Women in management: barriers to accessing senior positions in the uMgungudlovu region of the Department of Education.

by

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Structure of the Dissertation

DECLARATION

Except where explicitly indicated to the contrary, this study is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been submitted in any form to any other institution.

....   17 April 2007
....
Eunice Nonkululeko Rajuili   **Date**

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to the countless women teachers who impacted my life. Many had to contend with huge challenges of being mothers, wives and professional people in a male dominated world. Your tenacity was a great inspiration to me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

CSEM	Chief Superintendent of Education Management
HOD	Head of Department
PL 1	Post Level One educator at the entry level
PL2	Post Level Two educator who has been promoted to head a department
PL3	Post Level Three educator who is a deputy principal
PL4	Post Level Four educator who is a principal
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SEM	Superintendent of Education Management

ABSTRACT

The research interest is in the area of leadership and gender, with specific reference to promotion prospects of female educators in predominantly black schools. I seek to establish internal and external factors that contribute to women educators being marginalised.

The investigation is carried out in the uMgungundlovu region of the KwaZulu-Natal's Department of Education. This region covers the rural areas of Vulindlela and the urban and peri-urban circuits of Pietermaritzburg. I made use of qualitative methodology to obtain data from a random sample of twenty one out of twenty five deputy principals from the two circuits. This was followed by a detailed interview of seven of the twenty one who formed the purposive sample

The central thesis of this study is that constitutional laws which outlaw unfair discrimination and academic qualifications play a subsidiary role in the upward mobility of women. The study will seek to confirm or refute this claim.

A major finding in this study indicates that hindrances to promotion among married women include family responsibilities of being mother and wife; disruption of career advancement as a result of husband relocating. Low self-esteem among some women also acts as a hindrance to promotion. However, the more intractable hindrances turned out to be external. Cultural conditioning and tradition both combine to relegate women to domestic responsibilities. There is the issue of unequal power relations between men and women in the work place and, in some instances, the failure to apply anti-discriminatory legislation during interview processes. It therefore made little or difference whether the research was carried out in an urban area like Pietermaritzburg or a rural environment like Vulindlela. Hindrances to female promotion were very similar.

This study concludes by suggesting that women should form lobby groups to challenge unfair labour practices. They should also increase their visibility by placing their curriculum vitae in the hands of people of influence. A further suggestion is that they take an active part in professional bodies and publish academic articles. At the school level, they should resist all attempts at being treated in a condescending manner.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the topic

During the apartheid era, men headed most secondary schools as well as tertiary institutions. Ten years after the first democratic elections held in 1994 and the adoption of a new constitution two years later, the situation has improved only very slightly. Printed in the bar graph below is the 2003-Gender status of the uMgungundlovu region. It is an eloquent testimony to the lack of transformation in school management.

Gender Status, Aug 2003: Umgungundlovu Region

Source: KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, Pieterrmaritzburg, November 2003

The bar graph on page one above, shows that, in the majority of cases, Primary level 1&2 (PL 1&2) educators are female principals of primary schools. PL 3&4 educators tend to be males and are appointed principals of secondary and high schools.

When the data represented by the two bar graphs on page one and two was accessed in 2003, there were 692 male as against 346 female principals in uMgungundlovu. This obtained in a province where 53.3% of the population are female and 47.7% are male.[1] The way in which the South African society was socialised has led to female educators being marginalised. The appointment of senior managers[2] also seems to be based not on gifting and experience but rather it is motivated by gender considerations. The bar graph below is testimony to the gender imbalances in senior management at the district, circuit and ward levels.

Umgungundlovu Region in October 2003. Gender Status: District/Circuit/Ward Managers.
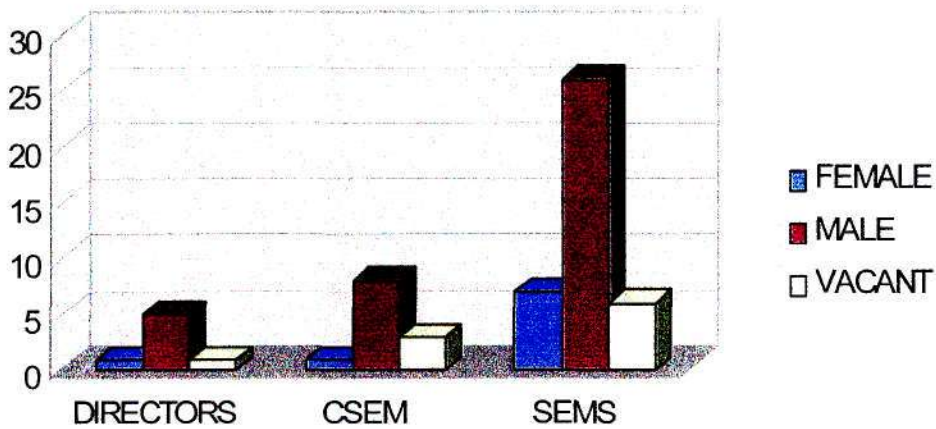
Source: KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. Pietermaritzburg, November 2003.

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[1]See Census '96: Preliminary estimates of the size of the population of South Africa

[2] In this study senior managers refers to persons employed at post levels 4-6. These include Subject Advisors, Principals, Superintendent Education Managers, and Directors.

In this study, I investigate the link between gender and the marginalisation of women when senior managers in education are appointed. Politics and ethnicity are noted but do not feature prominently. The locus of my research is the uMgungundlovu region.[3] In that region, I focus on two circuits of Pietermaritzburg and Vulindlela.[4] It is worth noting that in uMgungundlovu, men far outnumber women as senior managers.

By comparing the respective ratios of appointments of male and female heads of former black schools in these two neighbouring circuits, I explore the extent to which post-apartheid South Africa is becoming truly non-sexist. In instances where I found female senior managers, I was curious to find out whether the appointments were made on merit alone or were the governing bodies and interviewing panels influenced by considerations of political correctness in appointing females?

During the field research, I obtained perspectives on the issue from thirty-eight (38)[5] female deputy principals in the Pietermaritzburg and Vulindlela circuits. I investigated the reasons, often not stated publicly, why men seem to get all the top management positions. Why and how is it that inspite of non-sexist legislation in place in the country, women are often short-changed?

1.2 Motivation for the study

In South African teacher training colleges and universities both men and women are given the same training, they write the same exams, and are awarded the same qualifications. But when positions of senior management have to be filled in most schools located in predominantly black neighborhoods, women are generally overlooked.

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[3] Kwa-Zulu Natal's eight regions (2002) have been consolidated into four large regions; uMgungundlovu, Thekwini, uThukela and Zululand to coincide with municipality boundaries.
[4] For statistics of these two circuits refer to Appendix A below
5 Pietermaritzburg has 22 deputy principals while Vulindlela has 16 hence both circuits have a total of thirty-eight deputy principals. See Annual Survey 2003 in Appendix A.

Following the 1994 elections, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa[6] and chapter two on the Bill of Rights states that "no citizen may be discriminated against directly or indirectly on one or more grounds including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour sexual orientation, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth." Two years later in 1996, the preamble of the South African Schools Act ruled out any discriminatory practices by stating that[7] "the Act *sought to advance democratic transformation of society, combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance.*"

The same sentiments were expressed by the Employment Equity Act of 1998." Section 5 provides for the elimination of unfair discrimination and requires that " every employer must take steps to promote equal opportunity in the workplace by eliminating unfair discrimination in any employment policy or practice." Section 5(1) on affirmative action states that "suitably qualified people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are equitably represented in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce of a designated employer."

Despite these provisions in the Constitution, and legislation designed to eliminate unfair discriminatory practices, few women occupy principal positions in schools. The Regional Director attributed the imbalance reflected in the graphs above to the fact that few women have formal training in management.[8]

1.3 Statement of the problem

The central problem that this study seeks to address is eloquently expressed by Maclean (1992:201) who, in reference to England, states that "women are under represented in most senior management posts in the department of education inspite of the fact that women educators are in the majority."

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[6] The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Chapter 2 9(3) page 7.
[7] <http://www.polity.org.za/html/govdocs/legislation/1996/act96-084.html>. Accessed on 2/7/04
[8] Personal communication with the Regional Director on 18 Feb. 2004.

Similarly, in South Africa, the situation is not much different. Writing on gender within one of South Africa's large union, South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) Mannah (2004:10) observed that;

> " Out of a total of eight leaders at provincial level, three must be women. Today this is reflected to a large degree at the lower levels of the union, i.e. branch and regional structures. But the highest body in the union, the National Executive Committee that comprises provincial chairpersons and a provincial secretary, is almost exclusively occupied by men."

1.4 Aims of the study

The main aim in this study is to try to understand the various factors that result in women being under-represented in school management. My goal is to develop an understanding of the status quo and to discover how people construct meaning in a particular context. According to Neuman (2000) social life is based on social interactions, and socially constructed meaning systems. Through the field work I set out to obtain a deep understanding of the way participants felt, how they made sense of the disparities, and see things, and to discover these meanings as they relate to the under-representation of women in management.

1.5 Research question

In this study the main question that is being addressed is: What are the internal and external factors that prevent women from accessing senior management positions? In other words, what are the self-imposed barriers as well as external hindrances that are placed in the way of the upward career mobility of female educators?

1.6 Significance of the study

The significance of the study is that it will hopefully contribute to bridging the gap that exists between non-discriminatory theory and practice, that is, between a desire on the part of legislators to uphold principles of fairness and traditions as well as practices that

negate equality. By way of example, the school, where I taught and where I was appointed deputy principal in 1992 advertised a post of principal teacher in 1996. Until the position was filled, I acted as principal for twenty (20) months. When the post was advertised, I was instructed by the then school inspector not to apply because it was alleged that the governing body wanted a "strong person" to maintain discipline. There had been no unusual discipline problems in the twenty months that I acted.

Furthermore, the governing body was said to favour a "local" person who had grown up in the community. The fact that I was more qualified academically than the person who was appointed did not seem to concern the inspector and the governing body. I have thus became interested to investigate whether there could be a perception that only males can head black high schools.

It is likely that this attitude emanates from the view that masculinity is associated with power and authority. Consequently, males who are principals are seen as representing power and authority. I wanted to examine the cultural and psychological rationale for such an attitude. It is the aim of this research to explore these issues.

1.7 Structure of the dissertation

Chapter One gives the background to the topic being investigated in the study. In this chapter I analyse the gender representation in senior management positions in the uMgungundlovu region of the Department of Education. Two adjacent circuits are studied to determine to what extent internal and external factors play a role in the promotion of women. Chapter two is a review of literature related to the topic on hand. I critically evaluate what male and female authors have outlined as hindrances to women advancing to senior positions in education.

The third chapter is on research design and methodology. I indicate why I have chosen the qualitative methodology. I show its strengths and weaknesses and how to overcome the weaknesses.

Themes that emerge from the field research are analysed and interpreted in chapter four. The fifth chapter is a summary of the research findings. In that chapter I also make recommendations on how to overcome challenges that aspirant female educators encounter. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further research on the topic.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a critical survey of what both male and female scholars have advanced as hindrances to women attaining positions of senior leadership in education. Since serious study of issues affecting women in the educational arena is a comparatively new development in this country, I confined myself to books, journals, newspapers, theses and dissertations written between 1984 to 2004, a twenty year period that spans the ten years prior to the democratic dispensation and extending into the first decade of a politically free South Africa. I sought to identify common themes that emerge from the writings of South African and international scholars. The material was not be arranged in a strict chronological order but the focus is on key themes, looking at their strengths and weaknesses in throwing light on the marginalisation of women in leadership.

I proceeded in three steps. Starting with Harridan and Jackson's (1982) understanding of oppression, I showed how American (Pharr, 1988; Frye, 1988; Love, 2000; Sloan and Krone, 2000) and South African feminists (Perumal, 2003; Mathipa, 2000) link the marginalisation of women in educational institutions with oppression. I moved on to show the links between gender bias and women's advance to positions of influence in education (Moorosi, 2000; Gwele, 1998; Greyvenstein, 1990/2000; Zulu, 2003; Dowling, 1998; Horowitz, 1997 and Iredale, cited in Verma, 1993).

Thirdly, I showed the extent to which oppression and gender bias feeds on, and is reinforced by cultural conditioning and traditional stereotypes (Mitimela, 2003; Raum in Duminy, 1966; Eggleston, cited in Verma, 1993). Finally, I looked at how the politics of power (Weiler, 1988; Sloan and Krone, 2000; and Pinderhughes, 1998), the queen bee syndrome and other self imposed limitations all contribute towards keeping women from positions of meaningful authority in public education.

2.2 The extent of the problem in South Africa and elsewhere

The marginalisation of women is a burning issue that has received attention both locally in South Africa and internationally. South African academics (Perumal, 2003; Mathipa, 2000; Greyvenstein, 2000; Dowling, 1998; Zulu, 2003 and Gwele, 1998) have argued that education institutions in South Africa are still very conservative when it comes to the appointment of women in senior positions. The scholars mentioned above maintain that very little transformation has taken place and the majority of women in tertiary institutions are found at the bottom of the educational hierarchy where they serve mainly as junior lecturers.

Internationally, in Canada and Australia female academics confirm the observation of their South African counterparts. Wynn *et al.*, (1977) point out that women academics have to struggle to gain tenure, promotion or recognition. Blackmore (1999) and Morley 1999), Wynn *et al.*, (1977) argue that in being marginalised in education institutions, women are compelled to undertake the emotional labour that their students desire and the housekeeping work that the department requires. This means that women are expected to function as counselors and address emotional issues in the school setting. If not, the expectation is that they are best suited to make tea and serve refreshments at departmental meetings.

Coleman (2001) writing about management in secondary schools in the U.K. points out that though the career of teaching is dominated numerically by women in England and Wales, women who head schools are very few. Notable exceptions are in those schools, which cater for very young children. Those tend to be headed by women.

Similarly, Measor and Sikes (1992:116) suggest that the promotion patterns in British schools are a mirror image of prevalent social attitudes. They thus agree with Delamont's (1990) observation that

> " The working and lower-middle-class backgrounds of many teachers mean that they are especially likely to hold traditional gender role stereotypes"

The two authors, having noted that there are fewer women in senior positions in schools, conclude that women consequently "lack formal power and have limited opportunity to influence official policy and decision -making." They conclude by lamenting the fact that since

> "there are few examples of 'successful' women in school; therefore traditional stereotypes are not challenged and the 'normalness' of male authority is reinforced, which has depressing results for female aspirations, (Measor and Sikes 1992:116).

