Positional power

According to Bush (2003) positional power is the form of power that comes as a result of the position that one holds in an organisation; for an example, school principals, deputy principals and heads of departments have this form of power because of their managerial positions. By virtue of being school managers the school male managers have power in the form of authority vested in them.

This form of power is relevant to my study because it helps to understand how managers exercise their power and how much impact their exercise of positional power has in the power dynamics between male managers and female teachers in schools. My study is designed to examine how male managers relate to female teachers.

Therefore it is important to find out if male managers exercise this form of power differently when it comes to female teachers, and also to find out how the female teachers feel about the way male managers exercise this form of power.

2.3.2 Authority of expertise

Bush (2003) describes authority of expertise as power that comes from people with certain expertise. It refers to people who are specialist in certain areas or fields. According to Morgan (1997, p. 181) “the expert often carries an aura of authority and power can add considerable weight to a decision that rests in balance”. One example of people with authority of expertise is a geography specialist in a school. This person commands a lot of power based on knowledge of the subject. This teacher might not be in a managerial position but has power because of the knowledge or the skills that he/she possesses.

For the purpose of this study that is focussing on exploring power dynamics between male managers and female teachers, I want to understand the influence this form of power might have in the power relations between male managers and female teachers. I further want to understand if women do understand the importance of the expertise they have. I also want to know how women experience the school male managers’ response to their expertise. The power of authority versus the power of expertise is a combination that is likely to effect the balance of power in the school and is also likely to result in the smooth running of a school but if they are well managed. This balance of power is important for ensuring good power relations in a school. I further would like to understand if this form of power is used to promote the interests of the school and good relations between male managers and female teachers.

2.3.3 Personal power

Bush (2003) states that personal power is the power that a person has due to being charismatic. It also involves the verbal skills that person possesses or any other characteristic that distinguishes that person from other staff members. More precisely it refers to the personal traits of an educator within the school. In the school scenario both male managers and female teachers can exercise this form of power.

People who exercise this form of power, in most cases, are eloquent, charismatic and trusted by their followers. They are able to persuade their followers and influence them to see things the way they want them to see it.

Both male managers and female teachers are likely to use this form of power to achieve their goals in the school. This can happen in the process of drafting policies or in meetings or at any event or process that has power contestation.

In this study I want to understand if this form of power has influence in the power relations between male managers and female teachers. I want to know if women do possess this form of power or whether they are just docile and submissive. I also want to understand if and how male managers use this skill to influence policies in schools.

2.3.4 Control of rewards

Bush (2003) says control of rewards refers to a situation where people in an organisation have controls of rewards. This form of power rests with school managers, because control of rewards is more of an authority than an influence as a source of power.

For example the school principal has powers to allocate duties to staff members and in discharging this duty he might reward those who support him by allocating them classes that are seen as better classes.

It is authority-based because it is enjoyed by people in their official positions. This results in teachers who want to benefit from these rewards being controlled by those who have control of rewards.

School managers play a big role in the promotion of teachers to senior positions. These positions are few and are highly contested. Those who are seen by managers to be co-operative and compliant are the ones who stand to benefit by being promoted to senior positions.

Schools have areas that can be regarded as strategic positions; one example is the sports manager of the school. The school sports manager's position is highly sought after because it has a budget. The school manager is therefore likely to reward those who are loyal with this position. It is widely perceived that most people who are promoted to senior positions in schools either do not possess the skills that are necessary for the job they are doing or they are using their positions to their own personal benefit.

In the political arena the talk is of 'cadre deployment'. The same is happening in schools. Managers want to influence policies, aims and objectives of the organisation to their benefit.

Therefore this form of power is used by managers to benefit those who support them in a quest to achieve their goals. In this study I want to know if this form of power does affect power relations between male managers and female teachers. I want to understand how female teachers respond to male managers when they exercise this form of power. I also want to understand if male managers do not use this form of power to sideline female teachers from contributing positively in the school management.

2.3.5 Control of resources

Control of resources deals primarily with the distribution of resources. Competition for resources is a great challenge in schools in that it is seen as a divisive factor by staff members. Members of the staff are divided into those who benefit and those who do not benefit in terms of the distribution of resources. According to Bush (2000) resources also play a big role in the micro-politics of a school. Power struggles determine the budgetary processes as to who will do what.

It must be noted that resources are a form of empowerment. Some sub-committees in the school have a lot of money in their budgets- for example the school tuck shop. The assumption is when a duty to manage the tuck shop is allocated, it is allocated to those who are close to the managers.

Since this study focuses on exploring power dynamics between male managers and female teachers, I want to understand how male managers experience female teachers' response to the way they distribute resources. I further want to understand how the female teachers feel about the distribution of resources in the school.

2.3.6 Coercive power

Another form of power is 'coercive power'. This refers to enforcement of ideas on people, or coercing people to agreeing with one's idea.

Some managers threaten teachers that they will be blacklisted as far as senior posts are concerned if they do not co-operate. According to Bolman and Deal (1991, p.196) “coercive power rests on the ability to constrain, block, to interfere, or to punish”.

Managers do coerce teachers in spite of the good legislation that is meant to protect workers. Sometimes the threats are explicit or are conveyed in the form of actions and gestures. At a school where I was working the principal used to tell us that anyone who does not do as he is instructed will not be written a testimonial that speaks well of him or her when he/she wants to work at another school or when he/she tries for promotion. This has led to most of us (teaching staff) fearing the man instead of respecting him and doing all he wanted us to do against our will.

Female teachers were frequently told that they were not ready to lead; even being class teachers, and the principal would justify this by saying that the children were wild and could not be controlled by a female. This has led to female teachers becoming docile and submissive. Even those who were capable could not execute their duties to their potential. This, as I have said before, is totally against the principles of democracy as articulated in our South African Constitution.

The new democratic dispensation calls for equality of all, gender equity and non-discrimination of anyone based on gender, race or creed (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). I have reviewed literature on this form of power because I want to understand how female teachers respond to coercion by male managers. I also would want to understand if male managers feel that they exercise this form of power. I also want to understand if women do exercise this form of power.

2.3 Understanding management

Management is about achieving particular goals or objectives with the minimum of delay and inconvenience (Bush, 2003). Hoyle (1986, p.8) defines management as a “continuous process through which members of an organisation seek to co-ordinate their activities and utilise their resources in order to fulfil the various tasks of the organisation as efficiently as possible”.

Cuthberth (1984) defines management as activities involving responsibility for getting things done through other people.

In this study management is defined as activities that are about ensuring that all resources of the school, that include all human resources of the school, are coordinated in a systematic way to ensure that the vision of the school is realised.

This study is focussed on the examination of how female teachers relate to male managers, and how male managers relate to female teachers. This relationship involves the school management; how the human resources and other resources are managed in the school. In order to understand this it is imperative to review literature on school management. School management under the leadership of the principal must be able to collectively involve all the educators, support teaching staff and non-teaching staff, parents and other available resources in the school to achieve their objectives as efficiently as possible.

I believe that effective management is accompanied by good leadership. According to Milliken (2001), the best leaders know where their school should be in the near future. In other words, they have a vision for their school. The vision should be linked to the aims and objectives of the organisation. It is important that all stakeholders take part in the formulation of these aims and objectives so that everyone in the organisation accepts and owns them. To achieve these aims and objectives there needs to be an understanding of the functions of management.

2.4 Functions of management

The four functions of management as stipulated by Clarke, (2007) and Bush, (2003) are: planning, organizing, leading and controlling. These four functions of management will be defined and discussed in the following paragraphs.

