



**UNIVERSITY OF TM
KWAZULU-NATAL**

**INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI**

**Leadership experiences of Black female School principals in the
Durban area**

Name of Researcher: Nokukhanya Luthuli

Student no.: 215002583

Supervisor: Dr Shanya Reuben

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents Mr. T.W.V and Mrs. T.N.H. Luthuli for becoming good role models to me by being educated themselves. Their perseverance and success in their studies gave me strength to travel this journey against all odds. They will always be my pillar of strength and a light of my life.

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ABSTRACT

The current study explores the lived experiences which Black women face in their leadership positions as school principals. The researcher was motivated by her personal interest in this area given that she hopes to pursue a leadership position in the future. An extensive review of the literature indicates that there is a gap in the South African literature narrating the Black female experiences in leadership positions.

This research aims to identify the experiences and challenges of Black women working in leadership positions, more specifically those that are employed as school principals as there is limited South African research within this area of Black female principals. This research study further identified how these women overcome the identified challenges.

This is a qualitative study using an interpretative phenomenology analysis. Participants were purposely selected from six primary schools in Clermont in the Durban area and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. The data was analysed using thematic analysis.

The Intersectionality Theory is a feministic theory that was used as a theoretical framework to frame this study. It describes the marginalisation of Black women in leadership positions due to their race and gender.

The findings revealed that Black female principals experience gender and racial discrimination in their positions due issues related to a patriarchal society. Positive experiences were also identified as participants revealed that working with motivated teachers and school learners was enjoyable and fulfilling. It was found that Black females employ transformational and democratic leadership styles in their positions as leaders of their respective schools. Furthermore, supportive structures and spirituality were identified as coping mechanisms which were important to overcome challenges.

The study recommends that Black women continue to delegate duties and have supportive structures to overcome their negative experiences. The study further recommends that Black women should be supported and encouraged in their roles as principals. Actions must be taken against race and gender discrimination and measures should be put in place to create supporting, enabling working environments.

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Chapter 1:

The Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Historically, Black women assuming leadership positions was embedded within and built upon an intense class and racial struggle as the immigrant nature of labour had only provided room for the White male workforce to occupy such positions (Webster, 1978). These positions, which historically did not include women, and especially women of colour, have remained highly patriarchal in nature, so it comes to no surprise that the role of women is still confined to administrative and supportive roles (Meryl, 2016).

According to Williams (2013), in America, the concept of education, how it was delivered and taught in institutions, was originally founded and led by males for males. The schools that were created for females afterwards, were designed to give women neglectful and inattentive education (Williams, 2013). This suggests that the system of education did not change its foundation, but rather allowed women to participate as secondary citizens.

Prior to 1994, the South African education system was structured along lines that were traditionally hierarchical, bureaucratic and racial (Govinden, 2008). Black teachers suffered consequences as a result they were forced to become teachers because they were given minimal occupations and opportunities to study. Govinden (2008) asserts that legislation that was historically implemented forced Black female teachers to teach in the primary sector in which a Junior Certificate of Education was required. Furthermore, there were stipulations that were included in the conditions of service such as a loss of permanent positions upon marriage (Govinden, 2008). Many of the Black female teachers were restricted from upgrading their qualifications as they did not meet certain criteria and expectations, for this they were refused study leave. Consequently, Black male teachers were granted more opportunities thereby advancing to higher positions such as leadership roles and earning higher salaries while Black female teachers were unable to do so (Govinden, 2008). Therefore, Black female teachers in South Africa were excluded from effectively participating and fulfilling leadership roles at school prior to 1994 (Govinden, 2008).

Race and gender are the two broad categories associated with opportunities that are inequitable in South Africa. Since 1994, there have been shifts in terms of school learners and educators to and from schools that were racially segregated. This meant ethnicity, language, gender and religion continue to shape schools. Vandeyar (2008) states that there are some schools that have diverted from the historic demographic characteristics, while others remain racially segregated. There is affirmation to indicate that female educational leaders in South Africa have been subjected to constant prejudice (Lumby, 2008).

Ampofo et al., (2004) states that women participated in leadership positions that included the state matriarchal political systems in pre-colonial African societies. Female activists in South Africa played an instrumental role in the struggle for gender equality and social justice. These female teachers were also included in not only the design of the state, elections and negotiations (Ampofo et al., 2004). Despite this, the inequalities of gender and race are prevalent. Access to education has not resulted in an equitable position for women in the labour market as a fight against sexist attitudes persist for women in South Africa within education and their school environment (Moorosi, 2010).

Normally, Black women who work in male dominated positions are less likely to consider themselves as leaders or to seek employment in leadership positions such as occupying principal and deputy principal roles. This meant that black women teachers were placed in the lowest rung (Tillman, 2008). Black women still have to be able to manage their stereotypical obligations as homemakers and as paid workers which makes it difficult to effectively balance home and work roles (Franks, Schurink & Fourie, 2006).

Research from the perspective from Black women as school principals and their experiences is considered as uncertain and undetermined due to the history and the controversy surrounding issues of gender and race (Dunbar, 2009). Black women face various challenges that hinder them from advancing to leadership positions. Thus this issue serves as a personal significance for the researcher as a South African Black woman. According to Maroosi (2006), men rarely experience challenges when they occupy leadership positions as much as women do. This study focuses on the experiences and challenges Black women face within leadership in the schooling context. In particular, the research investigates the experiences of Black female principals in the Clermont area. Clermont is a township of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Clermont under the apartheid days was a Black middle-income township. It is surrounded by Westville, Kloof, New Germany and Inanda in the distant. Its main road is called Clermont road and is named after Sir Clermont, a farmer who sold his land. It was the only place in Durban where black people were able to buy property and build houses. Since the end of apartheid, Clermont has been sprawling with shacks as people from the rural areas come and seek work opportunities in the nearby suburbs of Westville and New Germany, Pinetown and Durban. Clermont has a large Anglican, Catholic and Wesleyan Church community and on Sundays one can see the women of each denomination wearing their church uniforms with pride. In light of the above, this research is interested in exploring the lived experiences of Black, female principals both in terms of the personal resources which they draw on in negotiating their day-to-day work as well as the challenges which they experience. This study was conducted in the Clermont schools in South Africa and follows an interpretative phenomenology analysis (IPA) which is a qualitative research approach. All the primary schools participating in this study have different school principals and therefore are assumed to face different experiences from each other.

1.2. Research aims

This research aims to identify the experiences and challenges of Black women working in leadership positions, more specifically those that are employed as school principals as there is a lack of relevant South African research within this area. The study will further identify how these women overcome the identified challenges.

1.3. Research questions

1.3.1. How do Black women principals narrate their experiences of leadership in primary schools?

1.3.2. What are the successes and challenges that Black female principals face in their leadership roles?

1.4. Structure of the dissertation:

Chapter 1 includes the introduction of the study.

Chapter 2 includes the literature review of the study.

Chapter 3 includes the methods in which the study was conducted.

Chapter 4 includes the data findings of the study.

Chapter 5 includes the data analysis of the study.

Chapter 6 includes the recommendations and conclusion of the study.

1.5. Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research study and focused on the background of the research problem, and the problem statement of the study. It also outlined the specific study aims and the research questions for the research study. The next chapter reviews the literature related to the research topic and the theoretical framework used for the study.

Chapter 2:

Review of Literature

2.1. Introduction

This research study is interested in exploring the lived experiences of black, female principals both in terms of the personal resources which they draw on in negotiating their day-to-day work as well as the challenges which they experience. Although there is research that discusses leadership in reference to race and gender, there exists minimal research in relation to Black women employed as school principals and the intersections of school leadership with race and gender (Williams, 2013). This chapter reviews literature that focuses on the challenges that Black women face in leadership positions and on the strategies that can be effectively applied to cope with the challenges that are encountered daily. A number of researchers (Coleman, 2005; Makura 2010; Peterson & Runyan 2009; Shakeshaft & Grogan 2011) have reviewed women in leadership positions and have identified reasons for women being underrepresented in the schooling system in South Africa. Furthermore, this chapter focuses on the theoretical framework, the intersectionality theory, used to explore the inner dialogue and the standpoint of Black women in leadership positions.

2.2. Historic Context of Apartheid in South Africa

Historically, the South African education administration was dominated by female teachers irrespective of race, however, in terms of leadership positions such as that a position of a school principal, it has been dominated by males (Chisholm, 2001). Education in South Africa plays a vital role in improving and developing socio-economic disadvantaged background and communities. However, attention should be placed on whether all learners with different races are given equal opportunities and whether the education system is legitimate (May, 2016). Historically, White schools that were situated in urban areas were provided good quality education and the schools situated in rural areas with predominantly Black school learners were not provided the same opportunity of good level of education (Hartshorne, 2008). This could be due to some rural schools not having access to computers and good functioning libraries that school learners can utilise to increase their literacy and computer skills (Maarman and Mbawuli, 2017). Due to these discrepancies, Black women from disadvantages areas are less likely to assume leadership positions which has lead to a small number of them being employed as school principals.

There has been progress in the South African education system after the first democratic elections in 1994 (Moorosi, 2006). Since 1994, there has been an increase in the number of women being included in the South African educational system (Moorosi, 2006). The number of women attaining leadership positions such as school principals has shown a significant increase in numbers between the years 2000 and 2015 (Department of Basic Education, 2015). Furthermore, 70% of all educators in the country's teaching force are represented by women and those that are employed as school principals represent 30% of women (Department of Education, 2005). However, there remains an unequal representation of women in the school's leadership roles despite the remarkable number of women present as teachers. Kanjere (2009) asserts that although democratic and multiracial South Africa has overcome a number of challenges, women continue to be discriminated against within the private, public and personal domain.