Women's aspirations to senior management have, according to Cunningham (1989 quoted by Sikes (1994:108) been seen as the most difficult exercise. These two authors (Measor and Sikes) maintain that there are two career paths in secondary schools – academic and pastoral. The latter focusing on holistic development and care of learners. In the majority of cases women fulfil pastoral roles and that makes it difficult for them to use that career path as a stepping stone to headship. This is fuelled by the traditional belief that headship in a school, and more so in a tertiary institution, is to be measured in terms of academic achievement. My contention is that a senior manager needs to be a rounded person, academically qualified, a strategist but also pastoral in their approach and possess administrative capabilities.

Maqhudeni and Swadener (1999) also highlight the fact that during the apartheid era in South Africa, women were excluded from managing educational institutions because of the widespread belief that their gender rendered them inferior. Missionary education also contributed to the subordination of women in South Africa because it equated them with domesticity.

According to Mitimela (2003:2) the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) has failed to eliminate gender disparities in secondary schools. She finds it ironic that men dominate the leadership of SADTU even though the organization claims to be non-sexist and non-discriminatory. She points out that even the secretarial positions that were reserved for women are no longer available to them. Key positions such as general secretary, treasurer are still the sole preserve of men. This is an organization that is placed in a key position to advocate gender equality in school management. In order to understand gender disparity in senior management, I had to decide which of the several theoretical frameworks would yield the best results.

2.3 Theoretical framework

Of the various feminist theories that have been advanced, I used radical feminist theory to assist me in understanding the marginalisation of women in education and also how to challenge gender stereotypes. As Acker points out,

> " Feminist theoretical frameworks address, above all, the question of women's subordination to men; how it arose, how and why it is perpetuated, how it might be changed and (sometimes) what life would be like without it." (Acker, 1994:43)

Since the 1980s writings by radical feminists have placed the concerns and the marginalisation of women high on the social agenda. According to Measor and Sikes (1992:27) this theory asserts that "it is patriarchy that oppresses women, and that their subordination stems from their social, economic and political dominance of men in society." Therefore radical feminists believe that the legal and political hindrances should be abolished in order to achieve equity. Until then, the marginalisation of women will be an enduring feature of society.

As critics of this theory have pointed out, I allowed for one important weakness of the radical feminist theory - that it tends to make no distinction between various forms of male power or between different classes and types of men (Measor and Sikes 1992:29). However, it is a useful tool to analyze the marginalisation of women by analysing the politics of oppression.

2.4 Politics of Oppression

Hardiman and Jackson (1982:3-5) maintain that it is important to have a theoretical understanding of oppression before one embarks on an anti-oppression training and education. They define oppression as that condition that exists " when one social group exploits another social group for its own benefit." They agree with Jones (1972) that oppression is

> " Maintained and operationalized by individuals, institutions and larger society/culture that consciously or unconsciously holds oppressive beliefs and behaves in an oppressive manner." Hardiman and Jackson (1982:6).

Pharr (1988:9) maintains that oppression is successfully maintained by the economic, institutional and individual power that some people wield over others. That power, she maintains, ensures that the control of national institutions, the military, finance and education remains in the hands of a few people who determine what they regard as the norm. She goes to point out that,

> " Once economic control is in the hands of the few, all others can be controlled through limiting access to resources, limiting mobility, limiting employment options." Pharr (1988:9).

According to Pharr, other ways besides those mentioned above, in which the defined norm excludes other people are invisibility when those who differ from the determiners of the norm cease to count; misinformation or deliberate distortion of facts about the people whom the powerful wish to exclude. Stereotyping, blaming the victim or applying the tactics of assimilation or tokenism are other oppressive measures that the powerful use.

That definition of oppression is very similar to one advanced by Frye (1988:6) who links the marginalisation of women to the concept of their oppression. Basing her definition of oppression on the root element 'press', she shows that anything that is oppressed is immobilized, molded and reduced from its original size to a new size. She bemoans the fact that oppressed people are caught in a double bind. On the one hand their oppressors expect them "to smile and be cheerful." If they comply, then they "acquiesce in their own oppression" and thus participate " in our own erasure."

On the other hand Frye observes that if a women challenge their oppression, society sees them as being "mean, bitter, angry and dangerous" and that often results in "rape, arrest, beating and murder." She concludes by saying that:

> " The experience of oppressed people is that the living of one's life is confined and shaped by forces and barriers which are not accidental or occasional and hence avoidable, but are systematically related to each other in such a way as to catch one between and among them and restrict and penalize motion in any direction. It is an experience of being "caged in: all avenues in every direction are blocked or booby-trapped." (Frye,1988 cited in Rothenberg, 1988:7).

Closely allied to oppression leading to marginalisation and immobilizing women, South African writers cite the conservatism of institutions of higher learning as a key factor that limits the upward mobility of women. Basing her analysis on Marshall's (1950) civic, political and social citizenship[9] Perumal (2003:74-82) applies that categorization to analyse factors that have either enabled or hindered women from participating meaningfully in educational institutions. She asks whether women's citizenship in the academy is anything more than just status with no accompanying transformative impact on academic institutions.

Perumal concedes the fact that the post-apartheid South Africa has promulgated legislation and supporting institutions that promote human rights. She cites the South African Constitution of 1996, the Labour Relations Act of 1995 and the Employment Equity Act of 1998 but bemoans the fact that these external interventions have not made significant changes in the implementation of democracy in higher education institutions. Likewise these same institutions have mission and vision statements that are non-discriminatory. However, in concurring with Enslin (2000) and Oldfield (1990) she notes that legislation and policy documents give an indication of what ought to be rather than what actually happens. She argues that " academic institutions are notoriously conservative, with most of the professorships still being occupied by men while white women are entrenched in middle-management positions with little or no promotion prospects (Perumal, 2003:77)." In stating that majority of women are found at the bottom of the educational hierarchy where they serve as teachers, Greyvenstein endorses Perumal's observation.

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9 For a detailed analysis and description of the three forms of citizenship, see Perumal, J 2003 *Identifying and responding to barriers impacting women educators: reflections by feminist educators on institutional constraints.* in SASHE/SATHO, 17(1), P74-82.

Five feminist educators interviewed by Perumal articulate what frequently happens in higher institutions. At the time of interview, all five were on the academic staff of South African Universities. They testified regarding the infringement of their right to freedom of speech. As Perumal puts it, in many tertiary institutions males assume that,

> " They have the right to speak in meetings and make decisions about work to be done and to treat with contempt, as trivial and infantile contributions that women colleagues make. This perpetuates the phenomenon commonly referred to as 'male deafness' which turns a deaf ear or shouts down women's contributions in meetings, only to regard as avant-garde when the same point is repeated or re-articulated by a male colleague (Perumal, 2003:77)."

Such marginalisation of women on the basis of their gender has the effect of causing some to withdraw from academic discourse thus re-inforcing the prior untested view that they never had anything to contribute in the first place. If on the other hand some of them defy their assigned role, become vocal and stand their ground, they run the risk of being censored and regarded as being unfeminine by their male colleagues. From her informants Perumal (2003:77) noted that when a woman is given a senior post, other women become less supportive of her especially if she is vocal, thus "resenting your outspokenness and independence of mind," and as Shireen, cited by Perumal (2003:77) puts it, "other women colleagues undermine you usually in allegiance with dominant males so as to gain their favour." Consequently academically inclined women divert their energies to teaching and administration.

The barriers to women's advancement is not only in terms of the infringement of their freedom of speech but as two of Perumal's informants, Diane and Shireen have noted, the numerical under representation of women in academic circles limits their political clout in decision making discussions. Since women are a minority in academic circles, they are constantly under pressure to work hard at proving themselves at the expense of their academic careers.

It is for that reason that Diane's (2003:17) statement that "My power to change anything is limited to curriculum revision and to teach my students" is so poignant. Women academics are deprived the opportunity to conduct academic research and publication since they have to "carry the bulk of teaching duties (Perumal 2003:78)". To combat the discriminatory environment, some women chose to challenge the system from within saying "I try to convey the fact that I take men colleagues on trust as human beings and that I neither dislike nor fear men, unless they do me harm (Perumal, 2003:81)." Other women consider moving out, and this is indicated by statements such as "I have seriously considered resigning my post to work in an environment where I don't have to swim against the tide (Perumal, 2003:81)." To sum up, dissatisfied voices by women indicate that the policy documents have not indeed succeeded in eradicating sexism. This over exertion of women against forces that face them leads Perumal (2003:78) to conclude that " it is not surprising that pre-occupied with teaching and administrative duties means that women compete on an unequal basis with their male counterparts."

Mathipa (2000:126) also raises the issue of barriers faced by women in academic institutions. She first defines the concept of labour and secondly, how women are discriminated against in management positions which are part of labour. Mathipa (2000:126) defines labour as " a human manner of expressing his/her humanness " She goes on to say that labour" is significant because through it every individual exercises his/her capacity to discover and also fulfills his/her Creator's given potential."

The implication of the statement above is that both women and men have to work in an environment where they could both maximize their potential equally. In view of the fact that both women and men went to the same schools, technikons and universities and were taught the same subjects and courses under the same classes and by the same teachers and lecturers, (Mathipa, 2000:127).

However, professional women find themselves being dominated by men in senior positions of leadership (Perumal, 2003; Gwele, 1998 and Greyvenstein, 2000). Mathipa (2000:127) argues that while there is discrimination of women in leadership positions in higher academic institutions, women however dominate positions of leadership in primary schools as well as jobs of a clerical nature. In her exploratory research, she finds that there are barriers that prevent women from aspiring to positions of leadership. The primary barrier, she argues, is one that denies women leadership positions on the basis of the "biological role of bearing children." In conclusion, Mathipa (2000:131) recommends that barriers need to be removed by educating society and " bring (about) a change in people's attitudes, mindset, values and perceptions."

The views on the effects of oppression on women that are articulated above are compelling yet I would not consider them to be the last word on the subject. According to Pharr (1988) oppression is maintained by political, economic, institutional and individual power. Frye (1988:7) contends that to be oppressed is to be "caged in" thus agreeing with Perumal that oppression "immobilizes its victims", resulting, according to Diane, in the victim feeling despondent.

I take a different view. I fully concur with Love's contention that since oppression is a product of socialization, it can be reversed. Love agrees with Freire, (1973); Woodson, (1933) and Albert et al (1986) that by developing a liberatory or critical consciousness all humans can create greater equity and social justice. She suggests that this can be achieved by developing:

"A consciousness or awareness of what is taking place in one's world.

An understanding and an explanation of what is happening, why it is happening and what can be done about it.

Deciding what needs to be done and then seeing that action is done.

Working in connection and in collaboration with each other, across and within "role" groups to eliminate automatic responses that perpetuate and maintain oppression, (Love, 2000:471)."

A second hindrance to women's upward mobility in education that I now turn to is gender bias.

2.5 Gender Bias

According to Leslie et al (1980:166) gender is defined as "the assignment of a person to the ascribed status, male and female – which is universally done at birth according to genitals." The abovementioned authors go on to point out that through socialization a person learns a sex role and society decides that males do certain things and females perform other functions in society. Similarly, Zulu (2003:98) sees gender as being " those characteristics, attributes, behaviours and attributes considered by society to be appropriate for men and women." On the basis of that analysis Zulu (2003: 98) explains the disparity in the professional advancement of women academics.

She argues that women academics in higher institutions are not proportionately represented (2003:98). In a survey that she conducted, she found out that women in all higher institutions were under represented in categories A (i.e. officers of the university) and B (deans of faculties/schools) but well represented in C (senior administrative officials).

Secondly, between 2000-2002, only 13% of women were appointed to senior positions. She attributes this disparity to socialization that starts in the early childhood where " boys are taught to be aggressive, assertive, independent, rational and task-oriented and girls are taught to be modest, submissive, affectionate, nurturing, people-oriented and emotionally expressive (Zulu, 2003:99). Dowling (1998), like Zulu, also maintains that different gender roles are a result of socialization from early childhood days.

This type of upbringing results in barriers being created thus making it difficult for women to advance. Both Zulu (2003) and Mathipa (2000) categorize barriers into intrinsic and extrinsic. According to Zulu, (2003:103) intrinsic barriers go back to early childhood upbringing resulting in women having a low self-esteem. Extrinsic barriers are formed within academic institutions where men, because of their numerical dominance in senior positions, are afforded power in decision-making. Zulu (2003:103) recommends that " women should set and work towards short and long term goals in their professional development and must realize that they have to be well qualified in order to meet opportunities that come their way."

Gwele (1998:70) also makes an analysis of gender differentiation but links it to racial stereotyping. In a comparative and descriptive study, she seeks to investigate working conditions of white and black academic staff at formerly all white English speaking universities in South Africa. In the process, she highlights the gender stereotypes experienced by female academics. The workload investigated by Gwele included routine employee benefits such as medical aid, housing subsidy and academic staff benefits such as sabbatical leave, study leave, and non-traditional staff benefits such as car allowance, child care facilities and rented accommodation.

She based her findings on Konrad's study, who, at the end, recommended that" institutions that are committed to employing women and black academics should examine the working conditions prevailing in their institutions (Konrad cited in Gwele 1998:69).

In her investigation, Gwele found that there were no differences in academic staff perceptions regarding the importance of staff benefits by gender and race. However, when it came to housing subsidy and medical aid, married women whose spouses work at the same universities were not eligible for such benefits and they considered that policy to be discriminatory on the basis of gender. Secondly, when it came to workload, females spent more time doing administrative duties. In "South Africa, women have complained that they were assigned heavy teaching, student consultation and administrative loads compared to their male counterparts, (Gwele, 1998:68)."

Bethlehem, cited in Gwele (1998:70) notes that while women as well as blacks are overloaded with teaching and administrative responsibilities, " senior academics who also happen to be white and male, spend most of their time on the prime academic activities." In conclusion, Bethlehem recommends that working conditions ought to be revisited and improved.

Dowling (1998:41) argues that gender stereotypes entrenched in the home have a lasting impact and that there is need to "bring children up as unsocialized autonomous beings". Using higher academic institutions as points of departure, Dowling (1998: 43) has noted that women academics were under represented in the higher echelons thus limiting the number of women in those positions due largely to gender stereotype. Accordingly "all gender stereotyping is wrong in the view of Wilson, on whom Downing (1998:42) draws upon heavily, gender stereotypes emanate from socialization. Furthermore, she contends that " we are still subject to a socializing process and pressures of various kinds to make sure we behave in the desired ways."

That socialization, as Dowling argues, results in women occupying junior posts in the work place. Women are expected to see their primary role as that of being mother. Dowling disputes that by saying there is a difference between the two concepts, that of a 'mother' and mothering'. She maintains that "most aspects of mothering can be shared, or that most child rearing duties can be, and ought to be a joint responsibility of a couple"(1998:47). This will give women time to develop themselves.

Dowling further maintains that ' a child that grows in the environment where parents share housework and mothering, will choose to adopt different roles from those in which women and men traditionally take (1998:47). To sum up, Dowling believes that for women to make inroads into higher education there should be a concerted effort in changing socially constructed roles at an early age.