2.4.1 Planning

Planning is a key function of management that leads to achievement of the goals or objectives of any organisation. Planning includes investigation to obtain information and forms the basis of other management tasks (Bateman & Snell, 2007).

According to Clarke (2007), planning includes identifying goals and objectives, resources, time frames for projects and methods that will be used to implement the plan. According to

Bush and Bell (2003) the purpose of planning includes; choosing a direction, formulating the goals involving all stakeholders and a careful choice of the tools that will assist to achieve the desired goals.

It is therefore important for a manager to be able to plan properly and have a strategy that will assist him to achieve the goals of the organisation. When planning, it is important to afford all stakeholders in the organisation an opportunity to contribute their views. This helps in ensuring that all stakeholders 'own' the agreed upon plan. In this study I am trying to understand if women are afforded an opportunity to contribute in the planning process in a school. I also want to understand if female teachers feel marginalised or if they feel they are part of the planning process. I also want to understand the male managers' views on the role of female teachers in planning.

2.4 2 Organising

“Organising is a task which is performed to initiate planning and to establish connections with various parts, so that goals may be realised and attained effectively” (Allen, 1998,p. 173). Clear communication strategies and negotiations are very important in organising. Organising is a process that breaks down the work to be done into smaller units which includes; consultation of all stakeholders, delegating duties, authority and responsibilities to enable the work to be done efficiently (Allen, 1998). In order to achieve this everyone has to know what is expected of him/her (Clarke, 2007). This means that all the stakeholders involved should be consulted about any project that has to take place.

Delegation is a form of empowerment of people in an organisation. It is important to note that delegating does not mean abdicating responsibilities. Duties delegated need to be monitored, and proper guidance should be given to those tasked with delegated duties. It is also important to report on the progress made and make necessary interventions in time.

All these steps are very important in organising. They give a manager a direction in his/her quest to achieve the goals of the organisation.

2.4.3 Leading

Another important function of management is leading. To lead is to show direction for the organisation or group and individuals and also to influence people to take or follow a particular direction (Bush, 2003). Mathonsi (2005) suggest that it is the duty of the principal to create an environment that will make teachers feel at home. Principals can do this by providing leadership that is decisive and showing direction to the organisation. This calls for a manager to be visionary and to have a clear mission to accomplish.

Since this study is exploring power dynamics between male managers and female teachers I therefore want to understand if male managers understand the leadership role they must play in schools. I also want to know if male managers do accommodate females in their visions and missions as important stakeholders in schools. On the other hand I want to understand how female teachers view the leadership role of the school male managers. I also want to understand if female teachers are happy with the environment under which they are working.

2.4.4 Controlling

Another function of management is controlling. This includes having control over the finances, systems and processes of the organisation (Clarke, 2007 and Bush, 2003). An organisation needs to have control over its structures to be effective and productive (Bush, 2003). Control can be accomplished by people with the necessary expertise irrespective of his/her position in the school management ladder. Authority of expertise comes into play here and empowers even post level one educators.

This management function will help me to understand if the school managers use the skills of female managers as well. I also want to understand if female teachers avail themselves to the management to offer their expertise.

My view is that leaders should put the interest of the organisation before individual interests. If the four functions of management are implemented in schools, there can be no member of staff that is marginalised because of gender, race colour or creed. I believe that for a school to produce good results all teachers should take part in the decision making of the school though at varying levels. However my observations suggest the opposite occurs.

I have observed female teachers being marginalised by male school managers. This has encouraged me to explore the power dynamics between male school managers and female teachers.

2.5 Selected management theories

In exploring power dynamics between male managers and female teachers I will also refer to literature on management theories in regard what scholars say about management. Proper management in schools should be based on correct and relevant management theories to embrace democratic values as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. For the purpose of this study I will focus on the following management theories: collegial theory and subjective theories.

2.5.1 Collegial theory.

One of the management theories that promote the principles of democracy is the collegial theory. According to Bush (2003, p.64) all theories that stress that power and decision-making should be shared by all within the organisation fall under the collegial models.

As far as the school, as an organisation is concerned, teachers should be given a platform to contribute and become part of the decision making process. Brundrett (1993, p.305) asserts that “collegiality can broadly be defined as teachers conferring and collaborating with other teachers”.

When teachers are given a platform to air their views in the discussion process of decision making, it boosts their confidence as important stake-holders of the school as an organisation. This then leads to the teachers contributing positively in the activities of the school. This theory provides for the participation of teachers in the school activities. Another important benefit that derives from collegial theories is that when many minds meet they are likely to arrive at informed decisions, and these decisions are also likely to be implemented correctly (Bush, 2003).

In this way collegial theory suggest an equal platform for both males and females to contribute in the decision making process of the school as an organisation.

This can further lead to a situation where members are given leadership positions in the sub-committees based on their contributions in the discussions, as well as their skills and knowledge of the work to be performed. Sub-committees within the school are small units that provide teachers with an opportunity to practise their leadership and management skills.

The appointment of the leaders of these sub-committees needs to be transparent and democratic. There should be no gender bias, or any form of discrimination. This is possible if all teachers are afforded an opportunity to participate in decision making. Sub-committees provide a form of power sharing. If a leader of the sub-committee is not doing well members of that committee reserve the right to replace him/her with another leader. This makes members feel that they are fully represented in the running of the committee as a sub unit, and at the school as a whole. Collegial Theory is a shift from the old ways of management where the principal was responsible for the management of the whole school alone (Bush, 2003). The leadership style of the principal influences, and is being influenced by, the nature of the decision making process in this theory (Bush, 2003).

This means that the management team should accommodate views that are presented by the staff members. I believe that listening to the views of the teachers strengthens the position of the principal, in that teachers develop trust in the school policy, and they also see their expertise, knowledge and skills being accommodated in the management of the school.

The authority of expertise is very important in a school (Bush, 2003). It is the solid foundation upon which the school managers can build a progressive school anchored in the principles of democracy.

For the purpose of this study I want to understand if school managers give female teachers an opportunity to contribute in the process of decision making in the school. In addition to this, I want to understand if school managers provide an environment that allows female teachers to lead sub-committees in schools. On the other hand I want to understand if the female teachers do not feel side-lined in the whole process of decision making. I further want to know the role that is played by female teachers, if any, in the sub committees of the school.

2.5.2 Subjective theories

Subjective theories may also be used by the school management team as these theories focus on individuals within the organisation. Each person is assumed to have unique and individual perceptions of the organisation (Bush and Bell, 2003).

These theories help to entrench democratic values and principles in the running of the school. Subjective theory will help me to understand if female teachers feel that their views as individuals are either accommodated or at least listened to in an organisation. As far as male managers are concerned I will understand whether they take female teachers seriously in an organisation.

2.6 Theoretical Frameworks

This study is underpinned by two theories which are: Political theory and Gender and power theory. These theories will be defined and discussed in the following paragraphs:

2.6.1 Political theory

According to Bush (2003, p.89) “political models assume that in organisations policy and decisions emerge through a process of negotiation and bargaining”. Interest groups form alliances in pursuit of particular policy objectives. Bush (2003, p. 89) further argues that “conflict is viewed as a natural phenomenon and power accrues to dominant coalitions rather than being the preserve of formal leaders”. According to Bush (2003, p.89), political theories “see organisations as political arenas whose members engage in political activities in pursuit of their interest”.

Political theory is relevant in my exploration of the power dynamics between school male managers and female teachers. The political model enables me to understand the ‘micro-politics’ of schools. ‘Micro-politics’ is defined by Mawhinney (1999) as an intermingling of the political ideologies of the way of life of teachers, administrators, teachers and pupils within the school. Bush and Bell (2003) in micro-politics, policy and decisions are arrived at through the process of negotiation and bargaining.