Maseko (2013) states, in conjunction with the continued prevalence of the marginalisation of women that:

Women continue to suffer from occupational segregation and rarely break through the so-called "glass ceiling" which separates them from top-level leadership and professional positions. The causes that inhibit the performance of women as leaders range from structural and societal obstacles, race, and gender discrimination as well as socio-cultural and gender stereotypes that tend to undermine the ability of women as educational leaders (p. 1).

The South African Schools Act encourages a democratic change that grants opportunities that are equal to all (Moorosi, 2010). This Act protects and promotes the diversity of languages and cultures and further suggests that women be given opportunities to participate in senior leadership roles since there are more women than men in the South African educational system. According to the Department of Basic Education (2015), in the year 2012, 4% of women in schools were in leadership roles compared to 6% of men. Furthermore, Acts that include the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 have given women opportunities to be promoted to top management and were given equal opportunity for promotion and employment. This has given those that were previously disadvantaged or discriminated against, including Black women, leadership roles and promotional opportunities (Moorosi, 2010). The South African

policies that have been implemented have been questioned as women still face challenges in their leadership positions as they still have to prove their worth. The current literature highlights certain Black female principal practices, but the majority of it derives from American research studies as there is not enough literature on South African Black women in principal positions despite there being a growing number of them being employed as school leaders. However, the researcher states that this is happening at a slow rate, therefore, there is a need for investigating this area.

Despite a large number of women present as teachers, there still remains an unequal representation of women in the school's leadership roles as these positions are dominated by males. May (2016) found that 70% of all educators in the countries teaching force are represented by women and that those that are employed as school principals represent 30% of women. Furthermore, Black females that occupy these leadership roles experience personal and professional challenges. They must work twice as hard to prove their abilities as an effective leader as some studies (Brundrett et al., 2005) have asserted that the qualities of a rightful leader are typically assumed to be male.

2.3. Definition of Leadership

According to the Department of Education (2008), leadership refers to the way in which an individual influences others by carrying out plans, providing direction and motivating individuals and/or teams. Omolayo (2007) defines leadership as a social influence process in which participation of subordinates is obtained voluntary in an attempt to obtain goals of the organisation. A leader influences others to act in a certain way by delegating tasks to implement specific goals and objectives (Mullins, 2004). Effective leaders are needed in today's organisations to keep up with the ever-changing global environment.

2.3.1. Different Types of Leadership Styles

2.3.1.1 Autocratic leadership

Autocratic leaders make high demands, dictates subordinates and orders them around as they have a strong and firm leadership approach (Chambers, 2003). These types of leaders are very clear on what is expected from their subordinates, they arrange all tasks to be completed themselves and they tend to not consult the subordinates when making decisions thus, this type of leadership offers minimal involvement from subordinates. This type of leadership is

characterised by high unilateral execution of authority (Chambers, 2003). It is characterised by the subordinates having minimal input and the leader having control over all decision-making. Autocratic leaders rarely seek their subordinates' advice but rather make decisions based on their own ideas, experiences, and judgements (Kaleem, 2016). It is beneficial when decisions need to be made quickly without consulting large groups of people. However, this leadership style is often viewed as dictatorial and controlling which can result in resentment from subordinates. Furthermore, autocratic leadership can inhibit creative solutions to problem solving which diminishes the performance of the group (Kaleem, 2016).

2.3.1.2 Democratic leadership

Democratic leadership focuses more on teamwork as it emphasises on participation. The democratic leader delegates authority to their staff members, however, unlike the autocratic leadership style, the democratic leaders offer the subordinates responsibility to complete their assignments and tasks (Campher, 2003). Staff members complete the tasks using their own work methods and are involved in decision making, resulting in acquiring a sense of belonging and enabling the staff members to bond (Campher, 2003). This style of leadership facilitates in easing the pressure on leaders as it allows subordinates to participate in generating new ideas, encourages team tasks and collective decision making (Campher, 2003). It is also referred to as participative leadership as subordinates are encouraged to be included in problem-solving and decision-making. The democratic leader leads their subordinates through effect and illustration as opposed to coercion and fear (Kaleem, 2016). Democratic leadership produces work that is of high quality and quantity and enables subordinates to feel trusted which leads to them responding with high morale, team spirit and cooperation (Kaleem, 2016).

2.3.1.3 Transactional leadership

This type of leadership is based on relationships between the leader and subordinates in which the outcome of it is a valued resource. Trottier et al, (2008) asserts that this type of leadership “relies on the trades between the leader and follower by which followers are compensated for meeting specific goals or performance criteria” (p. 58). Firstly, the transactional leader validates the relationship between the subordinates' performance and reward in which what follows is an appropriate response that encourages performance improvements from subordinates (Scott, 2003). Transactional leaders use corrective actions, contingent rewards

and rule enforcement to motivate subordinates' behaviour. It is characterised as short lived, episodic and limited to the transaction (Bush, 2011). The disadvantage of employing this leadership style is that due to its lack of longevity, it does not ensure long-term commitment to the values and vision of the goal. To overcome this, leaders are encouraged to offer intrinsic and extrinsic rewards to subordinates to increase motivation (Bush, 2011).

2.3.1.4. Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership is the opposite of transactional leadership style. It involves the pursuit of obtaining higher-level goals and getting the subordinate staff-members to achieve more than what is expected of them. Transformational leadership style focuses on developing follower's potential and their needs and focuses on their growth and improving the value system of the subordinates. According to Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy (2014), transformational leaders enable followers to obtain a clear view of a problem from a new perspective, provides support and are able to articulate a clear vision of their organisations and communicate the vision to their subordinates. Furthermore, transformational leaders can "transform" individuals and organisations and increase motivation which leads to subordinate performance and satisfaction (Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy, 2014). Campher et al, (2013) suggest that transformational leadership additionally focuses on intrinsic motives, self-actualisation, autonomy, and higher order psychological needs for esteem. Yukl (2010) argues that transformational leadership has eight attributes, which includes: forming goals, creating and structuring vision, increasing performance, allowing personal growth and intellectual stimulation, forming a productive culture and empowering staff by enabling participant decision- making related to the work-related goals (Yukl, 2010).

2.3.1.5. Laissez-Faire Leadership

Alternatively known as the "hands-off" style, the laissez-faire leadership style is one in which the leader gives subordinates freedom and provides them with little direction and guidance on their work (Khan et al., 2015). The power is given to the subordinates to solve their own problems, make decisions, and to determine their own goals and objectives. The laissez-faire leadership style is most effective when subordinates are dependable and experienced. This is so when external consultants, staff specialists and outside experts are being used also subordinates are highly skilled and have experience in their line of work and when subordinates have pride in their jobs and are driven to successfully complete their work (Khan et al, 2015).

There are a number of different leadership styles that are employed by leaders in organisations. All the leadership styles have their own advantages and challenges. The types of leadership styles employed by leaders are based on the individuals' personality style and the manner in which they see fit to lead their organisations into success.

2.4. Leadership styles employed by female leaders as school principals

According to Dunbar (2015), the 21st century calls for educational leaders to have the capacity to understand and respond to the evolving nature of education. Educational leaders are expected to find new ways to encourage learners to achieve higher marks and handle budget deficits (Dunbar, 2015). According to Lumby's (2010) study, female educational leaders identify in nurturing, providing care, mothering the school learners and being responsive to the needs of the school community. Mothering the school learners brings about a direct transfer of positive values that they assert at home, to the school learners (Lumby, 2010). Women being able to transfer their motherliness to school learners enables them to have a strong emotional attachment to the school learners (Lumby, 2010). These attributes are inherent in women generally, however, female principals further assert these attributes as a conscious strategy to redress the social and economic ill health that is associated with the schools having inadequate resources to ensure quality education to the school learners (Lumby, 2010). This is essential as many school learners and staff are living in areas where they constantly face a range of issues that are associated with poverty, health and other related oppressive attitudes. Mothering style of leadership is seen as a positive and an imperative foundation to establish an effective learning culture (Lumby, 2010). This is indicative of transformational leadership style as it focuses on developing follower's potential and their needs and focuses on their growth and improving the value system of the subordinates (Campher, 2003). Female principals motivate school staff, learners and the community. The focus is on developing the school learners and staff and co-opting parents from the community to participate in the costs and responsibilities. Thus facilitating school growth, supporting and accommodating learners (Lumby, 2010).

Although transformational leadership was introduced to the corporate sector, it is asserted (Dunbar, 2015) that the effectiveness of transformational leaders has three implications for the school setting. Transformational leaders promote a positive learning environment through shared decision-making and empowerment. It also defines the school's mission and possess strong instructional leadership (Dunbar, 2015). According to previous studies, the participatory

form of leadership was employed as female leadership styles. Researchers state that Black female leadership is transformational in nature (Tillman, 2008; Dunbar, 2015). They assert that Black leaders employ transformational leadership for social change through creative problem-solving and innovative thinking (Tillman, 2008; Dunbar, 2015). African-American women in particular have enacted adapted forms of leadership to overcome the forces that have been historically oppressive in the American social system (Branche, 2014). The word resilient has been used to describe Black women. Wormer et al., (2011) conducted a study on the lives of six African-American women during segregation in Arkansas and Mississippi, and it was noted that the participant's upbringing was embedded in messages of racial socialization. This finding is significant as Branche (2014) noted that both transformational leadership and resilience plays an instrumental role in success in the organisation and leadership outcomes.

The literature evidences that women are said to have a maternalistic and transformational approach to leadership. Furthermore, female principals assert flexible leadership styles with subordinate staff members when working on tasks and when guiding learners as they value their input (Heilman et al., 2004). This is also indicative of a democratic style of leadership which is effective for female principals as by employing this style, they are viewed as leaders who are willing to encourage participation due to the inclusion of everyone in decision making (Campher, 2003). Considering the above, Black women in leadership positions employ mostly the transformational and democratic leadership styles as researchers assert that it makes it easier to respond to different situations, staff members, and school learners (Campher, 2003; Heilman et al., 2004; Wormer et al., 2011; Branche, 2014).