In an article published in a magazine called Educator's Voice, the mouth-piece for the largest teacher union the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), Mitimela (2003:2) challenges the rhetoric concerning gender issues. SADTU is supposedly meant to be a progressive organization but on closer examination of its structures, Mitimela found that reality did not coincide with rhetoric. She highlights those women issues that have to be addressed if SADTU is to be truly gender friendly. She points out that it is common knowledge that the majority of educators in South Africa are women. However, it is ironic that the leadership of SADTU does not reflect the demographics of South African teaching profession.

Mitimela questions why is it that even the portfolio of secretary has been wrenched from women. Why, she asks, does SADTU not have a full time gender officer? Also, why has gender been sidelined? I also noticed that the SADTU diary states that the union participated in the World Conference of Education for All, convened in Thailand. SADTU was one of the 180 signatories to the Framework of Action that was adopted. One of the six goals in the Framework of action was "to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and gender inequality by 2015 with the special focus on ensuring full and equal access for girls to basic education of good quality[10] "

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[10] See the South African Democratic Teachers' Union diary dated March 2001 on page 41.

However, five years after the Thailand gathering, SADTU is still dominated by men. Thus Mitimela observes that female teachers are still discriminated against in terms of salaries, housing subsidies, maternity and paternity leave. She suggests that important campaigns should therefore be undertaken to improve the lot of women in areas where they are unfairly discriminated against. She concludes by suggesting that SADTU should strive to become "truly non-sexist and non-discriminating (Mitimela, 2003:2).

Greyvenstein investigates gender equity or a view that ensures that all unnecessary obstacles are removed from career paths of women. Jacklin (1981) cited in Greyvenstein (2000:30) describes it as "allowing fairness to be placed above traditional rules of law." He proceeds to give a brief summary of major barriers that prevent women from being in senior management positions. The author concludes by offering some recommendations for the way forward to gender equity.

These include an awareness that there is a general" consensus of opinion concerning a gender dichotomy, which exists within the education profession (Greyvenstein, 2000:30). Though a few women are appointed to senior management positions, the majority is relegated to the bottom of the educational hierarchy where they serve as teachers. Mathipa (2000:129) also confirms this finding. In a report by the Task Team for Educational Management Development (1996:38-47) and cited in Greyvenstein (2000:30), the point is made that "the paucity of women in senior positions in the education system is testimony to the gender discrimination which has pervaded all levels of public service."

Greyvenstein attributes the existence of the barriers to extrinsic and intrinsic factors, (2000:31). According to him and to Zulu (2003:99), intrinsic barriers include stereotyped socialization, which popularizes the view that women in senior positions are "deviant from the norm (Greyvenstein, 2000:32). Extrinsic barriers include "cronyism, tokenism, marginality, lack of sponsors, mentors and role models and also lack of qualification."

As a possible way forward, Greyvenstein (2000:31) agrees with Mitchell and Corren's (1996a) seven-point strategy for redressing gender imbalances in education. These include attending to the particular circumstances of rural women and educational management development; recognizing the significance of sexuality and power within educational management hierarchy and also focusing on gender rather than women and placing women in promotable positions.

Horowitz (1997:75) goes one step further than the authors above and notes that society not only prescribes gender roles, but those roles cause men, in particular, to suffer " serious physical, psychological and emotional harm." The negative impact of prescribed roles is due to the fact that men live pressurized and lonely lives that cut them off from their basic humanity where relationships and interdependence are important to one's well-being.

2.6 Cultural Conditioning

Besides various forms of oppression and gender bias, the third major hindrance to women attaining management positions in education is the effect of cultural conditioning. Rajuili (2004:229) defines culture as "everything that contributes to making society what it is, guides and directs what people do in communicating values and also determines how they do so." To that end Moorosi (2000:7) notes how a deep-seated African perspective which maintains that " a woman's place is in the home" has contributed to the exclusion of women from senior managerial positions. According to her, culture decrees that women "are traditionally associated with private, dependent and domestic activities as compared to men whose activities are public and autonomous (Moorosi 2000:7).

Moorosi (2000:16) shows how cultural myths such as the one cited in Delamont (1996) could have contributed to the subservient roles played by women in education. Kenealy is quoted in Delamont (1996:2) saying:

> " The woman of average brains attains the intellectual standards of the
> man of average brain only at the cost of her health, of her emotions or
> of her morale."

Belief systems informed by that kind of cultural socialisation eventually prescribe what women are believed to be or not capable of doing. Without minimising the real and negative effect of culture on women's advancement, I would nevertheless agree with Rizvi and Crowley (1993:145) that culture should not "be treated as something fixed, finished or final, and depoliticized because it obscures the inherently political character of the term." Consequently, once society at large and women in particular appreciate that culture is dynamic, the myths of cultural determinism will be set aside. That would lead to the liberation of women to play their rightful role in education alongside male colleagues. Closely allied to cultural myths, the fourth barrier to women's advancement is tradition.

2.7 Tradition

Mathipa maintains that while culture prescribes that a woman's place is at home, tradition prescribes that certain careers are solely for women. She points out that:

> " In education available promotions start with the senior staff positions like Heads of Department, Deputy Principals, Principals, Subject Advisors, Inspectors, District managers, Regional managers, Deputy directors, Directors, General directors, Deputy ministers and Minister of Education." (Mathipa, 2000:126)

She maintains that these posts are, more often than not, offered to male staff members with the exception of primary school posts, which are dominated by women. The perception underpinning this is "that women as leaders in primary schools fulfil adequately the role model of motherliness the young children are used to at home."

In order to remove the drawbacks that tradition has placed on women's advancement, Mathipa (2000:129) argues in favour of an inclusive leadership approach in education. She points out that women, as the backbone of society, have important leadership qualities which are essential to the improvement of the education profession.

She concurs with *Tsoka* (1999) that " *training centres should be established with a bias toward empowering more women in managerial positions.*" Tsoka further notes that though there is wisdom in tradition, it also " preserves the accumulated bonkum of the ages as well." In conclusion, she maintains that:

> "It is the accumulated type of bonkum that the education profession needs to discard with the aim of removing traditional drawbacks so that progress and development could result because women have for long been excellently managing family finances, solving problems, making important decisions and maintaining harmony." Mathipa (2000:129).

2.8 Employment Practices

Mathipa (2000:129) citing Gil (1990) describes employment as an "economic relationship in which employees are hired at the discretion of, and in the interest of, employers as 'factors' rather than 'masters' of production." Consequently, as Mathipa puts it, women have found themselves at the wrong end of the stick.

Firstly, the biological role of childbearing has resulted in socially structured inequalities between males and females. The underlying assumption is that women's primary responsibility is to take care of children and their prospects of upward mobility are limited.

Secondly, the normal employment practice of promotion does not apply to women as it does to men. Promotion is defined by Van Niekerk (1999) and quoted by Mathipa (2000:130) as " the movement of a person to a level or post, which is associated with not only better remuneration, but also greater responsibility." Lessened responsibility results in decreased output and that further disqualifies women and the vicious cycle of inequality is continued.

The inequality is further exacerbated by the fact that in 1994 only 11% of black women teachers were adequately qualified, Chisholm (1998) cited in Moorosi (2000:16). Because the majority of women were unqualified, when promotion posts become available they were less likely to be considered. Since women are systematically kept our of senior posts, Mathipa notes that according to a Sunday Times (25/10/98:5) " men continue to dominate the upper occupational categories despite the fact that women, particularly in the urban context, have caught up with them in the educational stakes."

Tsoka (1999) cited in Mathipa (2000:129) raises another labour question: " does the possibility of pregnancy not make women less desirable employees than men?" Her finding was that such a possibility remained a real problem. Agreeing with Hasking (1997) Tsoka (1999:73) found out that many companies were still reluctant to repeal discriminatory rules. To overcome unfair labour practices, Tsoka (1997) cited in Mathipa and Tsoka (2000:129) suggests that " women should be exposed to more meaningful tasks and placed in positions that demand accountability." Alongside that is the need for women to be supported affirmed and supported in the working environment. She concludes that such interventions will result in " the working situations in favour of the oppressed and exploited women (Mathipa and Tsoka, 2000:129)."

2.9 Prejudice and stereotypes

Greyvenstein (1990:124) attributes the lack of representation of women in senior management to "the traditional patriarchal stereotyped view of gender roles." In addition, for South Africans, white males have traditionally held managerial positions. In agreeing with Webb, Stout and Mertha, (1986); Birklen, (1980); Leornard and Papa-Lewis, (1987), Greyvenstein maintains that intrinsic barriers which feed on stereotyped socialisation account for the paucity of women in what is perceived to be the male domain. Among extrinsic barriers he cites filtering where interview panels consist of males only; tokenism and marginality where the tokenized woman is marginalized by her male colleagues and rejected by the very females whom she is supposed to represent.

Lack of women sponsors and role models is another extrinsic barrier that works against women advancement. This lack of formal and informal networks in what is a predominantly male environment weakens the female voice in education management. Added to that, Greyvenstein (1990:32) cites home and family responsibilities which cause career breaks as well as re-entry problems.

Ironically a final extrinsic barrier noted by Greyvenstein is the effect of the legal status and the affirmative action strategies of the hiring procedures of many governments. While these strategies have brought about surface changes in advancing gender equity, Greyvenstein (1990) agrees with the observations of earlier researchers such as Adkinson, (1981); Shakeshaft, (1986) and Klein, (1988) that :

> " such governmental laws and policies have only been symbolic efforts without enforcement, merely serving to reify the existing hierarchy."
> (Greyvenstein 1990:32)

That view is based on the observation that affirmative action strategies are difficult to monitor. While they satisfy women's personal aspirations, they may not bring about institutional and attitudinal changes. According to the authors cited in the paragraph above, the net effect is that these strategies trigger a male backlash where the males in power resist and even curtail affirmative action interventions.

2.10 The politics of power

Unequal power relations between men and women are responsible for the lack of equity in management positions among educators. Pinderhughes (1989:109) defines power as "the capacity to produce the desired effects on others." According to Heller, quoted in Pinderhughes, power is mastery over self as well as over nature and other people.

In a study on career and promotion patterns carried out in Australia, Maclean (1992:202) noted teachers' perceptions that there was a direct link between upward mobility and " a willingness to conform to the views of those with power." Generally such people were superintendents and directors, " the power brokers" with whom potential promotees had to get along with. Maclean's finding contradicts the widely held view that women are marginalised mainly because of inadequate academic preparation.

Sloan and Krone (2000) have also studied power relations between men and women in the work place. Their research revealed that hierarchical relationships found in the broader society formed the sub-stratum on which male-female relationships in the school were formulated. Power relations exist between men and women and also between females in what has been called the queen bee syndrome.

2.11 The Queen bee Syndrome

On page two (2) of the Business Times published in the South African Sunday Times dated (03/10/2004), the foreign desk reporter published two research findings on female bosses. The reporter highlighted a research led by Naomi Ellemers of Leiden University which found out that women bosses were tougher on their underlings than their male counterparts. Ellemers described the female bosses' behaviour as a queen bee syndrome because bee colonies usually have one reproductive queen per hive. The rest of the female bees are infertile and serve the queen bee. Likewise, Ellemer's team concluded that, some women bosses tended to marginalise other women.

The Sunday Times reporter also found out that, according to social psychology experts, female bosses displayed masculine traits to fight their way to the top and once they had reached the queenly position, they protected it from other females. A related study found out that older women bosses were more likely to give female underlings a hard time, presumably because when they started working, it was rare for women to be in charge.

According to these findings, potential female managers face a double hurdle in attaining senior positions in education. They have to contend with male prejudice on the one hand and rejection by their own sisters on the other. That there is such rejection is implicit in Zulu's observation that "women already in high positions should try to support other women and affirm them and not close the doors on them once they are inside." (Zulu, 2003:103).

2.12 Conclusion

The problems relating to the barriers placed against the advancement of female educators moving to senior management were focused on. A review of the literature revealed that hindrances are experienced at two levels. First, the anti-discriminatory legislation passed by the South African government between 1995-1998 has brought about minor changes in the direction of equitable employment. Conscious and unconscious oppression of women leads to their marginalisation . Secondly, the disproportionate representation of women in academia is due to gender bias, cultural conditioning and tradition. Those societal stereotypical beliefs relegate the majority of women to the bottom of the educational hierarchy.

The review showed that women also contribute to their own oppression as evidenced by the queen bee syndrome, poor self-image, less assertiveness and an absence of a systematically thought out career plan. I also concluded from the literature review that up until now there is not much written on the marginalisation of women in predominantly black secondary and high schools in South Africa. This study will hopefully make a contribution to that debate. The next chapter on field research will test how the views gleaned from the literature review are confirmed or disproved by this researcher's findings among deputy principals in the uMgungundlovu region of the Department of Education.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I describe the research design and methodology adopted for the study. The specific advantages and weaknesses of the research instruments used are explained by taking note of what Neuman (2000:63) has said that each research instrument "has its own set of philosophical assumptions and principles and its own stance on how to do research." I therefore detail the actual procedures followed and conclude by identifying common themes that emerge from the initial field study.

3.2 Statement of the Research Approach

As stated in chapter one above, this research explores hindrances that prevent women from accessing senior management positions in the Department of Education. It seeks to establish what are the internal and external factors that contribute to women being marginalised. In order to address the research problems above, it seemed logical to make use of a non-experimental design which is highly recommended in social and behavioural sciences (Brown and Gilmartin, 1965 and cited in Smith, 1975:99). This type of research design employs primary data such as surveys and interviews (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:78) which are an integral part of qualitative methodology.

3.3 Research Site

As I have stated in chapter one above, the research site for this study was the uMgungundlovu region of the KwaZulu Natal department of education. Special focus was in two of the five circuits, namely Pietermaritzburg (also now known as uMsunduzi) and Vulindlela. Both circuits are located within a 40 (forty) kilometer radius from the city of Pietermaritzburg. Vulindlela was part of the former Department of Education and Culture. It is administered by traditional as well as elected leaders.

Consequently, it has been a stronghold of the Inkatha Freedom Party. On the other hand, Pietermaritzburg circuit formed part of the Department of Education and Training. It has been strongly aligned to the African National Congress. The two circuits were chosen because of their relative proximity to my home thus enabling me to make follow-up visits. Additionally, I was keen to see how different socio-economic as well as political awareness have a bearing on peoples' attitude towards gender and promotion prospects.

The overall research site is represented in a diagram below.