Here, the interest of the groups within the school community becomes more important than the goals of the organisation. The school community comprises people from different political backgrounds, who also have different experiences and who subscribe to different ideologies.

Culture also plays a pivotal role in shaping the thinking and behaviour of the groupings within this community. In the complex nature of this association, there is likely to be conflict emanating from groupings wrestling for power (Morgan, 1997). This conflict must be managed accordingly. Female teachers and male managers can find themselves wrestling for power. This can be as a result of females trying to emancipate themselves from apparent male domination. Female teachers see themselves as capable of competing with their male counterparts in all fields, especially in areas that were previously dominated by males. Being a woman at a time and in a country that seeks to empower women, is in itself a power base.

This theory will provide useful background in addressing my research question: how school male managers and female teachers understand power dynamics between them, and what strategies could be employed to improve the relations between them. The Political model looks at the goals of the organisation as highly contested, not fixed and ambiguous (Bush, 2003). Various interests that various groupings bring into the organisation will lead to a contestation of wanting to influence the goals of the organisation. This leads to the most powerful group being able to influence the process of decision-making in the organisation, and the weaker grouping sidelined (Bush, 2003). The focus of this study is on exploring power dynamics between school male managers and female teachers.

Bush (2003) sees a dialectical relationship between the Political model and Transactional theory. Transactional theory is defined by Miller and Miller (2001) as a process of exchange. This process of exchange does not produce results that serve to further the long term goals of the organisation. In a school scenario the school principals who, because of their positions, have the authority vested in them would want to get the cooperation of teachers. It is at this point where the transaction arises and both parties gain something. However, the transaction will not extend beyond the gains of this process. This relates to my study because managers and female teachers are likely to engage in these transactions to achieve their interests.

In my experience as a teacher I have observed managers making exchanges with teachers in order to achieve their goals.

My ex-principal would encourage teachers to complete marking their work in time during examinations. In return he would promise them to break earlier than the normal time.

According to Miller and Miller (2001), transactional leadership is concerned more with the present and less with the long term benefits of the organisation. On the other hand in the Political model personal interest rises above that of the organisation.

I therefore believe that using the Political model together with the Transactional theory will help me understand the political transaction that take place between male managers and female teachers.

Another factor that has a major influence in the power dynamics between school male managers and female teachers is the environment outside the school. According to Sergiovanni (1984) a school exists within communities and interact with these communities. This interaction results in the communities influencing schools and *visa versa*. The schools then become a political terrain where outside forces exert pressure in trying to influence the policies and decision making within the school. The schools that I will conduct research in are in the semi-rural areas. The area is ruled by traditional leaders. Patriarchy is still the order of the day. Hierarchical authority is supported by community structures. Using the political model will help me to understand the dynamics surrounding power relations between male managers and female teachers.

2.6.2 Gender and Power Theory

Gender and Power Theory concern sexual inequalities and gender and power imbalances (Connell, 2003). The perpetuation of imbalanced power relations between men and women is not meant for individual benefit but is a collective project in which the power of men and the subordination of women is sustained (Connell, 1995). He continues to say that if authority is defined as legitimate power, then we can deduce that the main axis of the power structure of gender is general connection of authority with masculinity (Connell, (1995).

The assumption is that males are given first preference when it comes to promotion, because of the belief that females should remain subordinate to men.

Sexual division of labour and sexual division of power are amongst the three social structures identified by this theory. This theory will be appropriate for this study because it involves the ways in which male managers and female teachers relate to each other (division of power between the two sexes). Moreover this theory will shed light as to whether patriarchal tendencies are practised in the school where my research was conducted. It also gives a deeper understanding of the subordinate position of female teachers that hinders their upwards mobility in the leadership and management ladder in schools but more importantly that lead to women being sidelined by male managers in terms of chairing sub committees, and doing other managerial duties within the school. It further helps to understand the extent of the marginalisation of female teachers by male school managers, if there is any, through sexual division of power and sexual division of labour.

According to Connell (2003, p.107), “the ability to impose a definition of a situation is part of social power”. He further asserts that power may be a balance of advantages or an inequality of resources in the workplace.

My own observation is that in a school situation policies are formulated to favour those who are in power. The policies that are formulated by the higher structures and are brought to the lower structures for implementation, are implemented in a manner that favours those who are in power. I have also observed that many schools are run or managed in a manner that promotes patriarchy, where management posts are reserved for male teachers.

As Connell (2003) asserts that the ability to impose definitions is part of social power. Those with the powers find their way to bypass the gender equity legislation and other regulations that speak to equity, and side line their female colleagues. Patriarchy becomes the order of the day. There are severally matters that can influence this but chief amongst them could be the surrounding environment. Using this theory will help me to understand if the behaviours of both male managers and female teachers are in any way influenced by the surrounding environment. I will also use this theory as a tool to understand the views of male managers and female teachers regarding the power dynamics between them.

2.7 Summary

In this chapter I have defined power, discussed and analysed the sources of power. I have also defined management as a concept, discussed the functions of management and management theories. I concluded my literature review by discussing the political and gender power theories that underpins my study.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study focused on exploring power dynamics between school male managers and female teachers. This chapter focuses on describing and justifying the research design and methodology used in the study. The chapter begins with a discussion of the qualitative approach followed by an explanation as to why the study is located in the Interpretivist paradigm. This will be followed by the reasons for choosing the case study. The chapter will also discuss the choice of the research site and the participants (how and why these participants were chosen). It also discusses the procedure that was used to gain entry to the research site and the data generation methods. Towards the end of the chapter will be a discussion on ethical issues, trustworthiness and limitations of the study.

3.2 Paradigm

This is a qualitative study located in the interpretivist paradigm. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), qualitative research seeks to explore a particular group and does not generalise the results over the whole population. The use of qualitative approach provided me with in-depth understanding of the experiences of both school male managers and female teachers with regard to power dynamics. In exploring power dynamics between school male managers and female teachers, I would get the full description of their social reality in the context of the school situation.

The qualitative approach was suitable to provide me with the detailed description of social reality of the male managers and female teachers because it is suitable for exploring such social phenomena (Maree, 2007).

The Interpretivist paradigm sees reality as subjective and socially constructed by the participants (Golasfani, 2003). Krause (2005) asserts that the best way to understand any phenomenon is to study it from within its own context. The interpretivist paradigm was used to understand and describe meaningful social action between male managers and female teachers in school context. To do this I needed to investigate the views of both male managers and female teachers as to how they understand and explain power dynamics between them. Furthermore the Interpretivist paradigm was used to find from both male managers and female teachers the strategies that could be employed to promote positive relations between themselves.

3.3 Research design

For this study I adopted a case study research design. A case study is an investigation that provides light on how people in a particular situation feel, and what their views are about the phenomenon under investigation (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). A case study is suitable to use in qualitative studies where the researcher has limited control over events being studied and the object of inquiry is a contemporaneous phenomenon in a real life context (MacPherson, Brooker & Ainsworth, 2000). Cohen *et al.*, (2007) asserts that case studies can utilise a combination of methods and sources of data.

A case study produces a huge contextual description of the phenomenon under discussion (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). The real life context in this study comprised the relations between school male managers and female teachers in the work place.

The Case Study design helped me to gather data within real life experiences of the participants. According to Maree (2007) case studies strive towards a holistic understanding of how participants relate and interact with each other in a specific situation. For the purpose of this study, I wanted to know how male managers and female teachers understand power dynamics between them. The case study further helped me to understand how the male school managers and female teachers understood their interaction in the work place.