2.5. Challenges facing Black female principals

According to Madlala (2007), females in education leadership face various challenges these include social expectations of leadership, gender issues, stereotyping, intrinsic barriers such as low self-confidence, cultural barriers, traditional stereotypes, glass ceiling, domestic responsibilities and the role of mentoring. These challenges that Black women face in their positions as school leaders are being addressed.

2.5.1 Social expectations of leadership

According to Brundrett et al., (2005, p.37) "leadership is a gendered concept" and he further asserts that the qualities of a rightful leader are typically assumed to be male despite females

assuming leadership positions. Brundrett et al., (2005) states that “the identification of leadership with men is deeply ingrained in our understanding of society and family and this continues even though considerable changes have been taking place in terms of work participation.” However, there is still an “automatic association with support and nurturing and an association of men with work in the public sphere” (p.38). There are societal expectations that influence women’s roles and positions of what they are expected to do at home. Hensen (2014) states that home and work responsibilities are interconnected, and they influence gender conflicts in the workplace as women continue facing frustrations and conflicts at work despite claims of eradicating discrimination. Hensen (2014), states that the stereotypes that are associated with how women and men act plague educators as they will encounter conflicts and challenges if they divert from acting within the confines of stereotypes. Male and female challenges differ as some males take orders from other stronger males instead of being the ones giving the orders. Hensen (2014) also notes that in the past, superintendents had a preference of hiring teachers that were female as they would unlikely question policies and administrative authorities than male teachers would (Hensen, 2014).

2.5.2. Structural barriers

According to Piterman (2008), there are structural barriers that contribute to the low numbers of females in leadership positions. Piterman (2008) asserts that there are some studies that have identified an association between the under-representation of females at senior level and the cultural and structural forces. The role of sexuality, gender and power plays a significant role in shaping the experiences of women in leadership positions (Piterman, 2008). Women have been associated with stereotypical qualities that include being nurturing, compassionate, emotional, understanding and supportive while men are associated with qualities of being driven, powerful and independent (Nichols and Nichols, 2014). These misconceptions have contributed to the challenges and barriers that women encounter in the leadership positions in the educational system (Nichols and Nichols, 2014).

2.5.3. Gender Issues

According to Brundrette et al., (2005), women find themselves having to explain their leadership position and justify themselves as leaders while the same does not apply to males. Furthermore, Brundrett et al., (2005) states that the women they interviewed were being judged in terms of how well they would carry their leadership duties. Brundrette et al, (2005) states that men are typically described as being active and strong while women are described as

passive and weak and that individuals tend to value the achievement orientation that is ascribed to males more than the affiliation and nurturing that is associated with females. Makura (2010) have stated that good management is ascribed in masculine terms therefore, good managers are believed to be men (Makura, 2010).

According to Hansen (2014) men are encouraged to remain powerfully intellectual, have high esteem and prestige while maintain their masculinity as in order to succeed. A male leader requires “masculine abilities and traits as a successful man can reasonably credit himself with the abilities and traits that are necessary for success and feel masculine. A man’s success and his masculinity reinforce each other” (Valian, cited in Hansen, 2014, p.18). On the other hand, Valian (2014) asserts that female professional success is accomplished at the expense of personal aspects as women confront feminine expectations that are conflicting. It is asserted that women must either see herself as inhibiting masculine traits which may lead to her seemingly lacking a feminine side- or as having compensated in some way- through significant effort or luck for lacking masculine characteristics (Valian, cited in Hansen, 2014). Additionally, there are assumptions regarding men and women that are detrimental to how women are perceived in the professional world. Men have traits that are instrumental and task orientated whereas women have traits that are emotionally expressive and nurturing (Valian, cited in Hansen, 2014). It is perceived that women “act out-of-role” in the professional world because they do not belong in it. When a woman succeeds beyond expectation in a male-dominated position, her success is unlikely to be attributed to her ability but is rather attributed to the tasks being easy or luck or both reasons, depending on the tasks at hand (Hansen, 2014).

Valian (cited in Hansen, 2014) states that a female assuming a leadership position is at a disadvantage as she will not assume the same status as an equivalent male leader as she will not be taken as seriously. Additionally, female leaders have to worry about being ignored as their ideas are less likely to be considered and implemented to than their male peers. Each time a woman’s ideas are ignored, subordinates are less likely to take her seriously and she loses prestige (Hansen, 2014). Christman and McClellan (2008) conducted a study researching a group of seven Black educational administrators on what their source of resiliency is and how they sustain their leadership roles. Their study findings assert that there are gender expectations that are powerful. “Women must work to become more like those in positions of power; men must avoid becoming feminine and weak.” They further explained, “...we expect women to behave like women or to be manly, and we expect men to act like men and if one works at

bending gender, then criticisms fly from our social expectations about the gendered norms” (p.6). Women must confront the dilemma they face as they navigate the social norms of leadership and this includes deciding whether their allegiance lies with the men’s culture or the women’s culture. A woman success may clash with her femininity. She may “learn to interact with men in ways that preserve the societal view that men are stronger and more capable than women and that women play a crucial role in empowering men” (Gilbert and Rader, 2001, p. 163). This behaviour strengthens the male leader but is detrimental to the female leader as these gendered stereotypes view women as assuming a more supportive role to the men’s success. Women have learnt to interact with men in such a way that men are more capable in succeeding and women play an instrumental role in empowering the males. This has resulted in certain perceptions that have had serious implications in the workplace (Gilbert and Rader’s, 2001).

2.5.4 Women's low self-esteem / confidence

According to Meryl (2016), women have been socialised in a certain way to think and act in certain ways and which has lead them to inherent certain personality characteristics like being submissive. The negative stereotypes that women internalise about their abilities and roles often result in them not attaining their highest potential and to underperform.

The women leader feels inferior, inadequate and less assertive so that they remain in a state where they constantly have to prove themselves. It is important for female leaders to believe in themselves as a lack of self-confidence affects their work performance (Coetzer, 2004). Additionally, a female leader’s self-debilitating attitude and belief about herself may prove to be her worst enemy and hinder her growth. This is especially the case if female leaders feel as though any criticism is a personal attack or if they feel they are not good enough for their leadership position (Chisholm, 2001). The opposite of this is a belief that if male is a manager then no one can disagree with them. This can also cause disastrous results (Meryl, 2016).

2.5.5 Cultural factors

It is asserted that cultural beliefs demonstrate themselves in the school environment. Khumalo (2006) asserts that teachers form part of society and carry their cultural belief system and manifest them in the school. According to Bush and Middlewood (2013), “cultural elements such as beliefs and values, are at the heart of an organisation with the ideologies held by individuals influencing their behaviour and the behaviour of others” (p.53). Additionally, the

different societal dimensions that include the importance of patriarchy and how decision-making is male dominated in the professional sphere continues to play an instrumental role in schools (Bush and Middlewood, 2013). Khumalo (2006) states that some African cultures believe that men are superior to women and that women should not be given power to make decisions as they are weak minded and are not fit for leadership positions. A study conducted by Olubunmi (2013) regarding overcoming the stereotypical barriers in higher education management in Nigeria found that Black women were regarded and seen as subordinates and second-class citizens according to the African traditional belief. This traditional view has been embedded in the African day to day life that starts at home and is manifested in the larger communities in African societies (Olubunmi, 2013).

Bush and Middlewood (2013) assessed the impact of these cultural beliefs in 89 secondary schools in the Shaanxi Province carried out by Coleman, Qiang and Li (1998) that attribute such gender inequalities to the continuous male dominance and patriarchy. Black female's questioning their ability to lead is due to the cultural values that are traditional (Moorosi, 2010). These perceptions about female leaders that has been established by society affect Black women negatively and they find it difficult to be treated as equals by their male colleagues (Moorosi, 2010).

2.5.6 Traditional Stereotypes

According to Heilman et al, (2004), stereotypical beliefs such as those that imply that women are indecisive, emotionally unstable and not being competitive continue to affect Black female principals negatively. They face social and cultural stereotypes that only allow them to assume junior and inferior roles to men. Across cultures there are assumptions and prototypes of leadership that are assigned to men and not to women. This has consequences for not only those wishing to assume leadership positions but for those whom are currently assuming above stated positions. Diko (2007) conducted a South African study, in which it was reported that Black female teachers tended to accept their roles as women and the roles that accompany it. Those who opposed the traditional roles and established order and became leaders did not receive any support by their fellow females and colleagues (Diko, 2007). Black female leaders have to constantly prove their abilities as leaders under the conditions of oppressive critical scrutiny.

Lumby (2010) reported that 47% of the survey respondents stated that they experienced sexist attitudes, such as being ignored, disregarded in meetings and not receiving the respect from

men. One Black female principal stated that in a meeting women had never had the opportunity to speak because only the men's opinions would be asked (Lumby, 2010). Female principals would experience sexism from male subordinates and other male principals from other schools as they found it difficult to have a female leader (Lumby, 2010). Female principals experience sexist behaviour and attitudes from male principals from other schools and from the student governing body (Lumby, 2010). There is also the existence of negative gender-based attitudes from other female insubordinate staff, as some Black female principals feel that females are jealous of successful women, undermine them and make them feel inadequate. Female principals also responded in this study and stated that they feel as though some people are expecting them to fail because they are women, thus mistakes and failures are constantly anticipated so they are always being watched and scrutinised (Lumby, 2010).