New Regions and Districts in KZN

Amajuba

Zululand

Obonjeni

Vryheid

Ukhahlamba

Othukela

Empangeni

Umzinyathi

Ilembe

Vulindlela

Pinetown

eThekwini

Umlazi

Umgungundlovu

Kokstad

Port Shepstone

Legend
Education Regions
Education Districts
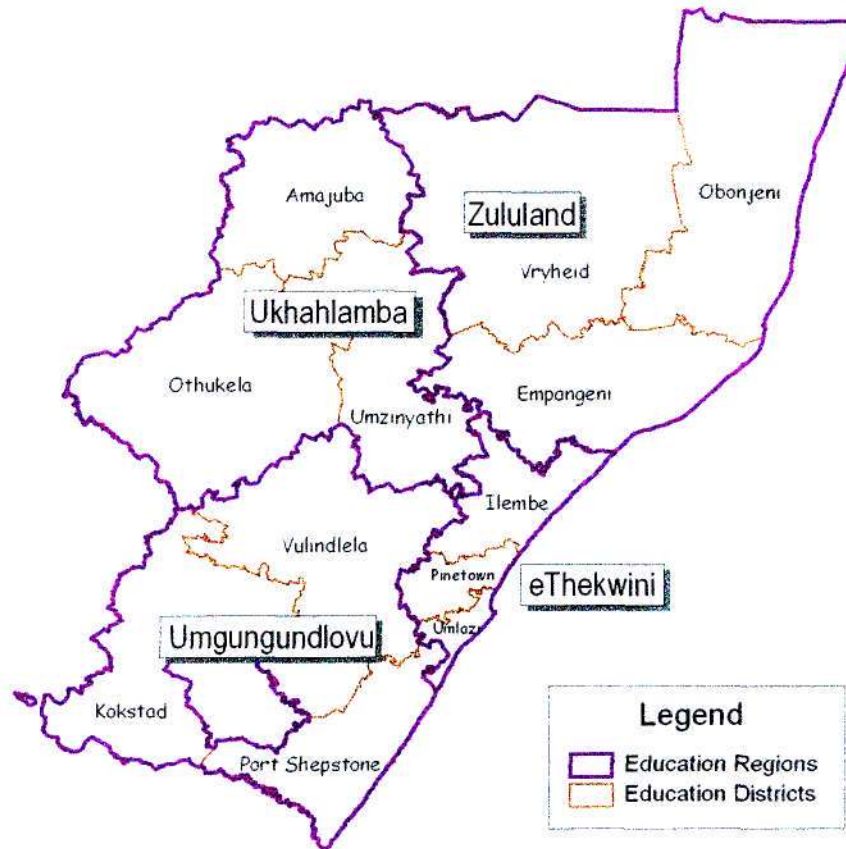
Sourced from EduAction, Durban 08/12/2004

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Key gatekeepers that I interviewed in the two circuits were the Director for Provisions, Chief Education Specialist, and a Superintendent of Education Management (SEM) – these three were from Pietermaritzburg. In Vulindlela circuit I interviewed the Circuit manager. I gathered from the interviews that out of a total of two hundred and twenty one (221) schools in the two circuits, there were thirty-eight schools with female deputy principals. Shown below is the statistics for the two circuits[11].

uMgungundlovu Region

	No. of Schools	Male Principals	Female Principals	Female Deputy Principals
Pietermaritzburg	106	90	16	16
Vulindlela	115	99	16	22
Totals	221	189	32	**38**

Twenty-five (25) deputy principals were randomly selected to fill out the questionnaire in Appendix B. Completed questionnaires were received from twenty-one (21). Out of those, seven (7) deputy principals were selected to form the purposive sample.

3.4 Negotiating Access

In order to negotiate access, I attended two seminars on Women in Management held on August 13th and 20th 2004 to coincide with Women's month. The facilitator asked me to give an epilogue at the end of the first seminar. That gave me an opportunity not only to summarise the day's input but I also introduced the subject of my research. Being a deputy principal myself since 1992, I had personally met and knew many of the deputy principals in the two circuits.

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[11] Information based on EMIS annual survey 2003

According to Rubin and Rubin (1995:115), it does happen that people " won't talk to a researcher because they identify the researcher with a disliked role, perhaps a journalist, social worker or university professor." Rubin and Rubin go on to point out that it is important for a researcher to take cognisance of the fact that " the role you have been cast into influences what the interviewees are willing to talk about and how openly they are likely to talk."

Being mindful of the barriers that exist between the interviewer and interviewee, I explained to the participants of the seminar that I had been deputy principal for twelve (12) years, and that I was not employed by the education department to carry out the research but that the research was part of the requirements for my M.Ed. in Social Justice. In doing so I had hoped to allay any fears that I could have been co-opted or bought off (Rubin and Rubin (1995:115). The authors caution that it is not advisable for the interviewer to pretend that they are someone else in order to gain entrance to a group. However, they mention that " it is legitimate to take on the role of a casual acquaintance, a person who has shared some experiences with the interviewee." That encourages the interviewees to feel at ease.

In spite of clarifying my role, I sensed there was an element of hesitancy from some of my colleagues to fill in the questionnaire. I had to obtain telephone numbers of the respondents from the facilitator. I then telephoned twenty-five and visited them at their homes to explain the purpose of the questionnaire before leaving a questionnaire with each of them to fill in. This helped to eliminate any interviewer bias where responses given might have been influenced by the presence of the researcher (Haralambos and Holborn, 1995:835). The return rate was 84% and this data collecting procedure was comparatively inexpensive, though, according to Haralambos and Holborn, questionnaires and interviews have many advantages and disadvantages.

3.5 Data collection

3.5.1 Selection of the random sample

The questionnaire, based on Coleman's model (Coleman, 2001), and adapted accordingly was distributed to twenty-five (25) randomly selected deputy principals in the uMgungundlovu region. A random or probability sample is defined as " a miniature version of the population to which the survey findings are going to be applied, (Anderson 1990:198)." Random sampling could either be of a simple type where the researcher chooses a sample in a mathematically random way; a systematic type where every n-th subject on a listing is selected; a stratified random sample where a population is divided into groups and then a given number of respondents is selected, and finally, a cluster sample where the target population is divided into groups and some of the groups are chosen (Smith, (1975) Neuman, (1997) and Anderson, (1990).

In this study, twenty-five (25) respondents were chosen in a mathematically random way from thirty-eight (38) deputy principals in two of the five circuits in the region. Of the twenty-five, twenty-one (21) filled in the questionnaire. I was careful not to disclose to my informants that I had established contact with key education officials lest such contact inhibit the free flow of information (Neuman 2000:353).

3.5.2   Criteria for the purposive sample

From the twenty-one (21) respondents, seven (7) were selected for more in-depth interviewing. The seven were chosen on the basis of age. The age factor (50-59years) was important in that the four respondents in that age bracket had many years of teaching and administration experience. They had exceeded the minimum teaching experience of seven years needed for one to be considered for promotion to senior management positions.

The second criterion I used was to select those deputy principals who were initially hesitant to fill in the questionnaire because I sensed they had a valuable contribution to make provided they were assured that their contribution would be treated with confidentiality.

In the third instance I looked for respondents who had a direct experience of being openly discriminated against by senior male colleagues or other females thus experience what has been called a pull-her-down "PhD" syndrome. According to Neuman (1997:206), purposive sampling is an acceptable kind of sampling for special situations. He says that it uses the judgment of an expert in selecting cases that would potentially contribute special data in the research.

3.5.3   Research instruments

First, set questionnaires do not allow the respondent to qualify and develop their answers. Secondly, respondents may interpret the same question differently. Third, this means that respondents being unwilling or unable to give full and accurate answers may reduce the validity of the data.

Despite the many disadvantages, questionnaires have a single advantage of enabling the researcher sharpen his or her interviewing skills. Those skills were then put to use during the intensive interviews of the purposive sample.

In three instances, the deputy principals of schools in Sobantu, kwaMpumuza and Imbali declined to fill in the questionnaire citing the "sensitive" nature of some of the questions. Two of the deputy principals were not in a position to complete the questionnaires due to sickness and death in their families. I resolved to include the three difficult to reach respondents in the purposive sample, discussed briefly in paragraph 3.3.2 above and in more detail in chapter four.

3.6 Qualitative Methodology

Haralambos and Holborn (1995:814) define the qualitative or the interpretive method of collecting data as one that enables a social scientist to gain " a true picture of a way of life, of a people's experiences, attitudes and beliefs." It is an inductive process of organising data into recognisable categories and patterns (McMillan and Schumacher 2001). Qualitative researchers major on developing insights and generalisations from data collected. Since this study is concerned with individual and group behavior patterns between people, especially how they do or do not get along with each other because of prejudices and stereotypes, a social scientific or qualitative methodology seemed more appropriate than a positivist approach.

According to Neuman (2000:64) the former approach assists in " discerning the laws that govern human life in order to improve how things are done and to predict what will happen." Qualitative analysis assumes that research and theory are intricately linked (Barbie, 2002; Sjorberg et al, 1991). Weber and Dilthey, cited in Neuman (2000:70) and other proponents of interpretive social science have argued that qualitative analysis presupposes that the researcher develops empathic understanding or *verstehen* of the every day lived experiences of people in specific historical settings.

Weber's contention is that in social research, " we learn the personal reasons or motives that shape a person's internal mechanisms and guide decisions to act in a particular way."

Consequently the interpretative approach fits in well with feminist research. According to Neuman (2000:83) it is mostly women who conduct feminist research even though it is still in the embryonic stage. This approach enabled me to gather information that was useful in acquiring an in-depth understanding of how women in management "create meaning in everyday life" (Neuman 2000:71). Neuman defines the qualitative approach as the "systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through direct and detailed observation of people in their natural setting in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how they create and maintain their social world."

Since the 1920s qualitative research has been used extensively by sociologists, anthropologists and other students who study human behaviour. According to Denzil and Lincoln (2003: 8) qualitative research " seeks to connect research to the hopes, needs, goals and promises of a free democratic society." Qualitative research has been described as being " inherently multi-method in focus" (see Flick 1998 cited in Denzil and Lincoln, 2003:8). Because a qualitative researcher uses a variety of approaches he or she becomes a *bicoleur* borrowing from empirical materials such as:

> "Case study, personal experience, introspection, life story, interview, artifacts, cultural texts and productions, observational, historical, interactional and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives." (Denzil 2003:4/5)

In other words, human life is too complex to be understood and analyzed adequately by relying too heavily on statistical analyses associated with quantitative methodology. On the contrary, qualitative inquiry allows for a broader and deeper understanding of behaviour patterns and power relations that this study seeks to address. However, like all research methodologies, the qualitative approach has its own limitations.

3.7 Limitations of qualitative methodology

McMillan and Schumacher have pointed out that qualitative researchers lean more toward the interpretive or subjective paradigm. Since qualitative research follows no strict rules, these authors caution that

> " The researcher is not allowed to be mindlessly inventive. Qualitative research should be done artfully, even playfully, but it also demands a great amount of methodological knowledge and intellectual competence." McMillan and Schumacher (2001:463/4)

One other inherent weakness of qualitative methodology is that of accurate representation. How does a researcher restrain his/her biases and also limit undue interference with data? More accurate results are obtained if the researcher acknowledges his/her limitations and makes allowances for them. In this study, I sought to achieve a measure of objectivity by

allowing the respondents to speak with a minimum of interruption from my side. I listened carefully, taking full notes during the intensive interview of the purposive sample. After recording my written notes and taped conversations, I went back to the interviewees and check if I had captured the informants' contributions accurately and to check with them to see whether they wished to add or withdraw any information they did not wish to see published.

Other critiques of the qualitative method, Lofland and Lofland (1984) and Davids, (1973) point out that, depending on the relationship between the researcher and the interviewee, the latter may not be honest in his/her answers. The interviewee may be inclined to tell the researcher what he/she (i.e. the interviewee) thinks the researcher wants to hear rather than what the researcher needs to hear. Secondly, the views of respondents do change over a period of time. That is not such a big problem when one takes into account the fact that perceptions normally change slowly. The data gathering for this research were done in a period that lasted three to four months and verified several months later.

A third weakness according to Rajuili (2004:124) is the Hawthorne effect which holds that " there are far too many variables that affect the results of a field experiment especially when the subjects are aware that they are being studied." I allowed for this possibility by rephrasing my questions and probing. Furthermore, I do I also agree with Bryman (1988:73) that "ethnographers rarely adopt a stance of being 'sponges' whereby they simply absorb the subjects' interpretations."

A further criticism of the qualitative method is that it bases conclusions on a limited data. In response to that objection, Shils and Finch quote Max Weber with approval when he says;

> " In the social sciences we are concerned with psychological and intellectual phenomenon, the empathetic understanding of which is naturally a problem of a specifically different type from those of which schemes of the exact sciences in general can, or seek to solve." , (Shils and Finch, 1949:74)

Therefore in the collection of the data from the purposive sample, which is the subject of chapter four below, I did everything possible to listen attentively, make extensive notes, probe and seek clarification. I observed verbal and non-verbal clues and did everything that enabled me to see reality from the perspective of my informants.

Qualitative researchers have been dubbed journalists and soft scientists. Their critics have argued that their method relies too much on untested anecdotes and it is subjective. A counter argument is that the method is supplemented by other data gathering methods as indicated above, (see paragraph 3.10 below). Furthermore, it enables the researcher to get close to the interviewees' perspectives through detailed interviewing and observation. Besides, Bittner (1973) cited in Bryman (1998:76) correctly points out that research cannot be done in a totally objective manner. Therefore qualitative methodology may not be better or worse than any other method (Denzin and Lincoln 2003:5).

3.8 Countering the weaknesses of the qualitative method.

Strategies adopted to minimise some of the weaknesses of the qualitative methodology are the use of triangulation. This is a cross validation of data sources whereby a researcher compares artifact collections, informal interviews and field observations. This is represented in the triangulation diagram below.

TRIANGULATION

Artifact
Collection   Informant

Social Scene of
process

Field
Observation
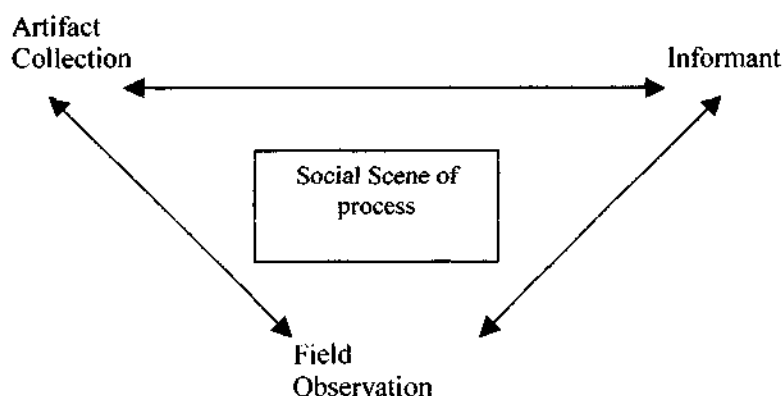
In Neuman's words (2000:124) "it is better to look at something from several angles than to look at it in only one way." He calls this the triangulation of measures. By comparing and contrasting data from these three sources, a researcher is thus able to establish whether there are recurring patterns. Often a researcher will use two or more methods such as qualitative, quantitative and library research in such a way that the multiplicity of method complement each other. This method is called a triangulation of method (Haralambos and Holborn, 1995; Neuman, 2000).