3.4 Participants

I used purposive sampling in this study. Purposive sampling enabled me to focus on power dynamics between male managers and female teachers and also provided me with people who are knowledgeable on the topic under consideration (Teddlie & Yu, 2007).

Research was conducted in one secondary school whose school management team (SMT) is dominated by males in terms of numbers. This school is within EThekweni Metro approximately 60 kilometres from Durban and 30 kilometres from Pietermaritzburg. It is situated in a semi-rural area with very strong beliefs in Zulu African tradition. The Chief and Izinduna (headmen) of this area still do not believe that it is correct for a woman to wear a pants. In spite of this, there are women who were pants. The way of life outside the school has a great influence on what happens in the learning institutions in the area.

I also chose this school because its management is dominated by male managers. There are five male managers and only one female manager who is a Head of Department. Both the Principal and his deputy were chosen because they are in the helm of leadership in the school. By virtue of their being managers in the school, they are expected to provide leadership, and to make decisions, in consultation with other stakeholders. This can influence the relations between the management and the female teachers. My plan was to choose two females with more than ten years service with the school, two with at least five years' experience, two with less than two years' experience in then school and two others who reside in the area.

This plan did not work because some female teachers were reluctant to talk about their relations with managers. They feared that the managers would victimise them. I promised them that information would not be given to their managers or anyone else. I further assured them that their identities would not be revealed. This helped to ease the situation a bit and I ended up with six female volunteers.

It was also cost effective to work with this school because it is not very far from where I work.

A small group of participants was easy to work with and I elicited data that was reasonable and easy to analyse without compromising the quality. I am aware that this number (of participants) is not representative of the whole community of the ward, hence the findings will not be generalised (Cohen *et al.*, 2011).

3.5 Data generation instruments

I have used interviews to generate data. The Semi-structured individual was used to interview male managers and focus group interview was used to interview female teachers.

I used semi-structured personal interviews to generate data because semi-structured interviews allowed me to ask follow-up questions to gain greater clarity. Radnor (2002, 346) says the use of semi-structured interviews “creates an atmosphere where the interviewer allows the interviewee to talk freely and is clearly understood they ask questions that encourage participants to open up their attitudes”. I also wanted the participants to open up. The interview lasted for an average of 45 minutes each. The duration of the interviews was determined by, *inter alia*, how the participants understood the questions and the need to probe once the participant had responded. Patton (2002) recommends short interviews because long interviews may decrease the quality of the responses. I took notes during the interview. I used these while probing for further clarity on participants responses.

I adopted a Focus group interview approach for female teachers. Focus groups save a lot of time because they entail a group of people discussing a particular topic (Hayden & Bulow, 2003).

The Focus groups interview approach provided participants with an opportunity to discuss the topic amongst themselves, thereby allowing individuals to be free to express and share information they might not have shared with the researcher if alone (Cohen, *et al.*, 2011).

This data generation method helped to relax the atmosphere thereby allowing individuals to express themselves without fear of being victimised. Use of these data generation instruments provided me with individual views as well as collective views.

Shuy (2003) suggests that face-to-face interviews provide a natural context which might yield great accuracy. Both Individual and Focus Group interviews provided face-to-face interaction which helped me to observe the body language, facial expressions and other gestures that supplemented verbal conversation.

3.6 Data analysis

I used inductive analysis to analyse the data. I transcribed data verbatim. Moreover, data generated through observing facial expression, body language and other gestures was synthesised. I read and re-read the data in order to understand it. I then coded and classified it into categories and themes to facilitate understanding. I used the process suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) of the phases of thematic analysis as indicated in table 1:

Table 1 Phases of thematic analysis (adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.87)

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarising yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data.
2. Creating initial categories	Organising interesting features of data.
3. Searching for themes	Gathering all data relevant to each theme.
4. Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes are appropriate.
5. Defining and renaming of themes	On-going analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, generating clear definitions and names of each theme.
6. Generating the report	Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, analysis of selected extracts relating back to the research question/s and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

I also used theoretical framework as lens to analyse data.

3.7 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness may be regarded as a “fit in between what the researcher records as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched” (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007, p. 149). According to Cohen *et al.*, (2007) triangulation is important to show trustworthiness. To ensure triangulation in this study I interviewed the school Principal, his deputy and the female teachers and compared and contrasted their perspectives.

This was to balance the information received from managers with that received from post level one female teachers. I also had prolonged engagements with participants during interviews. I reverted to the participants to confirm whether the transcripts were representative of what they had said. Cohen *et al.* (2007) also argue that the researcher’s neutrality is very important in ensuring that the study is trustworthy. One way of ensuring neutrality is to be aware of one’s bias and presumptions as a researcher. To ensure that neutrality was applied I focused more on the context and the phenomena over which I had no control. I had limited understanding of actual happenings.

In this study I recorded all the interviews. I probed where necessary depending on the responses from the participants. There were no pre- arranged probing questions. I arranged for peer researchers to check and confirm categories and themes.

3.8 Ethical issues

I began by applying for ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu Natal. This clearance granted me permission to proceed with my research. Since my study was conducted in a school which involved male managers and female teachers, I sought permission to conduct the study from the Department of Basic Education. I further sought permission to conduct the research in the school with the school Principal. I explained to the Principal the purpose of the study and assured him I would not withhold from him any relevant and important information in this regard.

Cohen *et al.*, (2011, p. 85) define ethics as “...a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others.” This highlights the importance of protecting the rights of the participants. According to Robson (2002) ethics infer rules of conduct and code of principles. To ensure that these rules of conduct and codes of principles were followed, amongst other things, I sought informed consent from the participants in the study (Cohen *et al.*, 2011).

The purpose of the research was explained to all participants as well as their role as participants, and what was to be done with the results. I assured them that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time, and at any stage of the study if they wished to (Cohen, *et al.*, 2010). I also explained to the participants that they would not be remunerated for their participation.

Cohen *et al.*, (2011, p.92) state that another “...way of protecting a participant’s right to privacy is through the promise of confidentiality”. The participants were also informed of their right to privacy, and were assured that their identity would be protected. In this regard pseudonyms or fictitious names were used instead of the participants’ real names. I assured the school that names of the participants would not be published if and when the findings of the research were published.

3.9 Limitations

According to Vithal and Jansen (2006), studies are limited by time, resources, access, availability and the credibility of data. This study was limited to a particular school in a particular community, therefore the findings cannot be generalised to all schools in different contexts.

In one school the principal refused me permission to interview female teachers. As a result I could not interview even the management because I could not balance that information with the views of the female teachers. This could have given me an opportunity to interact with the primary school teachers and get their views. At Mageba High School (fictitious name) I could not secure interviews with the group of females I had initially wished to interview. I wanted to interview two females who had spent more than ten years, two with at least five years’ experience, two with less than years’ experience in the school and two who reside in the area.

I eventually engaged with only six female volunteers. Had I got the group I initially wanted, I would have been able to generate data from different participants in terms of experiences.

3.10 Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the paradigm in which the study is located and justified the choice of this paradigm. I have also discussed both the research approach, and the research design giving reasons for the choice of these two.

I have discussed the research site and the sampling I have used to select both male managers and female teachers to participate in the study. This was followed by a discussion on data collection procedures, data analysis employed in this study and ethical issues. I have indicated the envisaged limitations of the study.

Research design and methodology

Qualitative Approach

Qualitative approach will be used in this study. Mays and Pope (2000) describe qualitative approach as used to find in-depth description of peoples' attitudes, beliefs and experiences.

. Qualitative approach also seeks to explore a particular group and not to generalise it over the whole population (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). This approach will allow me to select a few schools in the area and be able not to generalise on the findings that I will get.