2.5.7 Domestic Responsibilities

The woman has to face the challenge of family life. The gender roles that women have historically been placed are childcare, housework and wife roles. This originated from the biological considerations that women need to nurse their children and men must be breadwinners and face the world. Kagoda and Sperandio (2007) suggested in their study in Uganda, the Black female principals remained single as men could not imagine being married to a female school principal. This was due to the social taboos that is associated with the relative education level of marriage partners, that was specifically significant to men (Kagoda and Sperandio, 2007). Chabaya et al, (2009) conducted a study of female educational leaders in Zimbabwe and found that family attachment and obligations was the main reason as to why women did not apply to assume employment as a school principal. The husbands often do not approve of their wives assuming a position as a school principal when the women consult their husbands about the subject matter. Coleman (2005) had similar results in relation to gender equality and found that women who assumed positions in school administrations tended to be unmarried and had fewer children than their male counterparts due to their family obligations and the heavy domestic responsibilities (Coleman, 2005).

According to Moorosi's (2007) study, some participants also stated that having their own children posed as a challenge during the early years of their careers as they found it hard to balance their personal and their professional responsibilities (Moorosi, 2007). The participant stated that "The fact that you had children. It is difficult to be a working mom and especially when I got divorced... I had to really make compromises with my children to make sure that I

am there when I am needed and that I could do what I wanted to do” (Moorosi, 2007, p.41). Similarly, a study conducted by Lumby and Azaola (2011), stated that one research participant knew some women who would be denied promotions as they had children. The findings state that women have to make family sacrifices due to the addition of duties and responsibilities related to work as school principals to ensure that there is a successful balance at home and at work as mothers and school principals (Lumby and Azaola, 2011).

2.5.8 Glass Ceiling

An additional barrier is associated with how the organisational structure is arranged. Chabaya et al, (2009) found that female teachers in Zimbabwe asserted that there was discrimination that was directed from those in authority and in the way that the organisation was structured. In this respect, terms ‘glass wall’ and ‘glass ceiling’ represent the differing and unequal structures that are inherent in the educational organisations, however, Cubillo and Brown, (2003) assert that the vertical and horizontal barriers are dissimilar and inconsistent within each culture. Addi-Raccah and Ayalon (2002) provides an example of ‘glass ceiling’, the men can move to different levels in the educational organisation as the number of women in the educational occupation rises. According to Kerr et al., (2002), the term ‘glass wall’ refers to the barriers that segregate women in their occupation from certain types of job. The primary example of a ‘glass wall’ in education is the women being confined in ‘caring’ roles such as teaching children in lower grades (Kerr et al, 2002). Similarly, Magno and Silova (2007) in conducting a study exploring school-based gender inequalities in south-eastern schools in Europe found that the number of female teachers has increased due to the decrease in teacher salaries and the declining status that is attached to it as a profession. Notwithstanding this, women are more unlikely to be promoted to leadership positions than men, who in addition to getting promoted, also receive higher salaries in these positions (Magna and Silova, 2007). An additional barrier, within the organisational structure occurs when women are placed in the leadership positions as a token, not as a real and authoritative figure, within their schools (Magna and Silova, 2007).

Similar findings were drawn from a study conducted by May (2016), in which it was stated that younger subordinate teachers struggle to accept authority from Black female principals. This study states that this struggle is embedded within the different cultures associated with gender-based stereotypes. Another participant stated that they encounter challenges of being isolated and excluded by other schoolteachers. May (2016) asserts that a study participant

stated that they obtain challenges from all angles, including the Student Governing Body and their colleagues. Women assert that there is a lack of awareness of gender-based discrimination that female leaders experience because of their status as women. The participant stated that she had been in a position for more than 10 years and stated that she had still been experiencing gender discrimination 20 years into the post-apartheid era (May, 2016). This led to the female principal's sense of self-confidence and their ability to successfully lead the school to be undermined. This resulting in women being determined as incompetent due to the exclusion they encounter in the school by their colleagues (Meryl, 2016). Some women experienced positive attitudes from their colleagues as they received support from both male and female colleagues, however, many female principals have experienced more negativity and critical scrutiny as a result of assuming leadership role (Lumby, 2010).

2.5.9 The lack of mentoring

Lack of encouragement is another challenge for Black female educators assuming leadership positions. Addi-Raccah (2006) suggests that women in leadership position can act as a role model to other women who aspire to be in the same position one day and they can further act as social agents promoting gender equality and inclusion. The women can contribute in changing the structure of the gender power relations in school. However, it is also recognised in her study that women do act diversely towards other women than how the male school leaders act towards the men (Addi-Raccah, 2006).

A researcher, Mendez-Morse (2004) conducted a study of Latina educational leaders in the US in which it was found that the Black female educational leaders lack mentors and sponsorships, due to the double stereotypes they suffer emanating from their race and gender. Mendez-Morse (2004) found that the participants in her study obtained different, alternative sources available to them as opposed to the traditional mentoring that is offered to the males in leadership educational positions. She concludes that mentorship can also be favourably chosen and accessed horizontally, it doesn't always get accessed vertically (Mendez-Morse, 2004).

2.5.10 Lack of community support

According to May (2016), women experience lack of support from community members which poses as another challenge. There are gender-based perceptions about a women's ability to lead as a school principal when women are appointed in their leadership position and these perceptions are formed by parents and other teachers in that school.

A study conducted by Lumby and Azaola (2011) in the ZF Mgcawu District, the Northern Cape Province, asserts that the participants working as school principals in this district experiencing a challenge of not being accepted by the community as the school principal. One participant stated that there are times when people refuse to work with a woman employed as a school principal because they question her abilities as a school principal. Additional findings also state that community members such as the learners' parents are less willing to participate in activities that are school related (Lumby and Azaola, 2011). The learners' parents doubt the female principals' abilities and have to work twice as hard as male principals to show their capabilities, particularly in sport and athletic areas (Lumby and Azaola, 2011). Furthermore, the study findings state that women employed as school principals need the broader school community to cooperate in order for them to successfully lead and manage their schools. The study findings suggest that these gender-based stereotypes questioning women's abilities contribute to a lack of support that school principals experience and are part of the challenges experienced by female school principals (Lumby and Azaola, 2011).

This section reviewed literature on the issues that display as challenges against Black women employed as school principals. The conducted literature review highlights that Black women face various challenges that range from professional and personal ones as school leaders. The various challenges that are discussed above include the social expectations of leadership, structural barriers, gender issues, women's low self-esteem, cultural factors, traditional stereotypes, domestic responsibilities, glass ceiling, the lack of mentoring, and the lack of community support. These challenges that have been identified have an unfavourable effect on Black women in school leadership positions. These factors that affect Black female principals enables them to experience a sense of inadequacy and ineffectiveness resulting in them having to work twice as hard to be taken seriously in their roles. The next section will review the coping mechanisms that Black female leaders employ to overcome identified challenges.

2.6. Black female principals on overcoming challenges

This section aims to review a number of strategies that Black women employ to overcome the different challenges they encounter in their leadership roles. The literature reviewed suggests that Black female principals identified methods that may facilitate them to overcome the challenges they face in order to function more effectively and efficiently and these include:

gaining self-confidence, establishing a balance between personal and professional obligations, establishing supportive networks, gaining strength through prayer and spirituality, delegating workload, expanding ones educational qualifications, being fearless in pursuing leadership and power and further encouraging female principals to cultivate a desire to succeed (Tiao, 2006; Gupton, 2009; Shakeshaft & Grogan, 2011; May, 2016; Gupton & Slicks, cited in May, 2016).

2.6.1 Self-confidence

According to Tiao (2006), Black female principals can overcome their psychological barriers if they are focused on improving their confidence and strengths. Particularly if they face exclusion and isolation by their male counterparts and female subordinate staff members. Tiao's (2006) study about how Black female principals cope with the above-mentioned challenges underscores that “the future woman leader needs to know herself, be herself, do her best, use her strengths, recognise her limitations, view things positively, have confidence, establish quality support systems and take assertive action” (p.41). From the above findings it is evident that Black female principals improve their confidence, belief in their overall leadership abilities and overcome identified challenges.

2.6.2 Gaining strength from prayer and spirituality

According to Meryl (2016), Black female principals stated that religion is instrumental in helping them overcome work-related issues. Meryl's (2016) study emphasises that the female principals relied on prayer, especially before making important decisions that is school related. One particular participant stated how praying about a work-related issue has played a positive role in the school. Meryl (2016) observed that the participants placed significant value on their religions and a further observation was made that the female principals were church leaders and community leaders. In Meryl's (2016) study, it was found that one of the respondents was said to gain major support and strength as a community leader and a school principal due to the important role she plays in church. The research study results reveal prayer and spirituality proved to be an instrumental means to overcoming the challenge (Meryl, 2016).

2.6.3 Support structures

Although one of the biggest challenges faced by Black female principals is associated with family obligations, the participants in May's (2016) study felt that receiving support from their husbands, children, parents and their extended family was a useful coping mechanism (May, 2016). The participating female principals state that they would not be as successful if they had

not received support from their families. According to May (2016), some participants state that receiving support from staff members and subordinate teachers reduced the work-related challenges.

2.6.4. Establishing Balance between personal and professional responsibilities

According to Meryl's (2016) study, participants stated that a pivotal key to women successfully leading their schools is establishing a balance between professional and personal responsibilities. The women who had both careers and the role of being mothers need to be able to differentiate between professional and personal lives (Meryl, 2016). In order to establish a balance, women tend to routinely schedule their daily activities to be able to have equal time for personal responsibilities which include being a wife, a mother, a grandmother and make time for their extended family members and their professional work-related responsibilities as school principals (Meryl, 2016). Similarly, Shakeshaft and Grogan (2011) research studies involving 14 female principals were conducted on how they overcome the above-mentioned challenges and similar conclusions were drawn. The women emphasised an effective time management strategy that ensures that personal and professional obligations are fulfilled (Shakeshaft and Grogan, 2011).