3.9 Interviews

In qualitative methodology a series of open-ended questions are used to collect basic and detailed data from respondents during an interview. I took special care to ensure that respondents were free to give honest answers. I did this by assuring them that I would not judge them in any way.

3.9.1 Advantages and disadvantages of interviews

The interview option was used to collect data orally from seven interviewees. I took extensive notes and a tape recorder was used as a backup in the data collecting process. Haralambos and Holborn (1995:842) point out that interviews

> " Have many of the same drawbacks as questionnaires: The responses given may not be accurate and may not reflect real behavior. Respondents may lie, may forget, they may lack the information required...Interviewees may not act in accordance with their stated beliefs...there is more opportunity for the interviewer (usually without realizing it) to direct the interviewee towards giving certain types of response."

Inspite of the above disadvantages, Silverman (1985) cited in Haralambos and Holborn (1995:843) argues that interviews or conversations " are an integral part of social life, and as one of the many ways in which people communicate they are invaluable as ways of trying to understand society."

Interviewing has the advantage that it allows the interviewee to put across his or her own concerns. At the same time, the interviewer, by probing, elicits deeper information that questionnaires could not provide. Thirdly, in this study many of the interviewees were my colleagues and that made for a relaxed atmosphere where information was shared at a deeper level. Neuman (1997:256) maintains that in an interview, respondents are more likely to give a truthful answer when a skilled interviewer exudes human warmth, establishes trust and rapport with the interviewees.

3.10 Data Analysis

The qualitative method requires that the analysis of data be done by following certain procedures. McMillan and Schumacher ((2001:461) maintain that " qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organising the data into categories." It is essential that categories and patterns emerge from the data rather than being imposed on the data prior to data collection (2001:462).

According to Neuman (2000:421), to code the data into themes, a researcher first needs to learn how ' to see' or recognise themes in the data. He goes on to state that seeing themes rests on four abilities (1) recognising pattern in the data, (2) thinking in terms of systems, (3) having tacit knowledge or in-depth background to knowledge and, fourthly, possessing relevant knowledge. The following themes emerged after analysis.

3.11 Summary of themes

3.11.1   In the promotion of women to senior management, years of experience in the education field were not such an important factor. All of the informants had been in the education field for over ten years and more.

3.11.2   Academically, my informants had the necessary qualifications to be appointed to senior management positions. 75% of them have university degrees.

3.11.3   In South Africa, oppressive management structures in education resulted in the marginalisation of women.

3.11.4 Inspite of several attempts by women to apply for senior management positions, in most cases males were the ones appointed.

3.11.5 There was widespread nepotism and favouritism in promotions.

3.11.6 Informants pointed out that in some cases women pulled each other down.

3.11.7 A tendency for female applicants to be lax in filling in application forms for promotion.

3.11.8 All informants believed that women could make better leaders in education.

From the eight themes above I formulated questions that I used in an in-depth interview of a purposive sample. During the semi-structured interviews recorded in chapter four below, the informants were encouraged to elaborate on the eight themes and, in the process, empower them to be change agents.

3.12 Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen that data collecting methods and theory are intricately related. We therefore opted for qualitative methodology because, in the words of Rubin and Rubin (1995:36), the researcher hears more and talks less and qualitative methodology " humanizes both the researcher and the interviewee [and focuses] more on those who [have] little or no societal voice." That approach to research is in line with feminist theory and the two complement each other.

Data was gathered from twenty-one respondents by means of a questionnaire and the initial findings were grouped into eight interrelated themes. From the themes a semi-structured interview schedule was formulated and used in chapter four below in semi-structured interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I first present the findings, and follow this with the interpretation of qualitative interviews of seven deputy principals interviewed for this study. The seven constituted a purposive sample chosen on the basis of the length of service in education. Secondly, on educational qualification, on marital status and, finally, on geographical location . Of the seven, five had been educators for twenty years and more, one for eleven and the other for thirteen years.

Two were within the 30-39 year age bracket; three in the 40-49, and the other two in the 50-59. The sample also consisted of educators who resided within the Pietermaritzburg municipality and thus within easy reach for interview purposes and cross checking their responses. However, not all of them taught in city schools at the time of interview. Three taught in peri-urban schools, two in schools located within the city and the remaining two educators taught in schools located in the rural parts of Pietermaritzburg. All of the above schools were fully state aided.

My interviewees consisted of married and single deputy principals. Two of them were involved in primary and the rest taught in secondary schools. The sample thus attempted to represent a cross-section of educators in the uMgungundlovu region. Before the seven deputy principals were interviewed, they individually completed a questionnaire in which nineteen questions were asked (See Appendix B). The first eleven questions were intended to give a composite picture of each one of them.

Questions asked sought to find out the respondent's personal details, areas of specialisation and career history. I did this because I fully concur with Newman (1997:331) that a qualitative researcher has to take into account the interviewee's total context in order to understand their specific actions. As Newman puts it, " each part without the whole has little meaning." The table 4.1.1, below represents the biographical information of the interviewees.

Table 4.1.1

Table showing biographical information of respondents

Name of respondent	Marital status	Age range	Qualifications	Specialisation	Teaching Experience in years	No. of years as SMT or deputy
LER	Single	50-59	B. Sc.	Physical Science	22	2
MCH	Married	50-59	Secondary Teacher's Diploma	Not stated	23	1
MKH	Married	40-49	BA (honours)	Librarianship	24	5
MUT	Married	30-39	Secondary Teachers' Diploma	Primary school teacher – no specialisation	11	3
MWE	Married	40-49	B Ed (honours)	Geography	20	3
SIT	Married	30-39	B Ed	Home Economics	13	2
THA	Married	40-49	BA (honours), B Ed	Biblical studies	24	1

4.2 Presentation of data

The interviews were captured on audio-tape, transcribed and supplemented by field notes. In coding the data I followed Spadley's (1979) and Strauss' (1978) systems cited in Rubin and Rubin (1995:229) where data collected in qualitative interviews are rearranged in such a manner to "group similar ideas together and figure out how the themes relate to each other".

The research questions used are grouped into two broad areas, namely those designed to begin and those that guided the discussion. Area one covered six categories which sought to establish how long my informants had been teachers; their perceptions of internal and external hindrances to promotion; the interview process, the effect of non-discriminatory legislation and their chances of promotion and the relation between my informants' and leadership experience, academic qualifications and prospects of promotion.[12] While the main questions directed the interview and kept it focused, they were open enough to encourage the interviewees to express their convictions and opinions (Rubin and Rubin 1995:146).

Area two covered questions in the form of probes which I used to elicit responses which helped me to get a clearer understanding of answers and statements from my informants. I state the rationale behind each question asked before capturing the responses of the interviewees. Where there were similarities in the responses, these were grouped together, indicating how many respondents agreed or disagreed in their answers. Emerging patters have been noted and presented in table 4.2.1 below.

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[14] For the exact questions posed to each of the seven interviewees please see Appendix D below. These questions are also shown in the table below.

Table 4.2.1

Views of female Deputy Principals on under-representation

Category of Analysis	Questions Asked	Responses to questions asked	Key issues arising out of the responses
Length of service as an educator	1. How long have you been both an educator and a member of the school management team?	▪ One said - 24 years ▪ Two said – 23 years ▪ One said – 22 years ▪ One said – 20years ▪ One said – 13years ▪ One said – 11years	Five deputy principals have been educators for twenty years and more. Only two have been educators for slightly more than ten years.
Relation between length of teaching experience and promotion	2. Given your current position in management and your teaching experience, why is it that you are still a deputy principal?	▪ Three cited domestic chores and limitations caused by husband's work. ▪ Three cited nepotism caused by corruption. ▪ Two said that women tend to be promoted to junior management positions ▪ One stated that she felt hesitant to apply for a senior position.	Hindrances caused by family responsibilities Cronyism Lack of experience.
Academic qualifications and promotion prospects	3. Do you think academic qualifications increase women's chances of promotion?	▪ Six maintained that academic qualifications ought to increase chances of promotion. ▪ One did not think so.	Women need to work on their academic qualifications. Qualifications make little difference

Internal barriers to women attaining senior positions	4. What do you regard as internal barriers to women attaining senior management positions?	▪ Four mentioned inferiority complex and a low self esteem. ▪ Two cited the oppressive nature of African traditions when it comes to womens' advancement. ▪ One cited a need for assertiveness	Inferiority complex Socialisation. Assertiveness
Subsidiary skills needed for management posts	5. What particular skills and knowledge is necessary for one to be appointed to senior management positions?	▪ Four felt that one should have leadership and organisational skills. ▪ One felt that a manager has to be an entrepreneur. ▪ One cited good listening skills ▪ One felt that a senior manager has to be a well-rounded mature person.	Leadership and managerial skills Entrepreneurial (innovative) skills Listening skills
Qualities for appointment of senior managers	6. According to you, are there any qualities and attributes that privilege one gender over another in the appointment of senior managers?	▪ Four felt that the issue of moral integrity and sobriety is central. ▪ One cited intelligence. ▪ Two felt a caring nature and sensitivity are crucial attributes.	Moral integrity and sobriety. Natural intelligence. Sensitivity

Fair representation in the interview panel	7 Did the panel that interviewed you reflect gender balance?	• Three of the respondents maintained that the panel was well balanced. • Three recalled that the panel that interviewed her was male-dominated. • One respondent felt that gender balance should not be an important issue in interview panels.	Well balanced interview panels Gender balance not an important issue.
Fairness of interview panels	8. What did you think about the questions asked during the interview process?	• All seven respondents felt that questions asked were fair.	Interviews were conducted professionally
Transparence in appointments	9. Do you think that there is transparence in the appointment of senior managers following interviews?	• All the interviewees felt that there was no transparency in the actual appointment of managers	Lack of transparency
Gender sensitivity in post-apartheid South Africa	10. How far do you think South Africa has adequately addressed gender equity in education since 1994?	• Four felt that it had not been adequately addressed • Three maintained that since 1994 society was more gender sensitive than before.	Political change had benefited a minority of women in South Africa.
General Question	11. Is there anything else you would like to add?	• Five had nothing to add • One mentioned age • One mentioned 'pull down syndrome	Age Pull down syndrome

4.3   Interpretation of data in table 4.2.1 above

In this section I carried out an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from interviews with seven deputy principals. I isolated the themes that emerged from the interview sessions. These themes were analysed in depth to discover connections and contrasts between them and also took note of any variations. The results were compared to findings of other researchers who have looked at women in education management. These findings are found in existing literature. The interpretation of results were controlled and guided by radical feminist theory that maintains that it is patriarchy that results in women's oppression and gender equity. I pointed out (see Chapter two paragraph 2.3 above) that according to this theory, legal and social hindrances can and should be removed in order for women to achieve equity.

The data collected suggested that hindrances to women achieving senior management posts could be grouped into two main areas. First, barriers related to, and caused by the way some of the women viewed themselves. Secondly, there are societal barriers which express themselves in stereotypes about what women can or cannot do. I now look at the first area and focus on the questions that guided the discussion.

4.3.1   Length of service as an educator

To the first question which sought to find out: **How long have you been both an educator and a member of the school management team?** Responses were of two types – Five of the deputy principals had been educators for twenty years and more. They had far exceeded the minimum period of seven years that is required by law for one to be in senior a management position. Two had been educators for eleven and thirteen years respectively. Fig **4.3.1** below is a table that shows the length of service of the deputy principals.

Fig 4.3.1

Deputy Principal	Total number of years in teaching field	Number of years as deputy principal	Age bracket
LeR	22	1	50-59
Mch	23	1	50-59
Mkh	24	5	40-49
Mut	11	3	30-39
Mwe	20	3	40-49
Sit	13	2	30-39
Tha	24	1	40-49

4.3.2. Relation between length teaching experience and promotion

In response to the question: **Given your current position in management and your teaching experience, why is it that you are still a deputy principal?** My interviewees responded in the following manner:

Mch: I think it is due to my husband's work because time and again he is transferred to different places.

Mut: It is domestic oppression. It is like you get home in the afternoon, you have to work for your husband, you have to cook for him and you have to do things for the kids. Those are things that stop us from progressing.

Tha: Most women are confined to HOD posts.

Mkh: Mmmm..... there is nepotism. I have been a treasurer and a Subject Head. I did librarianship course. I have a B.A. honours degree and Diploma in Administration and Management. Pregnancy also acts as a barrier to promotion.

Sit: Corruption. My education should have placed me in a better position.

LeR: I needed more teaching experience.

Mwe: *Amafields amaningi* (many fields) are still dominated by men.

Of the seven respondents who had been deputy principals for ten years and more, three cited family responsibilities and commitments as major factors that delayed their carrier move. These responsibilities included involvement in domestic chores in the home, career disruption due to pregnancy and looking after children and, finally, women being compelled to relocate as a result of husband or partner changing employment. I examine each of above-mentioned domestic responsibilities in the next section.

4.3.2.1 Family Responsibilities

The two respondents who cited family responsibilities as hindrances to promotion confirmed Goduka and Swadener's (1999:130) contention that homemaking reduces women's competitive edge in the labour market. The two authors point out that industrialisation made a false distinction between unpaid, domestic or reproductive work done by women and paid productive labour as the preserve of men.

Women invariably found themselves having to hold, in balance, at least two or even three careers of wife, mother and professional wage earner. This not only placed them at a distinct disadvantage compared to men but the potential for role conflict was enormous (Evetts 1990; Adler et al 1993). It is significant that the three respondents who saw family responsibilities as barriers in their career paths were married women.

Commenting on the social norm that women are cut out to be homemakers while men are to be involved in market or wage work, Goduka and Swadener (1999:130), agreeing with Safa (1995), challenge what they regard as the myth of the male breadwinner. According to these authors, "designating men as breadwinners maintains male control over female labour which is largely confined to the home and reproductive sphere."

Additionally, the findings of the field research indicate that for married women with children, societal expectation is that household chores are their major responsibility. One respondent highlighted the special difficulty and oppression that women faced in relation to being homemakers and aspirant managers in education:

> **Mut:** I think women are a little bit oppressed. They are not oppressed by anyone, but they are used to being in that situation. It is like when you get home in the afternoon you have to work for your husband, you have to cook for him and you have to do things for the kids. When he comes back home maybe he reads a newspaper, wait for a plate of food and at the end of the day you are tired and you end up not even being able to do things that push you forward, that make you a better person because you have to work during the day providing for the family as much as he does, Eh.. you don't get home to rest. You only stop doing your house chores at about eight (20h00) washing dishes for him and yet he is busy reading a newspaper. Why can't we share things? Why can't he do something to help you so that you have enough time to prepare for yourself for the next day? That would make you a better person the following day and you will be in a better position to think clearly, to think brilliantly.