Chapter Four

Data Presentation and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore power dynamics between male school managers (principal and deputy) and female teachers in a particular school. Data were generated using semi-structured individual interviews with the principal and the deputy principal of Mageba High School (fictitious name) and focus group interviews with six female teachers of the same school. In this chapter I present and discuss the data. I have used the phases of thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006).

This chapter unfolds as follows: First I report on the context of Mageba High School. This is followed by a report on responses regarding management tasks at the school. Next is the discussion on the influence of culture in power relations at Mageba High School. Fourth I discuss the promotion of women in education. This is followed by a discussion on the characterisation of the relationship between school male managers and female teachers. Lastly, I discuss the emerging issues.

To ensure confidentiality, the participants were allocated pseudonyms as follows: the Principal is Mr. Memela and the Deputy Principal is Mr. Zulu.

4.2 The context of Mageba High school

The school is situated in a semi-rural area between Durban and Pietermaritzburg in the Province of KwaZulu Natal in South Africa. This area is under EThekweni municipality but it is a traditional area ruled by a Chief and Izinduna (headman). The community is patriarchal in nature. The chief and izinduna (headman) have a great influence on what happens in learning institutions in the area. Girls in the area are organised by senior ladies who teach them female behaviour with relation to men. Boys are also taught by old men how men should behave themselves in relation to women in life.

These lessons create a rift between boys and girls as they don't interact even when they are playing (from early ages through to adolescence).

Boys are taught from an early age that women are subordinate to men. Women are taught not to argue with men, they are made to understand that a man's word is final.

At Mageba High School there are twenty eight teachers with fourteen males and fourteen females. The school management comprises a male principal, a male deputy principal, and four heads of departments- three males and one female.

I held individual interviews with each of the Principal and the Deputy. I then held one focus group interview with the female teachers. The interviews with the Principal and the Deputy lasted thirty eight (38) minutes and thirty four (34) minutes respectively. The focus group interview lasted thirty (30) minutes. Ideally these interviews should have been longer, which would have allowed more information to emerge, but was limited by the interviewees who only had this time available due to other commitments.

I chose the Principal and the Deputy Principal because they are males and they are at the helm of leadership in the school. They have a duty to provide direction on the campus and to make decisions, in consultation with other stakeholders, which can influence the relations between the management and the female teachers.

Selecting the female teachers to participate in the interviews was a bit difficult since they were reluctant to talk about their relations with their managers. They feared being victimized by the managers. I allayed their fears by explaining, in detail, that the information would not be given to their managers or anyone else. I also explained that their identities would not be revealed.

Initially I wanted to select two females who had spent more than ten years at the school, two with at least five years' experience, two who are new with less than two years' experience in the school and other two who reside in the area. This plan did not materialise. Instead, I ended up interviewing six female volunteers.

4.3 Management tasks

For the purpose of this study management tasks will be divided into two sub-themes, namely; transparency in the allocation of subjects and participation in sub-committees. These two themes emerged when the data was categorised into themes.

4.3.1 Transparency in the allocation of subjects

For planning as a management activity I focused on the allocation of subjects because this seems to be the core of preparing for teaching. I asked the school Principal, Mr. Memela, and his Deputy Principal how the duty loads is decided upon in this school.

Both the Principal and the Deputy Principal reported that the duty load was dealt with in a transparent way. In this process all affected people were afforded an opportunity to make contributions on the drafting of the duty load. According to these managers the duty load reflected feeling in the staffroom. They said that it normally starts with teachers meeting with their heads of department to decide on the subjects that would be taught by different teachers. The head of the department would then report back to the school management team (SMT). There could be minor changes that could be made by the SMT but they were very minimal. They did not affect the core of what the departmental meetings had decided.

The Deputy Principal, Mr. Zulu, had this to say about the allocation of the duty load:

The HOD sits together with the educators at the level of the department. That is where they look at the curriculum of the school, the subjects that this department has, and they decide who is going to Grade eight or Grade twelve. The teachers agree with the HOD. As managers we still can effect some changes as determined by the curriculum needs of the school, and any conditions including protecting our female teachers from teaching Grades that are going to give them problems in terms of discipline.

The Principal and his Deputy seemed to be suggesting that the allocation of subjects is done transparently, but they seem to be contradicting themselves by saying they also protect females from teaching Grades 11 and 12 because of disciplinary problems among learners.

Under normal circumstances the Principal is responsible for the allocation of duties to his staff, but he can delegate this to the HODs. This should be done in a transparent manner, which does not discriminate according to race, colour, gender or creed.

Responding to a question seeking clarity on whether it is fair to prevent females from teaching higher Grades, the Principal and the Deputy Principal said that it was seen by female teachers as a tool used by the management to side-line them, but their (the Principal and the Deputy) intentions were genuine, and were aimed at nothing other than ensuring that discipline was exercised at these senior Grades.

As managers they then ensured that these two classes are taught by males because seemingly males were dealing with older boys in a manner that ensured that discipline is instilled.

On the other hand female teachers felt that they are prevented from teaching Grades 11 and 12 classes because there are opportunities for getting extra money through being selected to mark Grade Twelve examination papers in December.

The general feeling amongst the females was that males were rewarded for supporting the Principal in the staff meetings. Females did not accept the thinking that they were not capable of dealing with older boys. They thought this was done to cover up that they were being discriminated against by the male managers.

They strongly believed that the male managers were undermining them.

This is what one focus group member had to say:

We are not happy with the way the duty load is done here at school. We feel that there are so many changes that are done by the Principal and his Deputy to pave way for male teachers to get opportunities to mark Grade twelve papers in December thereby making extra cash, and the school Principal does not want us to enjoy that privilege of marking and getting extra cash.

Another female participant said:

In fact there are tensions because ever since I came to this school, I have been complaining about teaching English, because it is not one of my major subjects.

As a Tourism specialist I was supposed to teach Grade twelve, but a male was given tourism at Grade twelve and I was given this English at Grade nine, which is not my major subject, because I am a female and this does not happen to male teachers.

Responses from the managers' and female teachers' in this regard suggest that the two groups had differing perspectives. The female teachers felt the managers abused their power, while the latter felt that they were protecting them.

The allocation of duties appears to be politicised in this school. It also seems to be characterised by conflicting perspectives. According to Political Theory, conflict is a natural phenomenon (Bush, 2003).

In principle, the idea of calling a meeting at departmental level where everyone is free to express an opinion in the allocation of subjects, is progressive and democratic. It affords people the opportunity to choose subjects wherein they are expert. But managers seemed to hijack this and allocate senior classes to male teachers in order to benefit them financially.

The opportunity to teach subjects in which one is an expert empowers educators with the authority of expertise, giving them power as specialists in their subjects. Bush (2003) describes authority of expertise as power that comes from people with certain expertise. According to Morgan (1997) the expert often carries an aura of authority and power can add considerable weight to a decision that rests in balance. Findings suggest that female teachers end up in some cases teaching subjects in which they are not confident because they have to stay with junior classes. This is likely to contribute immensely to reducing their confidence, both in the classroom and as teachers because they do not command that power emanating from the authority of expertise. This also may have a negative impact in the relationship between male managers and female teachers. Some female teachers said that they did not give their best when they were teaching because they are demoralised. Political theory sees this conflict of interest as a natural phenomenon (Bush, 2003).

4.3.2 Participation in sub-committees

I also sought to know how 'organising' as one of the management activities influences power relations between male managers and female teachers.