2.6.5. Self-empowerment

Female school principals have a need to better themselves as school principals in order for them to feel empowered. Gupton (2009) states that women empower themselves by furthering their education at tertiary level and this further adds to the increasing number of South African women assuming school leadership positions. Gupton (2009) states that women who empower themselves by obtaining the relevant qualifications and further have a good working relationship with the Department of Education and the schools they are employed in have a better advantage of improving their careers and becoming prominent leaders (Gupton, 2009).

2.6.6 Delegating workload

According to May's (2016) research study, delegating tasks, workload or work-related duties to school secretaries, subordinate teachers, deputy principals and department heads such as Head of Department serves as an instrumental coping strategy. May's (2016) study findings suggests that the female school principal's delegation of work-related tasks and duties aids in minimising their work stressors. Additionally, women in leadership positions can reduce the

workload by assigning the teaching load to subordinate teachers to effectively cope with stresses and overcome work-related challenges (May, 2016).

2.6.7 Establishing networking programmes

May (2016) suggests that establishing a number of networking programmes for Black women employed as school principals where they can discuss school-related matters that are of concern and make informal decisions enables school principals to overcome challenges. Establishing networking programmes provides and encourages mutual support, and offers emotional support structures between Black female school principals that are facing similar challenges in their respective schools that they are leading (May, 2016). Furthermore, networking programmes assists Black female school principals an opportunity to establish a good working relationship with subordinate teachers and staff as the programmes offer career and work-related opportunities as well as emotional support (Mthembu, 2013). Networking systems encourage female leaders to talk about their challenges, experiences, and to share ways to overcome various challenges with others through interaction (Mthembu, 2013). There are various ways in which Black women employ to overcome challenges as school principals. In light of the above, this section delved deeper into the personal resources which Black women employ to overcome both their personal and professional challenges they experience. The Black female principals overcome challenges by being positive and improving their self-confidence, gaining strength through prayer and spirituality, relying on support structures such as family members, establishing a balance between personal and professional responsibilities, self-empowering themselves by furthering their education, delegating workload, and establishing a networking programme.

Research from the perspective from Black women as school principals and their experiences is considered as uncertain and undetermined due to the history and the controversy surrounding issues of gender and race (Dunbar, 2009). Black women face various challenges that hinder them from advancing to leadership positions. Therefore, this issue serves as a personal significance for the researcher as a South African Black woman. According to Maroosi (2006), men rarely experience challenges when they occupy leadership positions as much as women do. This study focuses on the experiences and challenges Black women face within leadership in the schooling context. In particular, the research investigates the experiences of Black female principals in the Clermont area. This research aims to identify the experiences and challenges of Black women working in leadership positions, more specifically those that are employed as

school principals as there is a lack of relevant South African research within this area. The study will further identify how these women overcome the identified challenges. The next section will review the theoretical framework that is used in the study to understand the challenges that Black female principals experience in their leadership positions.

2.7. Theoretical Framework

The Intersectionality Theory focuses on women who have a diverse backgrounds and shifts attention from using the traditional frameworks of middle-class White women to addressing issues for all women, thus illustrating alternative knowledge (Williams, 2013). Intersectionality Theory is a feministic theory which was developed by Crenshaw in 1989. It asserts that most people who are oppressed and marginalised in society fall under the multiple forms of minority and are socially stratified. It is a theory that identifies how the interlocking systems of power affect those that are oppressed and marginalised in society, mostly women of colour (Cooper, 2016). It focuses on the oppression of Black and other non-white women in society. Crenshaw (1989) considers the various forms of social stratification, such as, class, race, sexual orientation, and gender and how these factors do not function independently from each other. Crenshaw further discusses Black Feminism, arguing that the experience of being a Black female cannot be understood separately of either being a woman or being Black. Rather interactions with each other should be emphasised and they should further reinforce each other. The purpose of utilising the Intersectionality theory for this research study is that it plays a significant role in conceptualising the relations between systems of oppression which in turn defines several identities and social locations in hierarchies of privilege and power. Intersectionality asserts that women's lives are constructed by different and multiple systems of oppression because oppression is not a singular process (Walby et al., 2012). This plays an instrumental role in having a deeper understanding of the experiences and challenges that Black women face in leadership positions and the oppression and discrimination they continue to have in comparison to males and their White counterparts in these positions.

There is a need to have studies narrating the Black female assuming leadership positions as this allows for their unique experiences to be investigated and understood more thoroughly. By not having studies that solely focus on this, the researchers fail to value the unique experiences and challenges that Black women undergo in their positions.

As Parker (2001) states:

Black women standpoints are a valuable resource for understanding leadership. If organizational leadership is understood as a process of negotiating meanings within contradictory and paradoxical situations to forge viable solutions, then we would do well to listen closely to what the experiences of Black women leaders can reveal (p. 48).

The intersectionality theory is used as a theoretical framework for other research studies to document the standpoint and inner dialogue of Black women in leadership position (Tiao, 2006; Shakeshaft & Grogan, 2011; May, 2016). The intersectionality theory allows for insight into Black females understanding and experiences of leadership through the challenges based on being marginalised due to their gender and race (Williams, 2013). This framework allows the researcher to draw upon the Black women's experiences and to additionally detail their understanding of existence of Black feminism. It is asserted that the intersectionality theory will create a better understanding of intersections of gender and race as defined by Black female principals through their experiences while exploring similar and dissimilar aspects of their lives as school principals.

2.8. Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the literature that Black women encounter in their positions as school principals. Because the challenges they encounter may lead to feelings of inadequacy and insecurity, it is instrumental that Black females build a supportive network to allow for communication with other Black women in similar positions and this may assist them in reducing feeling isolated. Additionally, delegating workload is seen as an effective strategy as it allows for black women to balance the domestic, home life with their professional life as this results in them not feeling as though they are neglecting important parts of their lives. Furthermore, this chapter focused on the intersectionality theory as a theoretical framework to document the inner dialogues and the standpoint of Black women in leadership positions. In the next chapter, the methods that were used to conduct this study are discussed.

Chapter 3:

Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This research aims to identify the experiences and challenges of Black females employed as school principals. This chapter presents the research methodology used to elicit answers to the research questions. The description contained in this chapter is on the research questions, research design, sampling, data collection method, data analysis, and ethical consideration.

3.2. Research Questions

- 1.) How do Black women principles narrate their experiences of leadership in primary schools?
- 2.) What are the successes and challenges that Black female principles face in their leadership roles?

3.3. Research Design

This research study will follow a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is a type of social science research that collects and works with non-numerical data and that seeks to interpret meaning from these data that help understand social life through the study of targeted populations or places. Merriam (2009) states that “qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (p, 13). Qualitative research enables the researcher to be located in the world as it comprises of material and interpretive practices that makes the world more noticeable. These practices reshape the world as they transform it into a series of representations such as conversations, recordings, field notes, memos photographs and interviews. It involves the naturalistic and interpretative approach to the world as it enables the researcher to study things in their natural settings to make sense of the phenomena to understand how the individuals interpret them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

An interpretative phenomenology analysis (IPA) is used in this study which is a qualitative research approach. The aim of the IPA is to explore thoroughly how research participants make sense of their social and personal world (Smith and Osborn, 2007). It aims to explore people’s

personal experiences and how people perceive these experiences or events and to offer insights into how a given person, in a given context and how they make sense of a given phenomenon (Eatough and Smith, 2017). This analysis opposes the production of objective analysis of events and experiences, emphasizing on subjective analysis, basing it on the perspectives from participants. IPA also states that the research process is a dynamic process and the researcher gains an insider's perspective, thus enabling an active role for the researcher (Eatough and Smith, 2017). In IPA, the researcher gathers qualitative data from the respondents using interviews in which the interviewer adopts a facilitative approach for open-ended inquiry. IPA usually elicits personal accounts of some depth and richness data that will allow the researcher to work with detailed verbatim transcript (Smith et al., 2009). Additionally, Smith et al., (2009) states that "IPA is not trying to operationalize a specific philosophical idea, but rather draws widely, selectively, from a range of ideas in philosophy" (p. 6). Furthermore, Smith et al., (2009) also stated that "in IPA, we are concerned with examining subjective experience, but that is always the subjective experience of 'something' (p. 33). Smith et al. (2009) said it best when they asserted that "Making sense of what is being said or written involves close interpretative engagement on the part of the listener or reader" (p. 35). The main importance of IPA is its 'participants-oriented' traditional approach which is more concerned about examining the lived experiences and the meanings that research participants attach to these experiences. Smith et al. (2009, p. 35) stated that IPA "researcher is making sense of the participant, who is making sense of X." Therefore, IPA is understood to represent dual positions as the researcher is similar to the participant in attempting to draw on the daily experiences of participants to make sense of the world. On the other, the researcher is not the participant as they only understand the participants experiences through what is documented on it by the participant.

3.4.Sampling

This study will use a purposive sampling in the selection of research participants. Purposive sampling, also known as selective, judgmental and subjective sampling, is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their own judgement when selecting participants to include in their study (Etikan and Bala, 2017). It requires the researcher to have prior knowledge about the purpose of their study so they can properly select suitable participants (Etikan and Bala, 2017). The researcher deliberately selects participants due to the qualities they inhibit in order to answer the research questions. The researcher decides what needs to be known then sets out to find participants that will elicit appropriate responses to

questions by virtue of experience and information (Bernard, 2002). Purposive sampling identifies groups of individuals or individuals that are well-informed and have experience about the phenomenon of interest (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Furthermore, it is noted that participants must have the willingness to participate, must be available and the ability to expressive their opinions and experiences in an articulate manner (Bernard, 2002). Six participants were chosen to participate in the research study as there are approximately six Black female principals that were identified who occupy leadership positions in Clermont schools in the Durban area. Furthermore, the themes that were identified from the data collected were consistent across the findings which validated that the purposive sampling was an appropriate sampling method utilized for this study.