Dowling's (1998:46) question is apt: " why should cooking and cleaning be the woman's role?" Even in middle and upper class households, where I drew my sample, the gendered division of labour (Goduka and Swadener, 1999) has changed only marginally even in a country like South Africa which is said to have the most liberal and non-sexist constitution.

It is worth noting, though, that the distinction between domestic and paid labour is not a particularly South African or African phenomenon. Coleman (2001:79) cites several researchers (Ruijs 1993, Davidson and Cooper 1992, Burke and McKeen 1994, Lewis 1994) who have concluded that in Europe, the USA and elsewhere, "despite the rhetoric, there is a little increase in the male share of housework and other domestic tasks."

4.3.2.2 Relocation of Spouse

On the relocation of spouse, responses from my interviewees revealed that when husbands or partners, traditionally regarded as breadwinners, changed jobs and relocated, women were compelled to move with them to new localities often at the expense of their (women's) career advancement. Therefore if the wife was not re-deployed or transferred at the same time that her husband was, she was forced to resign as happened with one of my informants who was a wife and mother, was a principal but was a deputy principal at the time of interview. This is what she said:

> **Mch.** Eh... I think it [forfeiting principalship] was due to my husband's work because time and again he was transferred to different places. For instance, I was a principal before in Vryheid (*lapho bengingu principal iminyaka emibili ngase ngi transfera*) where I was a principal for two years before I was transferred. So our family relocated to Pietermaritzburg and I lost my job.

Answering along the same lines, a respondent reflected on how family responsibilities and especially her desire to be with her husband and children turned out to be a hindrance to her promotion possibilities. The following extract illustrates how commitment to her family became disadvantageous to her:

> **Mwe:** I cannot leave my family and my children and take up a promotion post in another area. That on its own is a barrier. I have spoken to some ladies, some who have divorced, maybe who have lost their husbands or partners and become single ladies because of being promoted and moving away from home.
>
> **Raj:** Tell me more.
>
> **Mwe:** Ya, definitely, that can be another barrier. If you look from a perspective of a woman who wants to reach for the sky. But there is this point (*ekhona-ke yabantu besifazane abanye..*) which many women experience, some find themselves very much settled where they are (*ngenxa ye*-commitment *yoMndeni*) because of family commitments.
>
> Many posts have been advertised (*ngingawa aplayeli*) and I have not placed an application, like assistant directorships from as far as Ulundi and Pretoria. You see, look at this commitment- I can't leave my family, my children.
>
> **Raj:** What about men? If your husband was a teacher and there was a senior management post either out in Ulundi or Pretoria, would he see family commitment as a barrier?

Mwe: No, they don't, unfortunately they don't.

Raj: Why?

Mwe: Its because we are more passionate about our families, our children. Sometimes we want to be professional – the real housewife.

Raj: If I could press you more, why do men not see family commitment as a barrier?

Mwe: Your know males are males. Sometimes they can quote that they used to work in the mines so they are used to leaving their children behind expecting the wife to take care of family responsibilities while they are away. Those are stereotypes.

Moorosi (2000:51), reflecting on married women and promotion aspirations, argues that "historically women were generally given few chances for promotions because of their lack of stability at work." This is an instability that results from maternity leave and career breaks as women join their husbands when the latter change jobs and relocate. Likewise, Mbulelo Baloyi (2004), writing in the Daily News on - Milestones in Our Education[13] refers to the post-provisioning norm (PPN) as another problem that faces education in South Africa. Its objective is to identify surplus teachers in schools for re-deployment where there is a shortage of qualified educators. When male married teachers are re-deployed some wives feel under obligation to accompany their husbands to maintain family unity. According to Maclean (1992:112) this feeling emanates from society's belief that:

> " The proper and prime role for a woman is that of a wife, mother and carer. In this view occupational careers should come second and, it is often assumed that women will and should always put their family first – taking time out to have and raise children and time off to look after sick relatives, resigning and moving when the partner gets a job in another part of the country – whereas men's commitment will and should primarily be to their career."

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[15] Baloyi, M (2004) Milestones in Our Education
Available at <□ HYPERLINK "http://www.dailynews.co.za/general/"
16□http://www.dailynews.co.za/general □>accessed 23rd January 05

4.3.2.3 Cronyism

Three of the respondents cited cronyism (or a special favour or favours that one extends their friends) as a barrier to career advancement. The interviewees maintained that most senior posts in education are occupied by males while women are concentrated in junior management levels, especially as heads of department (HODs). They attribute this anomaly to the fact those men in senior management and therefore with powers to appoint or recommend appointments, select male friends over women regardless of the latter's' abilities. This is what the interviewees said:

> **Mkh.** I applied for the Superintendent of Education Management post and was not even short-listed because of nepotism. The males who did the appointing already had people in mind. They already knew who would occupy the positions even before the posts were advertised.

Furthermore, the respondents pointed out that cronyism goes beyond men appointing other men. Some women, they contended, were promoted on the strength of friendships or being closely related to people of influence.

> **Mkh.** The male directors and their wives want to enjoy a big fat cake by appointing their spouses to senior management posts. Scorpions,[14] ideally women scorpions, need to investigate the liaisons that some women have with men in senior positions thus getting an unfair advantage.

> **Tha.** I know of a woman who was promoted to a senior position inspite of being underqualified. She has a romantic relationship with influential men.

> **Sit.** Corruption is definitely a hindrance to women's advancement.

In her study, Tsoka (2000:128) argues that promotion " is not based on ability but on one's sex first." Greyvenstein (2000:23) concurs saying that men are not only

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[17] Scorpions are a specialist wing of the South African Police Services, which investigates political crimes.

gatekeepers, "they are filters exercising cronyism, the buddy system or the old boy network which underlie the subtle and covert barriers."

4.3.2.4 Lack of experience

Only one respondent, LeR cited lack of experience as being the reason why she was still a deputy principal at the time of interview. For me it was difficult to understand how someone who had been teaching for twenty-two years still regarded herself as being inexperienced and not ready to assume a senior position. One could attribute this attitude to the fact that women are systematically marginalised and consequently assume passive roles in society. The result is that even women who have leadership skills end up lacking in confidence due to male dominance. In challenging women's resignation to the status quo, Rodick (1995:vii) maintains that if women understood how exceptional they are, they would not lack confidence. She goes on to say " women must be willing to be powerful. It is because women bear scars from the ways men have used their power over them that they often want no part of power."

4.3.3 Academic qualifications and promotion prospects

With regard to the relation between academic qualifications and promotion prospects, the interviewees were asked: **Do you think academic qualifications increase women's' chances of promotion?** One gave an unqualified yes, the other was more cautious and the rest of the respondents thought differently. This is what they said.

Mch: *Amaqualifications* (academic qualifications) of a person give a person confidence.

LeR; I think academic qualifications are important.

Tha: Yes, ideally academic qualifications *ought* (italics mine) to increase one's chances but they don't. I know of a woman who was promoted to a senior position inspite of being underqualified.

Mwe: Definitely. Academic qualifications ought to improve one's chances. Yes, that is what I used to tell myself.

Sit: Yes, I am hoping.

Tha: I don't think academic qualification is the only way of getting a senior position ... I think what is important is to make things happen.

Mkh: Yes, but in the olden days.

It seemed to me that the relation between academic qualifications and promotion was another very crucial question seeing that from my purposive sample, all the deputy principals had attained the necessary minimum qualifications. In addition four of them had acquired extra curricular skills as part of their on-going educational enrichment. The table below presents the interviewees qualifications.

Table 4.3.3

Deputy Principal	Highest Academic qualification	Non-formal educational qualifications and specialisations
LeR	B.Sc	Chaired a meeting that formulated physical science policies
Mch	STD	Organiser of English symposia for learners and set up voluntary English coaching classes
Mkh	B.A (hons)	Did a diploma in speech and drama and introduced it in her school. Diploma in librarianship.
Mut	SED	
Mwe	B.Ed (hons)	Co-ordinator of Geography teachers in the Edendale circuit
Sit	B.Ed	Diplomas in Administration and management and also in home economics.
Tha	B.Ed	Involved in life skills as a co-ordinator

The data in table 4.3.3 above showed that the commonly held view that women are underqualified and therefore not promotable lacks substance. It is a stereotype that is still very etched in many people's minds. Six of the women interviewed maintained that under normal circumstances the attaining of academic qualifications and possession of leadership skills ought to enhance their chances of advancement but that was not necessarily the case.

4.3.4 Internal barriers to promotion

Respondents were asked to reflect on what they regarded as internal barriers to promotion. They were asked: **What do you regard as internal barriers to women attaining senior management positions?** Responses to the question can be grouped into thee types, namely inferiority complex; limiting effects of African tradition and lack of and innovative or entrepreneurial spirit.

Sit: Yes there are. Firstly, men are thought to be better. Secondly females haven't told themselves they can do it. Thirdly, women themselves don't apply because they lack skills to apply and be interviewed.

LeR: The way women perceive themselves and the way they are regarded by men. They (women) see themselves as being less able than men. Men see women as decorations, not being really capable, but that is slowly changing.

Mch: I think it is definitely socialisation. African tradition puts us at a disadvantage.

Mut: We were brought up in a traditional environment that made us think that a woman was someone who had to stay behind and the man to go forward and find something to provide for a woman.

Tha: Yes men themselves are barriers. Women are powerless. They have low self-esteem which emanates from being kept down all the time. Being assertive can also be a barrier.

Mwe: Maybe *ukuthi ikhona lento yokuthi* (there is this idea that) they (men) know the person they are looking for. By the time you drop the big brown envelope, they already know the candidate.

4.3.4.1 Inferiority complex

Five of the deputy principals interviewed regarded inferiority complex, lack of self-confidence or self-worth among women as a hindrance to them moving up the career ladder. The following quotations illustrates this point:

Sit. You can be a female and be capable. But, eh... it's embedded in our minds as women that men are more capable –that one has to be a man to qualify as a principal. For example- a woman was appointed in one post-primary school to be a principal. Other male principals complained that this female principal should have first started at the higher primary school. This attitude makes women end up belittling themselves.

According to **LeR,** who had spent twenty-two years before applying for a middle management position, a feeling of self-pity operates at a subliminal level. In her reply she stated:

> **LeR:** Ya, women are very capable. Truly, I only realized late that I had this inferiority complex. I would not say complex, it is too strong a word, rather a feeling of saying "Oh I wouldn't manage. Oh it's a male preserve. Oh they are the ones who should be the figures of authority. Now my perception is changed completely (she laughs).

> **Mkh:** Inferiority complex. Pregnancy could also be a barrier.

Indications are that women set up very high standards for themselves as a prerequisite to accessing senior posts. This is clearly shown by the comparatively high number of B.Ed and higher education qualifications among women as compared to men. According to Shakeshaft (1993) cited in Coleman (2001:85) research carried out in the USA and the UK shows that " women are more likely to expect to have the majority of the qualities required for a job before application, whereas men are confident about applying with only some of the qualifications and experience."

My informants agreed that the lack of self-confidence results from what Zulu (2003:103) describes as extrinsic factors. These are culturally mediated barriers that view men as natural leaders and women as followers. An attitude of self-debasement also emanates from intrinsic factors dating from early childhood. According to Zulu (2003) these are socialisation patterns that promote the belief that women have to be socialised " to be feminine, that is, submissive, compliant, affectionate, tender, soft-spoken and so forth." In the tough and competitive world in which we live, that attitude limits women's chances of advancement.

A second cause of women's lack of self-esteem, according to Zulu (2003), is their tendency to unwittingly undermine their efforts at work. Their lack of confidence and reticence facilitate men's advancement. She concludes that intrinsic factors cause women to decide late that they would be establishing a career or perceive their job as a stable job rather than as a career. Closely related to the lack of self confidence is a negative socialisation process that acts as a barrier to women's advancement.

4.3.4.2   Socialisation

Two of the seven respondents, **Mch** and **Mut**, cited socialisation and tradition as barriers to women's advancement. Mch specifically mentioned African tradition, saying that most black female teachers are the ones who are at the bottom of the social ladder. She further pointed out that schools are often an extension of African community. In saying this she endorsed what is said by Measor and Sikes (1992:116) that schools are part of society and are therefore subject to prevailing social attitudes. In a typical African setup, a woman always has to assume a subservient role. This practice naturally leads to black female deputy principals not being in line for senior management positions.

4.3.4.3 Assertiveness

Contrary to expectations, one respondent, **Tha,** made an observation that oftentimes assertiveness by women yields negative results. Assertive women are seen as unfeminine and bossy. This confirmed what Back and Back (1999:53) have noted that "in a patriarchal system men believe that they are superior and they know what is best." The Backs go on to show that women who are assertive become more of a threat and do not feel accepted in organizations were men are in the majority in senior positions.

4.3.5. Skills and Knowledge

Respondents were asked to consider skills and knowledge and determine the role that they play in career advancement for women. Presented below are their responses to the question **what particular skills and knowledge are necessary for one to be appointed to senior management positions?**

Mch; A leader must demonstrate leadership skills. They show (values of good behavior) *amavalues okuziphatha kahle* .

Mut: I think doing things and making things happen is more important than trying to educate ourselves, but at the same time, education is important.

Tha: One needs to be a proven leader, a workaholic and be organised.

Mkh: Yes leadership and life skills. Be creative to equip children and older people.

Sit: You need managerial skills and also to put them into practice.

LeR: You need leadership skills

Mwe: Listening skills. These skills play a very crucial role. A good manager who is a listener tends to be a democrat as compared to one who is a non-listener and becomes autocratic.

4.3.5.1 Leadership, managerial and organisational skills

It is interesting that four of the respondents specifically pointed out that for one to be in senior management, one needs to possess leadership skills. Additionally, good and effective managers need to possess organisational skills according to others of my informants. The fact that women could identify the requisite leadership skills is an indication that they too can successfully lead organisations. Table **4.3.3** above shows that deputy principals have indeed equipped themselves with the requisite skills for senior management. Besides their academic qualifications, two had attained diplomas in librarianship, administration and management. The others had exercised managerial skills.

4.3.5.2 Entrepreneurial skills

Mut: Her response underlined a skill that is needed 'to make things happen.' In the business world such an innovative person would be refereed to as an entrepreneur, a risk taker and a pragmatic person who will see an opportunity and use it to achieve his or her goals. It is in that regard that **Mut** stressed that a senior manager ought to be a top achiever in the midst of many challenges, an entrepreneur.