With regard to how the sub-committees are formed in the school, the principal and the deputy said a general staff meeting is called to elect members of the committees. Once these members are elected they then sit in their respective committee meetings to elect the office bearers, including the chairpersons.

The Principal and the Deputy expressed satisfaction in the way these sub-committees are formed.

This is what Mr Memela had to say:

A general staff meeting is called to elect members of various committees. The elected members will then sit in their own meetings to elect the chairpersons.

They stressed that members of the committees were elected in a democratic meeting, and that all staff members were given a chance to participate without fear.

They also emphasised the point that sometimes they were forced to consider gender due to the nature of certain committees. Mr. Memela had this to say:

Committees like Sports and Examinations need to be led by males because these committees are so demanding and exhausting.

The female participants had a contrary view to this. They argued that the process was not as democratic and as transparent as one may want it to be because the school Principal advised the staff to elect the chairperson of Sport and Examination committees from male teachers. The female participants believed that this took away their right to make their choices freely without any pressure.

One female commented:

The principal influences the staff before elections to elect males as chairpersons of Sports and Examination committees.

Females believed that they are underestimated by their male managers. They are only given the responsibilities of chairing 'insignificant' committees which are believed to be inferior.

The examples of these 'insignificant' committees, as seen by female teachers, were the Health and Cultural committees. The school regards Sports and Examination committees as strategic. This is what one female participant had to say:

We are given responsibilities to chair Health and Cultural committees which are insignificant and not strategic. We feel that the management undermines us.

The general feeling amongst female teachers was that the Principal preferred male teachers to lead these committees because he trusted males. They held the view that in the examination committees the Principal needed someone who was close to him and someone he could trust because the success and failure of examinations had implications for the entire school, and in the Sports committee there was money involved.

But it was not clear to me why there was that lack of trust.

One female participant said the following:

...in our school sports committee is chaired by a male teacher and under no circumstances can a female teacher lead it because the school principal tells us in the meeting before we elect the chairperson that it should be a male teacher because the nature of this committee is demanding a lot and is exhausting.

This, according to the female teachers, had dampened their spirit to a point where they were no longer interested in chairpersonships of the sub-committees anymore. They felt that they were discriminated against by the senior managers (the school principal and the deputy principal). They strongly believe that they were seen as people who were not capable. This is what one of the female participants had to say:

They think we are not capable of playing a leadership role in the school, they doubt our ability to organise, we feel discriminated against by these managers.

We suspect that the principal uses these positions to reward the male teachers who are seen to be siding with him all the time in the meetings.

Responses suggest that the perception of the managers' and female teachers' regarding participation in committees differed. While the management maintains that there is transparency in the manner and procedure followed when forming committees, females felt that the management was using its power to manipulate the distribution of the resources to their advantage, and subsequently side-line them.

The distribution of resources is the major source of contention in this regard. According to Bush (2000), the distribution of resources plays a pivotal role in the micro-politics of a school.

The participation in sub-committees also touches on Gender and Power theory in that there are committees that are reserved solely for males because these committees are said to be 'demanding and exhausting'. According to Connel (2003) power can be defined as a balance of advantages or an inequality of resources in the workplace.

4.4 The influence of culture in power relations at Mageba High school

I asked the participants if Traditional Zulu culture had influence in the human relations in the school. The Principal felt that the influence of culture played a pivotal role in human relations within the school, particularly in relationships with female teachers. He believed that Traditional Zulu culture described different roles that should be played by males and females in the society, and the school needed to abide by what this culture prescribed.

He expressed his concern about certain sections of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) that put women on par with their male counterparts, without taking into consideration the way of life and the culture of different people. This is what Mr. Memela had to say:

Every community has its own way of doing things. This school is in a particular community and therefore it must assist this community to prepare its children for the future in a way that does not deviate from its norms and values. This is the principle that is guiding us as a school. We should not, as a community, allow our culture to be dominated by other cultures.

The Deputy Principal held a similar view saying that their relations with female teachers were negatively affected by the females who wanted to behave like men, and who forget their role and place in the society. He further stressed that while he respected the rights of everyone, including women, it was important not to forget the roles of both genders.

Mr. Zulu had this to say:

We respect women and their contribution in our education. But it remains our responsibility to ensure that we protect them, and do not elevate them beyond their status as women. Our roles in the society are not the same, and that should reflect in the way we do things and conduct ourselves. Education must not brain wash us and take our culture away. We must ensure that we preserve our culture.

Female teachers had a different view. They said that their Principal used culture to marginalize female teachers. They argued that while they understood that the area they were working in was traditional, but they believed that the managers should be guided by the Educational Acts that govern schools when managing. They cited the Employment Equity Act, Employment of Educators Act as well as the Constitution of South Africa as some of the legislation that managers should be referring to, to ensure fairness and equality in their human resource management.

The female participants said that there were instances wherein the Principal would say he was a man and he did not argue with females. They described this as being arrogant and looking down upon female teachers.

One female participant commented:

Our Principal and our Deputy Principal are very arrogant, they hide behind culture in their attempts to side-line us. They treat us differently. Our Principal would even go to the extent of telling us that he is a man, he does not argue with females. We believe that they are influenced by the community because this community is still very traditional and patriarchal in nature. But as managers they are expected to implement amongst others the Employment of Educators Act, Employment Equity Act and the Constitution of South Africa accordingly.

The responses seem to suggest that the cultural influence negatively affected power relations between the male managers and the female teachers in this school. They also suggest that managers and female teachers had different understandings of the way in which culture influences their relationship. Both the school Principal and the Deputy Principal were born and bred in the school community. In that area males are taught, when they are young, that they are superior to women. This leads to a situation where males do not think women can say something useful.

This thinking is in total contrast with the following Acts which are meant to promote gender equity, equal rights to all people and fair labour practice to all irrespective of gender, race, colour or creed: Gender Equity Act (1996), Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act no. 108 of 1996), the Employment of Educators Act (Act no, 76 of 1998), the Employment Equity Act (Act no. 55 of 1998) and White paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service (1998).

Political theory sees organisations as platforms for the practice of politics by their members, with an aim of achieving their interests (Bush 2003). Culture had become one of the areas that are politicised by both male managers and female teachers to pursue their interest. Culture is seemingly used as a tool to promote patriarchy and gender inequality. The contrasting views of managers and female teachers confirm that “the ability to impose a definition of a situation is part of social power” (Connell, 2003, p.107).

4.5 Women development in the school

Responding to a question that sought to understand what the managers were doing to address the challenges that affect their relationship with female teachers, both the school Principal and his Deputy stressed the point that a lot needed to be done to capacitate their female colleagues.

They were both of the view that female teachers would need workshops and seminars conducted by well-known females (their role models). They also stressed that woman to woman talk could help to boost the confidence of the female teachers which, according to their view, seemed to be at its lowest point.

Mr Zulu believed that women should organize themselves programmes that speak directly to women issues and to help one another to grow professionally.

In affirming these views the school Principal had this to say:

..more particular some sort of workshops to workshop females so that they gain confidence. We have to get women leaders who are known, to talk to ladies, and say 'ladies you must wake up, you must be strong, you must participate fully in all activities, you must try by all means to be independent....'

On the other hand female teachers were of the view that while teacher development is important, a specific women development programme should be developed by managers to address the gender imbalances of the past. They further believed that the managers had a duty to capacitate them in all areas which led to them to being sidelined in teaching certain classes and holding certain chairperson positions. They proposed capacity building programmes on; class management, instilling discipline and on leadership, as very crucial for their development.

One female participant had this to say:

As females we believe there should be a specific development programme for us, which will seek to empower us, and to address the gender imbalances of the past. We also would want the managers to develop us in areas where they think we are lacking instead of sidelining us.