The sample of participants included six Black women who are employed as primary school principals in Clermont schools in the Durban area. The researcher interviewed six Black women as this enabled the researcher to receive a thorough understanding of the motivations and the challenges they encounter as leaders of their respective schools. In order to gain useful, and relevant information, the researcher ensured that all participants have been employed in the capacity of a school principal for at least 2 years.

3.5.Data collection methods

Semi-structured interviews were used as a method to collect data in this study. Semi-structured interviews are widely used in qualitative research (Edwards and Holland, 2013). It combines a pre-determined set of questions that prompt a discussion with the opportunity of allowing the researcher to further explore responses from the interviewee (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). They are used as a method of data collection as they result in the production of rich data which includes also includes observational data (Bjornholt and Farstad, 2012). It further allows the interviewer to probe the interviewee to elaborate and enable a line of enquiry that was introduced by the interviewee (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). A semi-structured interview is a mixture of both the structured and unstructured interviews therefore, it has the advantages of both. The structured interviews gives the interviewer comparative data that is reliable while the unstructured interviewers allows the interviewee to fully express their opinions and probe the interviewer with questions which encourages the generation of important, useful information that is important for the research (Kelleher and Conradin, 2020).

The researcher visited the participants at their respected schools and made appointments to conduct the interviews. The interviews were conducted at the school premises as the participants preferred that as the location to conduct interviews. The researcher introduced herself as a student conducting research for study purposes to the participants and asked the participants to read and sign the informed consent form for which they complied. Each interview lasted for approximately 45 minutes to an hour in length. Interviews were audio recorded and substantiated with field notes for data analysis purposes. Through semi-structured interviews, the researcher attempted to elicit participants experiences, their challenges and how participants cope with identified challenges.

3.6.Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used for data analysis. Thematic analysis is used for identifying the themes and patterns within qualitative data. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that thematic analysis provides critical skills that enables researchers to conduct many other kinds of analysis for research. It is independent of particular theoretical and epistemological perspectives, unlike several qualitative methodologies, making it a flexible method. This is an advantage, particularly from the viewpoint of teaching and learning, as there is a diversity of work in teaching and learning (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) 6-step framework is used for this research. Phase 1 includes familiarizing yourself with the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The researcher familiarized herself with the data. There were audio recordings and field notes that were transcribed which allowed the researcher to work through the data. The researcher started marking preliminary codes of data that helped to describe the content. Phase 2 involves generating initial codes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The researcher assigned codes to start organizing the data into meaningful groups. Phase 3 includes searching for themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The researcher looked at the list of codes and the associated extracts and then tried to collate the codes into broader themes that revealed tangible information about the researcher's data. Phase 4 includes reviewing themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The researcher reviewed and refined the themes that were identified in theme 3. The researcher read through the extracts related to the codes to identify whether they are supported, are in contradiction and to see whether they overlap. Phase 5 includes defining and naming themes that were identified in the previous steps (Braun and Clarke, 2006). As the theme was being described, the researcher was able to identify the story that the theme was telling and how this story relates to

other themes and to the overall research question. Subthemes were also identified under the themes. Phase 6 includes writing and producing the report (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis is the most suitable approach to use for this study as it allows researcher's clear and a more understandable framework for conducting a thematic analysis. The goal of a thematic analysis is to identify themes and patterns in the data that are instrumental or interesting for the research, and these patterns and themes are used to address the research. Thematic analysis allows us to interpret and make sense of data presented. Braun and Clarke (2006) differentiate themes between two levels: latent and semantic. The latent level looks beyond what has been said and '...starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations – and ideologies - that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data' (p.84). In contrast, semantic themes '...within the explicit or surface meanings of the data and the analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written.' (p.84). This theme doesn't solely focus on describing but rather focuses on interpreting and explaining work. The data will be transcribed verbatim and the textual interviews will be imported to Nvivo 9 which is a software package that enables the researchers to analyse and handle the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis can be used to analyse both large and small datasets. Thematic analysis at times can be compatible with phenomenology in that it can focus on participants' sense-making and subjective experiences; there is a long tradition of using thematic analysis in phenomenological research (Connelly and Peltzer, 2016). There are some differences between interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and thematic analysis; however, the end result of an interpretative phenomenological analysis and a thematic analysis is often found to be very similar. Often the final result of an doesn't seem to be any different from a thematic analysis on a small sample which is suitable for this study as interviews from six participants were conducted (Smith et al, 2009).

3.7.Ethical Considerations

Interviews have an ethical dimension. They involve interpersonal interaction and produce information about the human condition (Cohen et al. 2011) hence the need for the protection of the participants in the study. Informed consent was obtained from University of KwaZulu-Natal and from the Department of Education to conduct the research study on the leadership experiences of Black females employed as school principals in Clermont. Before conducting

the interviews, the researcher informed participants that informed consent was received to conduct this study. The researcher assured the participants that their identities will remain anonymous and that the research questions asked during the interview are purely for research purposes. Pseudonyms were used instead of real names in the reporting of data. The researcher undertook to uphold the autonomy of all participants. Participation was voluntary; therefore, participants were free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to themselves. Participants were asked to complete a consent form before the start of interviews.

Non-maleficence means that no harm or act against the best interest of others must befall of client when working with them (HPCSA, 2016). No harm was done on the participants during the data collection process which is in accordance with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA, 2016). Beneficence means acting in the best interests of clients even if my interests' may conflict with my own personal self-interests. This study aims to identify the experiences and challenges that Black females employed in leadership positions undergo which will benefit and fill the research gap that exists in South African literature regarding Black female leaders. According to the Health Professions Council of South Africa autonomy entails honouring the rights of all clients to make their own informed choices which ultimately shows their own self-determination (HPCSA, 2016). Participants were provided the freedom to withdraw or refuse to participate in the research study without any consequences. Confidentiality entails participants personal and private information always being treated as confidential in professional relationships (HPCSA, 2016). Pseudonyms were utilised to ensure that the participants names remain anonymous in reporting of the data which is in accordance with the Health Professions Council of South Africa.

3.8. Trustworthiness

3.8.1. Dependability

Dependability is defined as repeatable procedures that ensures stability of findings over time. Polit and Beck (2012) states that dependability involves the participants assessments of the findings, interpretations and recommendations of the study such that all are supported by the data that was collected from research participants. Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) states that to establish dependability the "consistency of the study processes" needs to be demonstrated.

Gasson (2004) proposes the following guidelines to establish dependability which includes defining ways to collect and analyse data; the result that the study aims to achieve should be articulated and recording these procedures so that other individuals can read and comprehend them which was demonstrated in detail.

3.8.2. Confirmability

According to Gasson (2004) confirmability is reached by “internal coherence of the research product” which is made up by including "the data, the findings, the interpretations, and the recommendations of the study" (Zhang and Wildemuth 2009, p. 7). The literature review discussion and the theoretical framework was conducted in an attempt to ensure that the assumptions and frameworks are applicable to the research findings.

3.8.3. Transferability

Transferability involves the degree to which the results of the qualitative research can be applied to another context or settings (Houghton et al, 2013; Polit and Beck, 2012). Research findings were constantly compared to one another during the analysis phase of the study in order to establish themes of the study. Furthermore, the background of the study and theoretical framework on which the study was based on was provided in an attempt to improve the transferability to other contexts.

3.8.4. Credibility

According to Shenton (2004) credibility tests what it intends to measure. Polit and Beck (2012) states that credibility refers to the truth of the data, how the researcher interprets and represents them and participants views. Shenton (2004) proposes that using well established research methods, techniques to encourage honest and open responses from participants (establishing rapport, refusal to partake and withdraw at any moment), sampling, examining previous research findings, reflective commentary by researchers and thick descriptions of the phenomenon under scrutiny. In order to ensure credibility, this study employed well-established research methods that the literature suggested was suitable for the study of Black women in leadership positions. Purposive sampling was selected as a method to identify participants for the study which includes Black women being employed as school principals. To encourage open and honest responses, the researcher established rapport with participants and encouraged them to refuse to participate and withdraw at any moment from the study without any consequences for them. The researcher constantly reflected on the literature during

the data analysis phase of the research to identify any themes, parallels and to facilitate the accurate interpretation of findings.

3.9. Conclusion

This chapter discussed the methods in which the study followed to conduct the research. The research design used is the interpretative phenomenology analysis which is a qualitative study. The sampling used is purposive as the researcher purposefully selected participants to answer the research questions. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data and the thematic analysis was used to analyse data. Ethical considerations and trustworthiness was also discussed in this section. In the next chapter, the data findings of the study are discussed.

Chapter 4:

Data Findings

4.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the findings of the research study which derives from the data collected from six Black female participants employed as school principals in various Clermont schools. A thematic content analysis was undertaken on five groups of data. These themes are identified and discussed briefly below.

4.2. Patriarchal Society

Living within a patriarchal society was identified as a common theme amongst participants. A patriarchal society is understood as a social system in which men are more privileged and hold a majority of power in society (Facio, 2013). Under this theme, it was found that related challenges around gender discrimination, domestic responsibilities as well as racial discrimination further impact on the ways in which Black Females are both viewed and experienced as leaders. These subthemes are described as follows:

4.2.1 Gender discrimination

Gender discrimination is when a person is unfairly discriminated against due to their sex/gender. There was general consensus that gender discrimination caused the participants to believe that school leadership should be reserved for males. Most participants stated that this resulted in a belief that women cannot lead schools effectively which can make them doubt their ability to attain and retain the position of being a school principal.

4.2.2. Domestic responsibilities

There was a general consensus that it is challenging to balance having a family and being a school principal and that age plays a significant role in being a successful leader. Some participants stated that they believe that younger female leaders need families which require their attention. Therefore, these participants felt that it can be a struggle to balance work duties with family duties. The participants believe that establishing a work-life balance can be a struggle for young female principals as they have young children to tend to.