4.3.5.3 Listening skills

Mwe distintly pointed out that to be in a senior management post one needs to have good listening skills. She noticed that some men in leadership are not good listeners. One may attribute this to Anderson (1986:74) who cites Eichenbaum and Orbach's contention that generally men expect to be listened to ...Their mothers listened to them when they were boys girlfriends listened when they were adolescents and women listened when they are men."

4.3.6. Qualities and Attributes

Linked to the question of skills and knowledge was one on qualities and attributes. The respondents were asked: **according to you, are there any qualities and attributes that privilege one gender over another in the appointment of senior managers?**

> **Tha:** Yes, there is a common belief that men are cleverer than women. According to me, that is not true. I have come across men who are not clever. After all, behind every successful man in a clever woman.
>
> **Mkh:** Yes, women do have so much love, patience and kindness.
>
> **Sit:** There are no special qualities and attributes, it depends on the person
>
> **LeR:** I should think, no. I think women are just as capable of holding senior positions and doing the job very well. In some cases they even surpass men

because they (women) are more sensitive and caring in addressing issues that affect their colleagues.

Mwe: There should be no difference, but when you are a leader, you have to be passionate. Definitely, you have to love your work. You have to be industrious whether you are a woman or a man.

Mch: There are teachers who drink *–baphuze nasesikoleni.* (they drink during working hours at school), *loyomuntu* (such a person) is not suitable for promotion.

4.3.6.1 Moral integrity, passion, industry, intelligence and sobriety

Judging by the responses above, four interviewees, **Tha, Sit, LeR** and **Mwe** said that senior managers ought to display moral integrity. They should be people who are passionate, hardworking and intelligent. According to these respondents, such attributes are found in both men and women. However, according to **Mkh** and **LeR**, the one outstanding attribute in which women outshine men is women's tendency to be balanced and caring. **Mkh** said that to be balanced means to be mature spiritually, physically, emotionally and intellectually. She went further and said that women tend to display those qualities more than their male counterparts.

Mch felt that for one to be a leader, one has to abstain from alcoholic drinks
LeR likewise, indicated that one attitude that is more pronounced in women than in men is that of being sensitive. As she put it, 'women are both sensitive and caring'.

4.3.7 Interview Panels

I asked my informants to reflect back on the gender composition of the panelists that interviewed them for deputy principal posts and other senior posts that they had subsequently applied for. This is the question that they had to respond to: **To what extent was the panel that interviewed you balanced?**

Mch and **Sit**; It was balanced

Mut: Yes, it was balanced. If I remember well, there were three women and four men. I accepted it.

Tha: For my present post, seven men and one woman whose duty was to call the interviewees in interviewed me.

Mkh: It was not balanced. The interview panel should be balanced, ideally. In that way women will be afforded an opportunity to appoint competent candidates.

LeR: It was not and should be balanced. A panel that consisted of only three females, one of whom was an observer, interviewed me.

Mwe: Gender balance in interview panels is irrelevant. What is important are skills and qualities.

Three of the respondents seemed quite happy about the gender composition of the interview panel. However **Tha** was dissatisfied that the only woman, out of a total of eight panelists, was used to call the interviewees in. She expressed her misgivings by saying that interviewing panels should be balanced "because women are also important and intelligent and should be well represented on interviewing panels." **LeR** stated that inspite of the South African constitution, men are still steeped in patriarchal traditions.

That sentiment was echoed by **Mkh** thus confirming Morgan et al (1983) observation that if selectors are predominantly male, they tend to make unchallenged sexist comments about the suitability of the candidates causing them to be subjected to greater scrutiny on their appearance than the male candidates.

One of the respondents recalled that during the interview "some of the men were dosing off, others looked like they were not interested in what they were doing or not even listening." She was convinced that she would not have been promoted had the vocal female members of the teacher union not intervened and the post re-advertised.

It was thus apparent from the observations of three of my informants that the women on the panels were tokens who occupied marginal positions of being "a messenger and a decoration," as LcR put it. This confirms Greyvenstcin's (2000:30) contention that women who successfully enter the management hierarchy experience further barriers due to being in a token or marginal position. Such women are viewed as being representatives of their gender group and are not judged as individuals or as part of the management team.

According to research findings, deputy principals interviewed maintained that patriarchal attitudes expressed themselves in the composition of interview panels. My informants were also aware, as Mac and Ghaill, 1994; Schuck, 1986 both cited in Coleman (2001:83) have observed that "men are often gatekeepers at every stage of career progression.

In her study Tsoka (2000:128) makes the similar observation, saying "that folkways, mores, laws and taboos still formed serious stumbling blocks in the way of women advancement to senior leadership positions in the education profession and elsewhere in the corporate world." She further notes that " promotion was not based on ability but on one's sex first, and in many instances, also on one's color of skin. Thus the darker your skin colour, the lesser the pay and the lesser the chances of promotion."

However one interviewee maintained that gender imbalance caused her to be more determined to stand her ground. Being aware that the only female member of the panel was passive, Mwc realised that she needed an extra measure of confidence.

4.3.8 Questions asked during the interview

Questions asked during an interview are crucial in ensuring that there is no undue sex-discrimination. It is for that reason that I asked the respondents **what did you think about the questions asked during the interview?**

> **Mch:** The questions were fair
>
> **Mut:** (As she was about to give here response she was distracted and had to attend to her four year old son who walked in bleeding)
>
> **Tha:** The questions asked were generally fair.
>
> **Mkh:** I think the questions asked were good.
>
> **Sit:** Questions were fairly good.
>
> **LR:** I would say they were generally good.
>
> **Mwe:** I did not sense any discrimination. Questions were balanced.

Six of the respondents agreed that none of the questions asked placed them at a disadvantage. Almost all of them felt that the questions were "generally good" One could attribute the fairness of the questions to the fact that guidelines are supplied to interviewing panels by the Department of Education.

4.3.9 Transparency in making appointments

In a democratic society like South Africa, transparency and accountability are two of the major pillars that ensure the continuity and growth of democracy. It was for that reason that I asked my interviewees: **Do you think there is sufficient transparency in the appointment of senior managers after the interviews have taken place?**

> **Mch:** You know, I have never heard of a woman director in Education in South Africa.
>
> **Mut:** Male chauvinism prevents women from reaching higher positions.
>
> **Tha:** No, there is no transparency. People who are in positions of power do things the way they like.
>
> **Mkh:** No, people who are going to be appointed are told in advance what to do and what not to do during and after the interview.

> **Sit:** No, for instance the appointment of current female Chief Education Specialist is contentious. I suspect there was some bribery and love relationships.
> **LeR:** No, men still have that condescending attitude towards women in management posts.
> **Mwe:** The lack of transparency is a system of education inherited from the apartheid era. I can assure you that 'change' is not easy. Most people resist change in any society.

All seven respondents agree that there is no transparency in the appointment of senior managers. According to **Mwe**, people of influence, who are generally males, still follow the apartheid methodology where there was no openness. Two of the respondents cited chauvinistic and condescending attitudes as stumbling blocks to women's advancement. **LeR's** reference to a condescending attitude implies that men see themselves as superior to women. The latter are regarded as subordinates who may be kept in the dark with regard to the process and procedures of appointments. Similar sentiments are held by **Mut** and **LeR**. According to those two respondents, chauvinism gives men not only the upper hand in the appointment of senior managers but also help to maintain the status quo.

4.3.10 Gender equity in post-apartheid South Africa

When asked: **After ten years of democracy, do you think that South Africa has addressed gender equity in education management adequately? Please explain.** They were asked to specifically comment on the provisions of the Gender Equity Act and other non-discriminatory legislation. This is what they said:

> **Mch:** No, it has not addressed it adequately. The office-based posts are advertised and these are still occupied by males. Even here at school, for a long time we had an SMT which comprised men only. It is only now that women have been appointed.

Mut: When it comes to managerial positions in our own department (education), most positions are given to men. Ok, we do have the national minister of education as well as some provincial ministers of education who are female. Other than that, the Chief executive officers and the rest of the senior managers such as Superintendent in Education Management (SEM) are male.

Tha: Not yet, but is getting there.

Mkh: Not adequately. For instance, if a lady who occupies a senior post dies or is promoted, her post is invariably filled by a man.

Sit: The launching of Women in Dialogue by Premier Sibusiso Ndebele of KwaZulu Natal is a positive encouragement to women to take their rightful positions in society.

LeR: Maybe in five years time we will have equity.

Mwe: We need another ten to fifteen years for South Africa to reach gender equity. It is being addressed but very slowly.

Four of the respondents were not optimistic about talks on gender equity. One of the respondents, **Mut,** indicated that SEMs are now overtly appointing males to head lower primary schools. This is what she said:

"There is a junior primary school in this circuit which goes up to Grade 4 and I learnt that a male has been appointed as principal. I found it strange that a male was appointed whereas females are seldom accommodated in Secondary schools, yet now males are appointed in what used to be traditionally female posts."

Likewise **Mwe** was not too optimistic about the transformation. For instance *nanka amaposts ayavela kumaphephandaba* (posts are advertised in the newspapers), and they mention affirmative action, blah, blah, blah. Fine, *asikuboni kwenzeka* (we don't see the affirmative action happen in reality).

According to **Mkh**, gender equity sounds like a concerted effort to achieve transformation. She maintained that in reality, there were very few cases where a senior position vacated by a female was filled in by another female. Not all interviewees were despondent about the pace at which gender equity is proceeding. Three pointed out that the laws which govern gender equity have helped and are still helping women to climb the social ladder.   **LeR** felt that given time, South Africa would witness a major transformation. **Sit** cited efforts like the Women in Dialogue effort as a move in the right direction. The interview process was brought to a close by asking the respondents to think of any other hindrance to women's promotion prospects. Several cited covert discrimination.

4.3.11 A General question.

Finally I asked them if there was anything that the respondents **wished to ask or to add.** This question was asked in order to give respondents to share whatever else they had in mind with regard to barriers they faced. Of the seven respondents, **Mch** and **Tha** spoke about age and the pull-down syndrome respectively.

4.3.11.1   Age

Mch: Our society has been socialised to think that if one is young, they are dynamic. As women grow older they are sidelined. For instance, I am a category C (i.e. university degree and five years teaching experience) employee but I cannot make it to the top.

Yes, governing bodies in black schools hinder women, especially older women from attaining senior positions. Until recently we still have a School Management Team (SMT) which comprised men only. It is only now that women have been appointed. Another thing is that the department of education employs younger ladies most of the time. That is another thing I have noticed – age discrimination. I can contest against a younger person and excel because of my experience but they employ young people.

4.3.11.2   Pull down syndrome

Tha indicated that women themselves can be a draw back to other women's career advancement.

Tha: There is what has come to be known as the pull-down syndrome among women. I have experienced it myself.

Closely allied to patriarchal attitudes, my informants noted that inspite of the existence of the Bill of Rights, the Employment equity Act and affirmative action strategies, there is still covert discrimination against women attaining senior positions. This was expressed in the following words by one of the interviewees:

Mwe: No. South Africa is trying to, but it has reached its maximum. You know, I was discussing this with one lady saying at my school there are five people in management. Three are males and two are females. There is still a gap. They are trying, for instance Thabo Mbeki is trying to achieve a gender balance.

Raj: Ya, that is in politics. What about education? Do we need two or three years before gender equity is a reality in education?

Mwe: Two or three years is too soon. We need another ten years if not another fifty years. Gender equity is addressed very slowly.

Raj: What is causing that, who is to blame?

Raj: Despite the policies that are in place to facilitate change such as the Employment Equity Act, Gender Equality, the Gender Commission, the Bill of Rights, are you saying that it will take 50 years for change to happen?

Mwe: Yes, possibly, unless (*kutshintshe wona lama*-policies) unless the very policies are amended. Some of the Acts (*abheke i*-need *eseduze*) focus on immediate needs. For instance, in education a Mr. M is a principal at Inqolobane High School, he will occupy that post until he dies. I will be happier if affirmative action policies and the equity Act were performance related (*zenze abantu kuma*-management posts *bangene kwi*-contract) and stipulate that persons in management posts be employed on contract basis) – say, for a short term not until a person dies or retires. In that way things would change.

Further concern that the stipulations of the Employment equity act are not fully embraced in the education department was expressed thus:

Tha: I have learnt from my husband (who is a senior manager) that the provincial minister of education in KwaZulu Natal, says that uMgungundlovu is the worst circuit when it comes to women representivity in senior management. She is committed to addressing that imbalance."

The experiences of four of my informants underscored the limitations of legal provisions in curtailing sexual discrimination in the employment of women. One of the deputy principals made the comment that male principals deliberately kept them away from attending leadership seminars and workshops. Instead, they asked their male colleagues or the shy Post Level One (PL1) females to represent them at workshops. This is how she put it.

> **Mut:** Women can do things and can handle things, the thing is that most of the women are not given an opportunity to do things. We are not even exposed to such things like if there is a workshop the principal might sometimes choose another male teacher to go and attend that workshop. When he comes back, he will sit in the office and discuss with the principal what happened in that workshop and not empower other educators. I think what is needed among female educators is empowerment. Once you give a women a platform to do something or do anything that will empower her then you will see the potential of a woman

According to **Mut**, covert discrimination was a move calculated to 'hide' potential senior managers from being recognised by the education directorate or to keep them (female deputy principals) uninformed about new developments in education. As a result, when they applied for senior posts, they found themselves at a disadvantage compared to their male colleagues.

In reflecting on the legacy of covert discrimination against women in South Africa, Goduka and Swadener (1999:123) point out that "under apartheid the education system was used extensively to perpetuate the discrimination against, and exclusion of women." Consequently for many years South African society assumed that "women lacked reasoning power and that they made no contribution to history," according to the two authors.

They go on to point out how biology has been used to construct gender stereotypes, and that for many years " women were perceived as less independent, less objective, less analytical, less logical and less resourceful than men. These gender biases form the core of a sexist ideology that equates femininity with domesticity" (Goduka and Swadener 1999:126).

Maclean (1992:115) likewise believes that discrimination is rooted in untested traditional assumptions that judge men and women on the basis of externals. She then concludes "there is still a great distance to travel before women teachers come to enjoy anything like equal career experiences and opportunities similar to those of men."

It is therefore not surprising that such culturally constructed attributes would take a while to deconstruct. It is Maclean's assertion that men are preferred because they are seen as better disciplinarians who will be better equipped to deal with problems in " rough areas" She agrees with Davidson's (1985) contention that this perception

> " Is linked with the notion that with older children it is more appropriate and necessary to have a man at the top in order to maintain discipline. Therefore men get headship posts. The beliefs are based on a conceptualization of management based on force and control, and on a view of women as physically weak and men as powerful authority figures."(Maclean , 1992:114)

Added to that that view of management is what two of the interviewees regarded as unchallenged corrupt practices where senior posts are earmarked for male candidates or family members. An informant had this to say:

> **Mkh:** I think that the community plays a very important part in oppressing women...It is rare to find a female succeeding a male principal. If it is a male dominated school, you will see a male following a male until maybe some woman comes and says (she smiles) No, we can do it."