Both parties (managers and female teachers) shared the same view that female teachers need to be developed on certain areas, but they differed in terms of strategy. Responses from male managers suggest that female teachers are on their own.

In spite of the challenges that face women raised by managers, they do not seem to use their power (positional power) as managers, to advance women empowerment in the school. None of the programmes they suggest speak to the role they should play as managers in developing and empowering female teachers. Male managers believed that women should be capacitated by other women (their role models).

Contrary to this view, female teachers believe that managers should capacitate them. They saw women development as the responsibility of the managers, especially on areas where managers had identified their weaknesses.

These workshops and programmes do not seem to address what were seemingly the burning issues of difference between the two groups. For example the managers do not seem to think that the culture can be re-looked at, as far as they are concerned it is 'cast in stones'. While females believed that managers needed to be developed too, managers believed that it is only females that need development. This means that skewed power relations are likely to continue because male managers do not see themselves as candidates for development.

Both groups are steadfast in their quest to achieve their interest. The school has become a political arena where each group wants to entrench and maintain its position. This is in line with the Political Theory that underpins this study. In the Political Theory organizations are seen as "political arena where members involve themselves in political activities in pursuit of their interest" (Bush, 2003, p. 89). Female teachers believe that male managers should develop them; on the other hand male managers believe that female teachers should be developed by other females.

4.6 Characterisation of their relationships

In respect of relationships, I asked managers how they perceived their relationship with female teachers. The male managers described their relationship as luke-warm. They acknowledged that there were challenges here and there like in any other relationship.

The managers pointed out that there were issues that led to this kind of relationship between the female teachers and themselves. The school Principal accused female teachers of two issues: The first was that female teachers showed lesser commitment to their work. The second was that female teachers were taking leave more often (such as early departure and also of late arrival). The school Principal believed that female teachers wanted to spend more time outside the school environment visiting the surrounding towns to do shopping.

He claimed that this led to misunderstandings between female teachers and management. He further reported that it also led to females believing that they were discriminated against by the male managers.

Mr Zulu had the following to say on this matter:

I think that we have a luke-warm relationship with the female teachers. Female teachers show less commitment to their work. When one checks our leave register, it is evident that females take more leave than male, As managers we have to reprimand them over, amongst others, application of the no-work no-pay principle (if their leave days are exhausted).

Another point raised by the managers was that their relationship is characterised by a lack of communication. They were critical that both sides had not sat down to discuss issues but had rather jumped to conclusions prematurely. Both the Principal and his Deputy were of the view that there were many issues that were not resolved between themselves and the females. They attributed this to a lack of tolerance from both sides.

Mr Memela added the following:

I think there is lack of communication between the female teachers and us. This leaves us with so many unresolved issues. Another challenge is tolerance for each other. Both groups need to understand each other so that we will learn to tolerate each other.

Female teachers viewed their relationship with male managers as a relationship with challenges. Like the managers, they said there was a lack of proper communication between them and the managers. They believed that some of the issues that seemed to be a problem between them and the managers could be solved through dialogue. They were of the view that this dialogue should be initiated by managers because of their position (position of power). They also suggested that the managers also needed capacity building workshop specifically on managerial, transformational and gender issues. The female teachers also reiterated the view that the managers lack tolerance. They said that both sides seemed not to be tolerant of each other. They act on suspicions and made conclusion about each other without establishing the truth.

A female teacher had this to say:

There is a lack of communication between the managers and us. We need a dialogue to solve some of the challenges we are facing. If we can do this our relationship can improve.

Another female teacher had this to say:

We also are not tolerant of each other. I think we have lost trust. We do not want this thing of us versus them. We want to work as a team and trust each other.

The members of the focus group also felt that another factor that affected their relationship was that managers showed a lack of confidence in the female teachers. They reported that when females address the assembly the male manager will arrive and repeat almost everything the female teacher had said to the learners. Females saw this as a sign of no confidence in them. To emphasise this point female teachers complained that they felt very much embarrassed and humiliated when a male manager arrives in a classroom and disciplines a learner without informing the female teacher who is the class manager of that class. One focus group participant said the following:

If the assembly is addressed by a female teacher, the Principal or the Deputy Principal will follow, either to repeat what that female has said, or to add to it. But the same does not happen with the male teachers. If a learner does something wrong in a class managed by a female teacher the Principal or the Deputy Principal will go into that classroom and discipline the learner without informing the class manager.

While both the managers' and female teacher's acknowledged that their relationship had challenges, both of them were able to identify these challenges and to some extent suggest possible solutions. The findings seem to suggest that lack of communication and tolerance are the main challenges that affect their relationship. Communication seems to be a key factor in management.

According to Hoyle (1986) management is a continuous process through which members of an organisation seek to co-ordinate their activities and utilise their resources in order to fulfill the various task of the organisation as efficient as possible. This is not possible without proper communication. These findings are in line with the gender theory which because male managers seem to be promoting patriarchy. Again the school seems to be a political arena in that both groups are involved in an ideological war in their quest to dominate. This is in line the political theory because it speaks to the micro-politics of the school (Bush, 2003).

4.7 Emerging issues

This study was trying to investigate the following research questions: how do male managers understand and explain power dynamics between themselves and female teachers and also to understand how female teachers understand and explain power dynamics between themselves and male managers. The following issues emerged:

Responses from male managers and female teachers suggest that the two groups held differing and contesting perspectives. The female teachers felt that the managers abused their power, while the managers argued they were protecting the female teachers.

Both managers and female teachers agree that there is lack of both communication and tolerance amongst them. Male managers are largely driven by culture and therefore they marginalise women.

Another research question used in this study was: What strategies can be employed to promote positive relations between male managers and female teachers?

Issues that emerged from this research question were that managers believe that female teachers need to be capacitated in terms of disciplining learners. They further suggested that female teachers should help one another to grow professionally. On the other hand female teachers believed these programs should be initiated and organized by the managers. They also suggested that managers too needed capacity building workshops on management and the handling of gender issues.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the study, makes conclusions and suggest recommendations in response to what has emerged from the investigation.

5.2 Summary of the study

The study explored power dynamics between male school managers and female teachers. The first chapter outlined the background and the purpose of the study. The motivation for the study emanated from my observations as a teacher. I observed that the old patriarchal form of control in schools still exists, women seem to be marginalised and not given equal opportunities with male counterparts. Available literature tends to focus more on gender equity, and how females are deprived of opportunities to be promoted to senior positions. This study attempted to fill the existing gap and sought to explore how male managers and female teachers explain and understand power dynamics between them.

In Chapter Two, I reviewed literature. The following concepts were discussed: power in an organisation, management, gender and strategies to improve power relations. The study was underpinned by two theories which are the Political Theory and Gender and Power Theory.

Chapter Three outlined the methodology used in the study. The study was located within the qualitative approach, and adopted a case study research design. The case study was conducted through individual and focus group semi- structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews enabled me to probe the issues that were investigated. The individual interviews were conducted with the school Principal and his Deputy while the focus group interview was conducted with six female teachers from the same school.

In chapter Four I presented and discussed the data that had been generated. The data was presented through the following themes: management tasks, influence of culture in power relations at Mageba High school, promotion of women, characterisation of the relationship between male managers and female teachers and the emerging issues.

Conclusions

This study was guided by three research questions:

How do male managers understand and explain power dynamics between them and the female teachers?

How do female teachers understand and explain power relations between them and the male managers?

What strategies can be employed to promote positive power relations between male managers and female teachers?