4.2.3 Racial discrimination

Racial discrimination which is being unfairly treated and discriminated against due to the individuals' race and skin colour is an additional challenge that most participants revealed to experience as school principals. One of the participants mentioned that Black female principals experience racial discrimination from subordinates as the issue of Blackness plagues Black leaders as they are associated with laziness which results in them having to work twice as hard to prove that they are effective leaders. While some participants supported this view, others opined that their race has been favourable in some respects. One participant stated that she formed a partnership with the Spar supermarket to donate windows at the school and this was due to them being impressed that the school was being led by a Black female.

This study's findings revealed that due to the patriarchal society that exists, Black women experience gender discrimination, domestic responsibilities and racial discrimination which has made their experiences as school principals more challenging.

4.3. Institutional challenges

Institutional challenges are difficulties that are related to professional, religious, and educational organisations (Becky, 2016). These challenges were identified as the common theme that participants experience in their positions. Under these themes, it was found that the daily challenges participants encounter derives from most of the stakeholders of the school including school learners, management and parents of the learners. The sub-themes include issues of discipline, mental ill-health, management issues and lack of support. The subthemes are described as follows:

4.3.1 Issue of Discipline

There was a general consensus that there is an issue of discipline and behaviour with regards to school learners. Most participants stated that there are some learners that experiment with drugs at a young age, who form gangs and physically assault other learners by stabbing them etc. Most participants stated that absenteeism is also an issue as learners absent themselves without a valid reason that is given to the school. Late coming is an additional issue identified by participants. They revealed that it is difficult to effectively discipline male learners because of the way they were raised. They revealed that Black learners have a belief that they need to get beaten as a form of punishment. However, corporal punishment is now illegal, therefore,

participants must derive new methods of enforcing discipline which may be ineffective as male learners do not fear them. Most participants revealed they tend to seek male teachers to discipline male learners as they fear them more.

4.3.2 Learning disabilities and mental ill health

Some participants revealed that other challenges they encounter are mental health issues and learning disabilities. There are many children who cannot read or write, and some have learning disabilities. Some participants have identified that the learners' mental health is not taken care of which is the governments problem and there is no counselling offered for teachers and children. There is only employee assistance programmes and they are available outside of the school. Therefore, participants have to counsel learners and teachers who have personal issues that are affecting their work, which takes away time from their daily duties.

4.3.3 Lack of support

Most participants stated that the lack of support they received from the learners' parents is detrimental to the learners and prevents the school from being productive in terms of learning and teaching. Most participants revealed that some children are taking care of their parents and leaders must deal with counselling their learners if there are troubles at home such as parents getting a divorce. There is also an issue of homework not being checked and monitored as parents work till late.

This study revealed that it is difficult to be appointed as a school principal when subordinates are not supporting you. It is particularly more difficult when you have not been working at that school in which you attain the position as many subordinates will be doubtful of your abilities.

4.3.4 Management issues

There are challenges when one is in management as everyone has different leadership styles and it is important to work as a team. Most participants stated that there are also issues when there are males and females in the same management team as males tend to be more dominant and can be aggressive towards other female teachers. Participants have suggested that they are sometimes viewed as soft by their male counterparts. This results in further hampering their ability to lead meaningfully.

Due to the institutional challenges that exist, Black women experience issues that include issues of discipline, management issues, lack of support from learners' parents as well as a lack of community support. This lack of support that participants received was due to their gender, belief that they are soft and can be taken advantage of.

4.4 Positive Experiences

This study revealed a number of positive experiences related to work associated with school leadership. Most participants enjoy working with school learners who take pride in their work, some enjoy helping the community grow and produce successful future leaders while others enjoy giving school learners better facilities and opportunities. The subthemes identified are motivated learners, dedicated teachers, improving the school and community and they are explained as follows:

4.4.1 Motivated school learners

The general consensus revealed that working with diligent learners provides participants with joy and is the main reason why they love their job as school principals. Most participants enjoy working with school learners that are serious about their work. This gives them hope that there is a bright future in South Africa because they produce well adapted learners.

4.4.2 Dedicated schoolteachers

Some participants noted that they take pride in working with teachers that are both dedicated to their work and who enjoy teaching as a profession. This means they are taking their job seriously and they actually care about creating a better future for school learners. Some participants stated that when teachers share in their vision, it is a pleasurable working experience.

4.4.3 Improving the school and community

Most participants stated that they enjoyed serving the community of Clermont and also improving the schools which they lead. Improving the conditions of a township school was identified as important to participants as it meant they have served their purpose. Being able to obtain sponsors that provide learners with school uniforms and food is something that they reported as fulfilling.

This study findings revealed that the participants related their positive experiences to teachers who are dedicated and passionate about their work, motivated learners who take pride in their work and improving the school and the community they serve and lead.

4.5. Leadership

Omolayo (2007) defines leadership as a social influence process in which participation of subordinates is obtained voluntarily in an attempt to obtain goals of the organisation. The schools in Clermont are similar, they have the same low infrastructure, the same large classes of learners in the schools. This means the participants will demand an equal of teachers and subordinates. Thus the study revealed that participants have similar leadership traits and styles. The findings suggested that there are leadership traits and leadership styles that participants employ as school principals. The subthemes have been explained below:

4.5.1 Leadership Traits

Some participants revealed that transparency plays an instrumental role in being a successful leader as leadership is about disclosing relevant information to stakeholders and not making decisions unilaterally. By being transparent, subordinates and other relevant stakeholders feel included in the challenges and progress of the school which enables them to feel important. This ensures further commitment from them as they feel valued by management and the institution.

Most participants revealed that leading by example is imperative in successful leadership as subordinates look to them in setting good examples. Most participants stated that teachers respect and trust leaders more when they follow rules, procedures and when they do things the right way.

Some participants revealed that showing compassion for others makes one a better leader as it shows an individuals' human side. Some participants mentioned that they must not only think of the business side of things but should also show that they care about their subordinates as people.

4.5.2 Leadership styles

Some participants revealed that subordinates are encouraged to start leading themselves and be assertive when dealing with others. They revealed that leaders encourage their subordinates to be innovative and be risk takers as they are able to adapt to change. This is indicative of the democratic leadership style as subordinates are offered responsibility to complete their tasks and are involved in decision-making. Some participants revealed a display of trusting their subordinates with important decisions to be made which leads to them being encouraged to participate in the decision-making process and to lead their schools successfully. Some participants stated that being a parent assists them in being strong leaders as they are able to give the learners' parents advice on what they can do to have a great relationship with their children.

Most participants revealed that they encourage their subordinates to keep doing well which is indicative of the transformational leadership style. This style focuses on developing follower's potential, their needs and focuses on their growth and improving the value system of the subordinates. Most participants stated that their leadership style involves grooming other people, making them believe in themselves and promoting them to lead in different scenarios. This study revealed that the Black female leaders incorporate a number of different leadership styles namely the democratic leadership and the transformational leadership to manage their schools. There are specific leadership traits that are inherent in the Black leaders that have been their drive to success. The Black women tend to lead with compassion as they recognize that their subordinates are human instead of only thinking about the business side of things. They value trust and respect in their relationships; therefore, they lead by example to ensure the same is given in return which they state is their key to success.

4.6. Coping mechanisms

There are a number of coping mechanisms that participants have identified to assist in dealing with difficulties. The subthemes that have been identified as effective coping mechanisms for school principals include self-empowerment, gaining support, applying codes of conduct, and gaining strength through spirituality. The subthemes are explained as follows:

4.6.1 Code of conduct

The general consensus was that the way to mitigate the issue of discipline and behaviour is by relying on the school code of conduct and educating both learners and parents about it.

4.6.2 Spirituality

Spirituality is the use of religious beliefs and practices to decrease the emotional distress in one's life that is caused by stressful events of life (Saad and de Medeiros, 2012). Some participants stated that their religious beliefs play an instrumental role in which they deal with challenges they face. They state that being Christian has helped them overcome challenges as they pray to God for guidance.

4.6.3 Support

Although one of the biggest challenges faced by participants is associated with family obligations, some participants receive support from family members when undergoing challenges. In addition, most participants revealed that networking helps as some participants consult with other principals if they have an issue. There are other Black female principals that participants have as mentors who assist them in overcoming challenges. This has assisted them in overcoming work-related as well as domestic challenges.

4.6.4 Self-empowerment

Some participants revealed that the most effective way to overcome challenges is through education, as self-empowerment can enable you to prove your doubters wrong. It is difficult for people to vocalise their doubt for Black female principals when they have acquired an education. Thus acquiring qualifications through education can prove that Black female leaders are deserving of the position and thus makes them less doubtful.