Conclusion

Findings based on intensive interviews revealed that, for married women in particular, family responsibilities had a direct influence on their chances of being appointed to senior management posts (Maclean, 1992). Where there was a conflict of interest between the demands of the home environment and teaching, the latter suffered. Several respondents felt that they could not sacrifice family welfare on the altar of career advancement.

One of the respondents was forthright that homemaking did not appeal to her and two felt that their spouses ought to share in domestic chores thus relieving their wives of the burden of taking care of home needs and in so doing, make it possible for them (wives) to advance. What remains outstanding, though, is that until there is big enough paradigm shift in societal expectations of women's' roles, they will continue to be marginalised.

The myth of the male breadwinner (Goduka and Swadener, 1999 and Safa 1995) seems set to continue for some time yet. That is because it has "ideological as well as material roots based on patriarchy and capitalism (Safa, 1995).

Closely related to hindrances caused by attending to domestic chores, some of the respondents noted that women's promotion is adversely affected by career breaks such as maternity leave or relocation to accompany husbands or partners to new localities.

The findings also revealed that statutory attempts at stamping out the apartheid legacy of discrimination have had limited success. Age and experience do not seem to be critical factors in appointing female education managers. There is a bias towards males and young women and a covert discrimination against older women.

Faced with covert discrimination, a further finding is that women are smart enough to realise that raw academic qualifications without proven managerial skills will not get them too far.

Of several structural barriers that female aspirant managers face is a realisation that interview panels are a male preserve and as such biased against appointing women to senior posts. Corruption and cronyism are some of the hindrances that women still have to overcome.

However, finally, respondents cited lack of self –confidence as a barrier that helps in maintaining the status quo where women remain confined to middle management as Heads of Departments and Deputy principals while the rest of the higher posts are occupied by men, at least for now.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In concluding this research I will cover four aspects namely; a summary of research findings, secondly, conclusions derived from those findings and, thirdly, recommendations and finally, suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary of research findings

This study set out to examine barriers that women experience in accessing senior management positions in the uMgungundlovu region of the department of Education. This goal was achieved mainly by analysing responses from a purposive sample of female educators in the said region. Library research, interviews with a male senior manager, information gathered from the public media and reflections from my own experience as deputy principal supplemented the data gathered in field studies. By making use of radical feminist theory advanced by Measor and Sikes (1992) and Ackers (1994), I was able to analyse the marginalisation of women in education, trace its origin and find out how it is sustained and also how it could be reversed. I now proceed to enumerate the research findings.

5.2.1 Women as counselors

South African female academics (Perumal, Mathipa, Greyvenstein, Zulu and Gwele) all concur with their Canadian and Australian counterparts that in their respective societies, women are expected to function mainly as counselors and thus perform pastoral functions. In departmental meetings, most women are expected to serve refreshments.

5.2.2 Extrinsic and intrinsic barriers

Mathipa (2000), Perumal (2003) and Zulu (2003) note that at tertiary education institutions, the paucity of women in senior management positions is due to extrinsic and intrinsic barriers. I have found out that the same situation applies at the high school level. Extrinsic barriers result when men, because of their numerical dominance in senior positions, determine who and how many women may be promoted to those positions. Other extrinsic barriers to women's' advancement take the form of male dominated interview panels. The other was tokenism where the tokenised woman's role was to call in the interviewees other than that she sat quietly throughout the interview. In instances where women do speak up, they are confronted by a male backlash. Intrinsic barriers have to do with how, from childhood, many women have grown up with low self-esteem.

5.2.3 Primary and High school headships

The research also revealed that males occupy the majority of principal posts in secondary schools. In those institutions, women tend to be confined to HOD and deputy principal posts. It is mainly in the primary schools where one finds that the majority as principals are women. Even that is changing. There is a growing move to have men head primary schools even if it means in that in certain school there is only one male and the rest of the staff are female.

5.2.4 Oppression and the politics of power

In order to understand the marginalisation of women, it is important to understand how oppressive forces work against women in favour of men. According to Parr (1988) economic power, vested in a few men enables them to control national institutions such as the military, finance and education. Frye (1988:47) on the other hand, maintains that oppression immobilises women and causes them to "participate in our own erasure".

The research revealed that hierarchical relationships with men at the top end of the social pyramid were duplicated in the school setting.

5.2.5 Cultural conditioning and traditions

Inspite of the commonly held notion that cultures and traditions are dynamic, several researchers such as Rizvi and Crowley (1993), Delamont (1996), Moorosi (2000) have noted that cultural socialisation and traditions act as barriers to women's advancement. Nowhere do these get greater expression than in employment practices. The possibility and reality of pregnancy make women less desirable employees compared to men. When they (women) do get employed there is often the underlying assumption that a woman's primary responsibility is to take care of children consequently prospects of her upward mobility are limited.

5.2.6 The Queen bee syndrome

Over and above external barriers, the research revealed that the few women who have made it to senior positions do marginalise their female colleagues. They act like queen bees, which expect to be served by the rest of the colony and resist any real or potential competition by other females. Ellmers and Leinden[15] refer to this phenomenon as the queen bee syndrome.

5.2.7 Domestic responsibilities

That domestic responsibilities of being a wife and mother constituted barriers to women's advancement was evident from the respondents that I interviewed. Chief among these were household chores of cooking, cleaning, raising children thus leaving the average woman with little time for academic advancement leading to promotion.

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[15] Sunday Times' 03/10/2004 and page 2 of the Business Times Careers section

5.3 Conclusions drawn from the findings

The findings in paragraph 5.2 above show that, to a large measure, the hindrances placed in the path for womens' advancement result from a social mindset that maintains that males are constitutionally superior to females. That attitude is learnt and entrenched over many years as a result of socialisation. It is made up of a complex of cultural, biological, anthropological and psychological principles, all feeding on and re-inforcing each other.

In analysing the research findings, one comes to the conclusion that the marginalisation of women is linked with those cultural stereotypes that dictate that women excel in the non-academic pastoral aspects of education. This conclusion is based on invalid data and is regrettably passed on uncritically from one generation to the next. Persons who operate with that framework tend to be arrogant and will maintain their 'superiority' at all costs.

Secondly, and as a result of such entrenched attitudes, legal interventions such as the Gender Equity Act of South Africa is of limited usefulness in advancing the cause of ordinary women in the teaching profession. I must hasten to concede that legal intervention and affirmative action strategies have benefited women in directorate and similar positions. However, that is a small percentage compared to the overall number of women in the teaching profession. The plight of women in the middle and lower levels of society has not changed much. The status quo could be due to the many structural barriers, mainly extrinsic but also intrinsic hindrances that act as self-fulfilling prophecies.

5.4 Recommendations

In the light of findings and conclusions above, I wish to move on to offer the following recommendations as possible ways of overcoming the barriers that female educators experience in their career advancement.

First, it would help for women to cultivate an entrepreneurial disposition. This could take the form of establishing lobby groups that would identify and challenge discriminatory practices. Women need to attend leadership seminars on business management. It would be instructive for women to remember that access to senior posts is not always based on merit. In many instances promotion is determine by a combination of social and political forces that have little relevance to the abilities of individuals. It is for that reason that women should not be shy to increase their visibility by placing updated curriculum vitae in the hands of human resource personnel. Furthermore such lobby groups should encourage women formulate well thought out career strategies and urge them not to give up after a few negative responses when they apply for senior positions.

Secondly, in seeking to reverse discriminatory practices, it is important for women to understand that they can be assertive without being aggressive. Katz and Vieland (1988:55) define aggressiveness as an approach that directly accuses the other person of obnoxious behaviour whereas assertiveness is directly pointing out with confidence and due respect what it is in the situation that makes one uncomfortable. The latter approach is likely to bring about long lasting and desired results whereas the former could lead the men in power digging in their heels even further.

It is essential, thirdly, that women take a more active role in professional bodies such as teacher unions and local authority associations. Their presence in those bodies should not be to swell the numbers, as is the case at present, but to influence policy decisions . This they could also raise their profile by engaging in current research and speak out in professional meetings. They should also share their concerns by contributing articles in teacher magazines.

Finally, those of our sisters who are in positions of influence already do well to heed what Katz and Vieland (1988:40) describe as the 'upstairs-downstairs' effect. This results when women allow their male colleagues (in the upstairs) to treat them in a condescending manner. That forces them to withdraw, mentally and emotionally to the downstairs (subservient roles) where they act as servants rather than professional colleagues.

5.5 Future research

During the course of this study, I identified two areas that could supplement the findings of this research. The one would be to get male perspectives on the hindrances to womens' advancement. Secondly it would be instructive to find out how and to what extent female senior managers encourage other women to overcome hindrances to career advancement.

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APPENDIX A

Number of Deputy Principals by gender

WARD	NO. OF FEMALE	NO. OF MALE
PMB SOUTH	11	11
PMB NORTH	1	7
PMB EAST	Nil	Nil
ENDENDALE	8	19
RICHMOND	3	5

Pietermaritzburg schools with female deputy principals

WARD	EMIS	SCHOOL NAME		NO. OF DEPUTY PRINCIPALS
EDENDALE	100788	ALEXANDRA	H	1
EDENDALE	111333	BONGUDUNGA	H	1
EDENDALE	128686	EKHUKHANYENI	P	1
EDENDALE	144744	FEZOKUHLE	P	1
EDENDALE	154734	HENDRYVILLE	P	1
EDENDALE	174270	KETHIDLENHLE	P	1
EDENDALE	266252	SINATING	JP	1
EDENDALE	276290	ST NICHOLAS	P	1
PMB NORTH	187553	LONGMARKET	P	1
PMB SOUTH	145854	FUNDOKUHLE	H	1
PMB SOUTH	146150	FUNULWAZI	P	1
PMB SOUTH	181818	IKHUSELIHLE	P	1
PMB SOUTH	188811	LUNGISILE	P	1
PMB SOUTH	207015	MEHLOKAZULU	H	1
PMB SOUTH	208828	MFUNDWENHLE	P	1
PMB SOUTH	248751	PHILANI	P	1
PMB SOUTH	250342	PMB GIRLS HIGH	H	2
PMB SOUTH	296370	WILLOWFONTEIN	P	1
RICHMOND	146705	GAGISA	P	1
RICHMOND	192400	MAGODA	P	1
RICHMOND	207718	MENZIWA	JP	1

Vulindlela schools with female deputy principals

NO	SCHOOL		NO	SCHOOL	
1	TETELEGU	P	10	UMQOMGQOTHO	H
2	SIYANDA	H	11	BHEKAMATSHI	P
3	INHLANGENI	P	12	NOBANDA	P
4	GOBINDLOVU	P	13	VEZOKUHLE	P
5	KWAMDLALA	P	14	NGCEDOMHLOPHE	H
6	NDELESHANE	P	15	ZWELIYAZUZA	P
7	KWANGUBENI	P	16	PHAYIPHANI	H
8	SONUOZIMA	P			
9	NYANDA	P			

Appendix B

QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire for female deputy principals in the Pietermaritzburg and Vulindlela circuits of the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education.

Name ....

Formal qualifications ....

Marital status ....

Age group

Under 30		30-39	
40-49		50-59	
60 and over			

School ....

1. Please indicate which of the following apply to your school

Full state aided	
Private school	

2. Year of appointment to present post ....

3. Is this your first deputy principal post?........

4 Have you functioned as deputy principal in another school?......................................

If yes, please indicate the number and duration (in years) of pervious deputy principalship(s)

Deputy principal one	
Deputy principal two	

5. Before you became deputy principal, were you an HOD ?

Yes		No	

If yes please indicate duration (in years) of   HOD post ....

6. Your main areas of responsibility as HOD..

....

7. What is your specialist subject area ....

8. Briefly comment on any responsibility you have exercised in your specialist subject

....

....

9. At what stage in your life did you have a desire to be involved in management?

....

10. What or who had a major influence in paragraph 9 above (mark all those that apply)

Parents		Husband/Partner	
Friends		Your teachers	
Domestic circumstances		Other (elaborate)	

11. Could you please elaborate on your attempt(s) to apply for a management position above your current one.

....

....

....

12. Were you aware of any unfair labour practice(s) in your attempt(s) to secure that/those positions.............? If so, what were they..

....

....?

13. Have you ever been aware of unfair practices from your peers?

Yes		No	

If yes please indicate the circumstances ....

....

15. Have you had a female mentor or role model in education leadership who encouraged you?

Yes		No	

If yes, please indicate the circumstances...
....

16. On the interview panel that selected you as deputy principal, what was the gender balance?

Men		Women	

17. Do you think as a woman you had to prove your worth more than a man would have in a management position?

Yes		No	

If yes, please explain...
....

18.Would you encourage female teachers to aspire to management positions in your school, and why?

19. According to you, what characteristics define a competent principal and deputy principal?
....
....
....
....
....

....

Thank you so very much for taking the time to complete the questionnaire

E.N. Rajuili
033 34343 (h)
082 429 8667 (cell)

Appendix C

Unstructured Interview Schedule

1. How long have your been both an educator and a member of the School Management Team?

2. Given your current position in management and your teaching experience, why is that you are still a deputy principal?

3. Do you think that your academic qualifications might increase chances of your promotion?

4. Are there particular skills or knowledge that a senior manager in education needs to have or demonstrate before he/she can be appointed?

5. In your opinion are there any qualities or attributes that privilege one gender over the other in the appointment of senior education managers? Please elaborate if there are any.

6. Do interview panels for senior posts need to reflect gender balance?

7. Do you think there are any barriers that prevent women from attaining senior managerial positions? If yes, what are some of them?

8. After ten years of democracy, do you think that South Africa has addressed gender equity in education management adequately? Please explain how.

9. When did you apply for a senior management post, and why do you think were you rejected?

10. Do you think that transparency and fairness exist when it comes to applying for senior management posts?

11. Were the questions asked during the interview fair or unfair to you? Explain why.
Is there anything else that you would like to add to what you have just told me? Please feel free to say it.

Thank you for taking time to answer my questions

ETHICAL CLEARANCE

3 April 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

EUNICE NONKULULEKO RAJUILI started her MEd prior to the merger of the universities, and thus prior to the conditions for ethical clearance as currently set out by the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Her study however did meet all UKZNs conditions for ethical clearance. The student operated within a very ethical framework and showed great respect for research participants.

The ethical clearance certificate is available for inspection on request at the Faculty of Education offices.

Dr TA MBATHA
Supervisor