As a result of the findings in the previous chapter the following conclusions are made:

The relationship between male managers and female teachers at Mageba High School are not good. They are characterised by a lack of tolerance and a lack of trust between the two groups. This was acknowledged by both groups.

The allocation of subjects is made in favour towards male teachers. This seems to benefit male teachers in terms of money, since they get an opportunity to mark Grade 12 examination papers as a result. The findings also reveal that the classes are allocated to male teachers as a reward for supporting the Principal in the staff meetings. These findings are in agreement with the Political Theory which characterise decision making as a bargaining process. These two groups are also engaged in this political activity in the quest to achieve their interest.

The process of electing the office bearers of sub-committees is designed to favour male teachers, because the chairpersonships of Examinations and Sports committees are reserved for male teachers only.

This makes female teachers feel marginalised by the male managers. This finding is also in line with the Political Theory which stresses that “the perennially scarce resources of schools...provide the nutrients for school-based political activity” (Lindle, 1999, p. 171).

It also confirms the role that is played by micro politics in the distribution of resources (Bush 2003).

Traditional Zulu culture is used by male managers as a tool to promote patriarchy and gender inequalities in the school. The male managers seemed to be greatly influenced by the community around the school, which is very traditional and patriarchal. The Traditional Zulu culture has become one of the areas that are politicised by both parties to pursue their interest. Political Theory sees organisations as platforms for the practice of politics by its members with an aim of achieving their interest (Bush, 2003). The contrasting views of these groups on Traditional Zulu Culture also confirm the position of the Gender and Power Theory that the ability to impose a definition of a situation is part of social power (Connell, 2003).

Regarding the development of women in the school, programmes suggested seem not to be addressing what had been raised as challenges in the relationship between the two groups. Male managers seemed to be maintaining the status quo; they want to maintain the skewed power relations between them and the female teachers. The male managers do not seem to be thinking that culture can be reviewed they appear to be happy with the status quo. They also seem uninterested in the development programmes that are meant to improve their own managerial skills.

Recommendations

On the bases of the above conclusions I recommend that:

1. The Department of Basic Education should intervene and ensure that the Gender Equity Act, the Constitution of South Africa (1996), the Employment of Educators Act, the Employment Equity Act, and the white paper on Affirmative Action are referred to, to ensure fairness and equality in human resource management.
2. Both male managers and female teachers should attend workshops that will encourage tolerance and trust between them.
3. The managers should improve their ways of communication within the school to ensure that their programmes are understood and accepted by other stakeholders.

4. Management recommendations in subject allocations should not be discriminatory against female teachers or anyone else, but should aim at improving the culture of teaching and learning in the school.

5. Culture should be re-considered to ensure that it does not disadvantage women in the work place. It should be practiced in line with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and other Acts that promote equality among the people of South Africa, irrespective of gender, race, colour or creed.

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Appendix A

EXPLORING POWER DYNAMICS BETWEEN SCHOOL MALE MANAGERS AND FEMALE TEACHERS.

Semi-structured interviews

Interview schedule – School male managers

Background information

1. For how long have you been teaching in this school?
2. When did you assume duties as a manager in this school?
3. Tell me about your staff composition
(the number of male teachers, number of male teachers and number of females in positions).

Work relations.

4. Tell me how would you characterise you work relations with female teachers in the school (how is your relationship with women like in the school?).

Management task

(i) Planning

5. One of the management functions is planning (e.g. drawing a year planner, timetabling, etc), it is said that planning should involve all stake holders in the school so that everyone will give his/her best in achieving the goals of the school. To what extent do you involve female teachers in the planning?
 - What are the activities that you organise and what is the role of female teachers?
6. Female teachers have different areas where they are good, like someone may be a good maths teacher or a good leader or have great management skills.

7. Do you recognise, accommodate and reward their different expertise that female teachers bring along with them in the school?
- How do you allocate duties?
 - Do you encounter any difficulties in the process of the allocation of duties?
 - Does the allocation of duty reflect positively in the final results of the school?

(ii) **Delegation**

8. How are the chairpersons of the sub-committees (e.g. sport committee, entertainment committee) decided upon in your school?
9. Do you have confidence in the female staff in as far as delegation of duties is concerned?

(iii) **Controlling**

10. Do female teachers participate in the staff meetings?
- Do they air their views freely?
11. How do you deal with female teachers who may have opinions that differ from yours as the school manager?
12. How much influence does the outside environment have in the day to day running of the school?
- Would you say that has influence in the way you handle yourself?

Possible ways of improving relations

13. In your view do you think that there is a need to have something more to be done to promote role of women in your school?
14. In your view what are the challenges facing women leaders today?
15. What else would you like to tell me about the relationship between male managers and female teachers?

Appendix B

EXPLORING POWER DYNAMICS BETWEEN SCHOOL MALE MANAGERS AND FEMALE TEACHERS.

Semi-structured interviews

Interview schedule- focus group (Female teachers).

A. Biographical information of the female teacher.

- 1.1 Age
 - 1.2 Gender
 - 1.3 Educational qualification
 - 1.4 Work experience (number of involved in education, position held in education, etc.)
-
-

B. Female teachers' understanding and explanation of power dynamics between them and male school managers.

- 1. For how long have been working in this school?
- 2. What in your opinion is good or not good about the school?

Duty load.

- 3. As experts in your major subjects, do you think your expertise is recognised by the school management?
- 4. Are you given the duty loads in accordance with your strengths?
- 5. How much influence does the allocation of duty have in the relationship between yourselves and the management?

Decision making process/collegiality

6. To what extent does the school management involve you in the decision making process?
7. Are you involved in the policy formulation of the school?

Management and leadership roles.

8. Do you feel the school management treat all educators alike?
9. How are sub committees elected / appointed in the school.

C. Strategies that could be employed to improve power relations between male managers and female teachers.

10. What are you doing promote good relations between yourselves and the school management?
11. Do you think the management is doing anything to ensure that women are empowered?
12. What are you doing or have done to advance the course of women empowerment?

General

13. What else do you want to add on the whole issue your relations with male management?

Appendix C

P.O.Box 481975

Qualbert

4078

20 June 2012

Attention: The school Principal

Department of Education

Province of KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag X9137

Pietermaritzburg

3201

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL.

My name is Jerome Khulekani Zulu a Masters student (in Educational Leadership, Management and Policy) and the Principal of Othweba Primary school. As part of my degree fulfillment, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research at your schools premises.

The title of my study is: **Exploring power dynamics between school male managers and female teachers.**

The focus of this study is to explore power dynamics between male school managers and female teachers in selected schools in one education ward. Male school managers refer to male school principals and deputy principals.

The planned study will focus on school managers (especially the school principal and deputy principals) and female teachers. The study will use semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with both the school managers and female teachers; focus group interviews shall be held with female teachers only. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 45 minutes and each interview will be voice-recorded.

Responses will be treated with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used instead of the actual names. Participants will be contacted well in advance for interviews, and they will be purposively selected to participate in this study. Participation will always remain voluntary which means that participants may withdraw from the study for any reason, anytime if they so wish without incurring any penalties.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Professor V. Chikoko . E-mail: chikokov@ukzn.ac.za.

In addition, should you have any queries please feel free to contact me directly using the following contact details: Jerome Khulekani Zulu; Cell: 082 304 1411

E-mail: jkzulu@gmail.com.

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely

Mr J.K Zulu.

Declaration

I (Full name of participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: ***Exploring power dynamics between school male managers and female teachers.***

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research project any time should I so desire.

Signature of Participant: ----- Date-----

Signature of Witness/ Research Assistant: -----Date: -----

Thanking you in advance

J. K. Zulu (Mr).