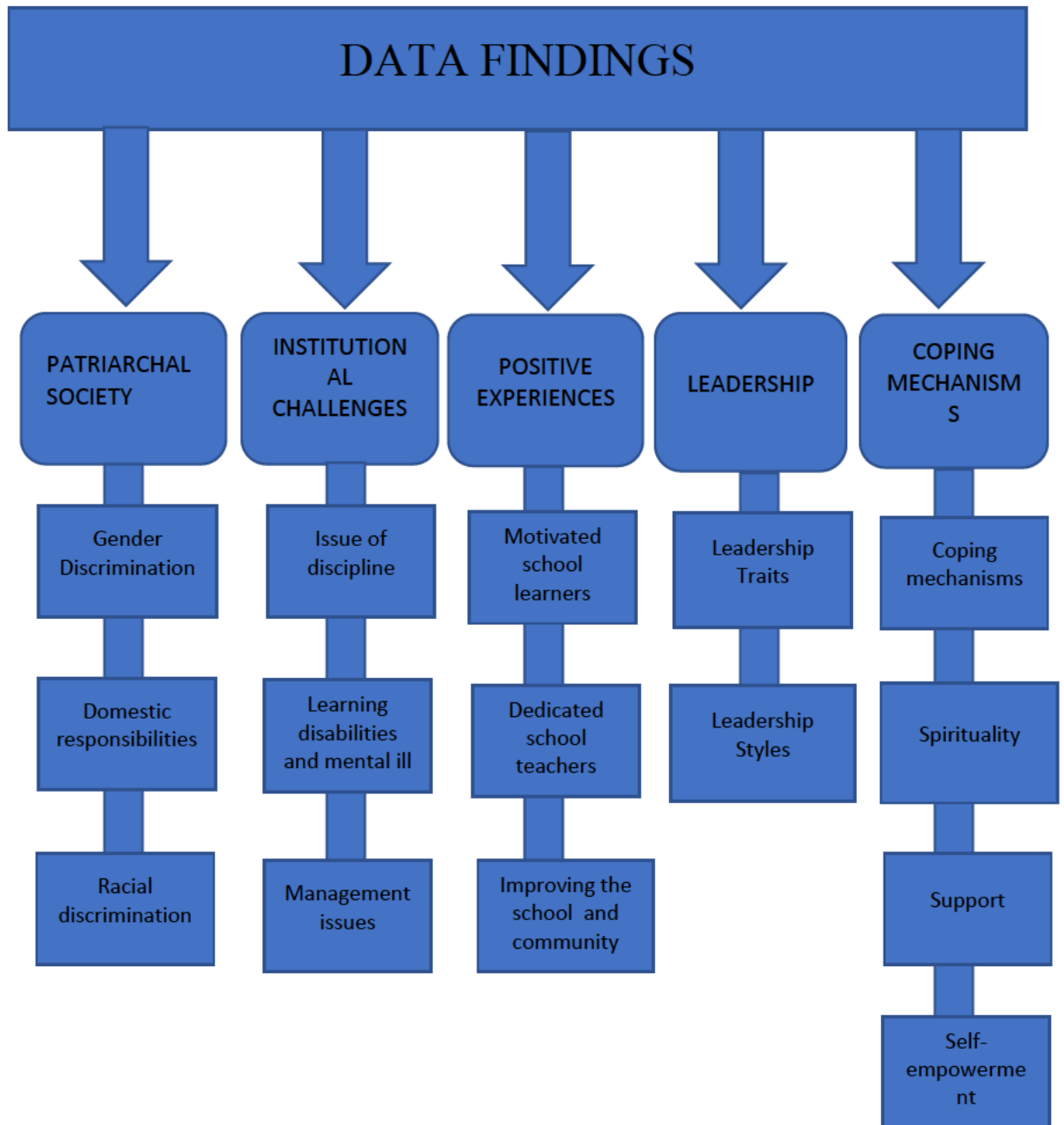
This study revealed that participants apply a number of coping mechanisms to overcome challenges such as establishing a supportive structure in the form of family, self-empowerment and establishing networks in order to overcome the difficulties encountered in their positions. Gaining strength through spirituality has further played an instrumental role as the participants seek the higher power for guidance before making decisions.

4.7. Conclusion

The findings that have emerged from this research study data revealed that Black female primary school principals experience a number of different barriers in their leadership positions that are related to the patriarchal society that exists and the institutional challenges identified.

Additionally, they have leadership traits that are inherent within them and employ different leadership styles which has enabled them to lead schools effectively. In the following chapter, there will be a discussion of findings based on the data that emerged from the data analysed.

Diagram 1: Presentation of the data findings



Chapter 5:

Discussion

5.1. Introduction

This chapter looks at a discussion of the five main themes that were briefly identified in chapter 4. Each theme is discussed below:

5.2. Patriarchal society

Living within a patriarchal society was identified as a common theme amongst participants. A patriarchal society is understood as a social system in which men are more privileged and hold a majority of power in society (Facio, 2013). The social arrangements privileges males over females and emphasises the inequality between men and women (Hunnicut, 2009). The patriarchal beliefs are believed to have been reinforced by customs, beliefs, and laws that are inherent in the organisation of society (Gosselin, 2010). In the South African and American society, the Black race has been less privileged and has held less power compared to the White race (Hunnicut, 2009). Patriarchy endorses traditional gender roles that arrange women in positions of inferiority and males in dominant positions. That is, men may adhere to patriarchal values in an effort to maintain their positions of power within their leadership positions and their households. The study findings revealed that we live in a patriarchal society, and because of that, Black women experience a number of challenges that have been identified as sub-themes which include gender discrimination, domestic responsibilities and racial discrimination in their positions as school principals. Discussed below is the sub theme of gender discrimination which focuses on the struggles that the principals undergo in their positions due to their gender.

5.2.1. Gender discrimination

Gender discrimination is when a person is unfairly discriminated against due to their sex/gender. Gender discrimination has been linked with gender roles and stereotypes as there is a belief that the male gender is superior to the female gender (Witt, 2017). Most participants revealed that some decisions they would make as school principals would not be trusted and supported by their male subordinates because they are female. Some participants stated their struggle to obtain sponsors for the school because of their gender. The study revealed that community members struggle to accept authority from a woman which poses as an additional

barrier and it is difficult to attain a leadership position when subordinates are not supporting you. The participants stated that the lack of support directed at them leads to feelings of insecurity and loneliness. For example, as noted in the narrative in participant C that *A negative experience is the fact that I have to work harder to prove myself than a male would in my position. When people don't trust me to lead the school as any minor thing that happens-they will say it cause this school is being led by a woman. I feel alone sometimes so there is an element of loneliness.* Similarly, this was supported by participant E that *there are some colleagues who will tell you that they come from male lead institutions and that males are good and doubt women. It is up to you to prove them otherwise therefore it is a continuous educating people that you are worthy and not allowing their mentality to break you and your actions.* One particular participant stated that even the interviewing process proves to be intimidating when you are females. Participant D mentioned that *it is difficult to believe that you will be a successful candidate for the position as it is intimidating when there is all male panel and no females. Males have a preference for one another, and some tend to doubt a female's skills and abilities to lead. This creates feelings of insecurity and self-doubt as it causes one to think they will not be successful in attaining the position of a school principal.*

Furthermore, the current study revealed that it is particularly more difficult when participants are new to the school situation. Many subordinates under the new principal will be doubtful of her abilities and think she is incapable of being an effective leader. As far as males are concerned this may not be a challenge for them. This reiterates the point that Black women must work twice as hard as school principals to prove their capabilities more than a male in the same position would. This is likely because of the gender and the gender-based-stereotypes associated with the role of being female.

The literature indicates that the role of sexuality, gender and power plays a significant role in shaping the experiences for women in leadership positions (Piterman, 2008). Hensen (2014) states that home and work responsibilities are interconnected, and they influence gender conflicts in the workplace as women continue facing frustrations and conflicts at work despite claims of eradicating discrimination. Hensen (2014), states that the stereotypes that are associated with how women and men act plague educators as they will encounter conflicts and challenges if they divert from acting within the confines of stereotypes.

These findings are supported by Lumby and Azaola's (2011) findings who states that there are times when people refuse to work with a woman employed as a school principal because they question her abilities as a school principal. This notion is supported by May (2016) who asserts that women experience lack of support from community members as there are gender-based perceptions about a women's ability to lead as a school principal. This happens when women are appointed in their leadership position and when perceptions are formed by community members, parents and other teachers in that school (May, 2016).

A considerable body of literature reveals that the societal expectations of leadership has hindered Black women being accepted as effective leaders not only in institutions but also in society, hence the reason behind a lack of community support for women. This finding is supported by Brundrett et al., (2005, p.37) who has asserted that "leadership is a gendered concept" and he further asserts that the qualities of a rightful leader are typically assumed to be male despite females assuming leadership positions. There are societal expectations that influence women's roles and positions of what they are expected to do at home. Brundrett et al., (2005) states that "the identification of leadership with men is deeply ingrained in our understanding of society and family and this continues even though considerable changes have been taking place in terms of work participation." However, there is still an "automatic association with support and nurturing with women and an association of men with work in the public sphere" (p.38).

Most participants revealed to be undermined by male principals and male teachers as they are deemed to be too soft and weak. This finding is supported by Brundrette et al, (2005) who reveals that men are typically described as being active and strong while women are described as passive and weak and that individuals tend to value the achievement orientation that is ascribed to males more than the affiliation and nurturing that is associated with females. Most participants stated that some teachers would not follow instructions they would give them or they would question their decisions because they are female. This finding is supported by Heilman et al, (2004), who asserts that stereotypical beliefs such as those that imply that women are indecisive, emotionally unstable and not being competitive continue to affect Black female principals negatively.

Black women in leadership positions experience gender discrimination as leadership has been historically understood to be for males instead of females. Black female leaders have to work

harder due to the historical implications that attribute males to gender roles and females to housework and submissive roles. As a result, females have to work twice as hard to prove their worth as effective leaders. Discussed below is the sub-theme of the domestic responsibilities that the participants have that have made it difficult for them to balance family and work life.

5.2.2 Domestic responsibilities

Some participants note that it is challenging to balance having a family and being a school principal due to the domestic responsibilities that women have at home. They further note that age plays a significant role in being a successful leader. For example, Participant A stated that *the role of a principal came at the right time because I have older children that have finished school and I can do and finish all my work at school without having to rush home and I have time to do all my work at home if I need to*. Similarly, this was supported by Participant D who stated that *younger female leaders have children that are young in age and husbands that need their attention therefore, it can be a struggle to balance work duties with family duties as they need to attend to their wifely duties such as cooking and cleaning*.

Some participants revealed that it is much easier when you have grown children as they can focus on their school work while they assert that younger female leaders have children that are young in age and husbands that need their attention, therefore, it can be a struggle to balance work duties and family duties. This correlates with Moorosi's (2007) study, who revealed that Black female leaders having their own children poses as a challenge during the early years of their careers as they found it hard to balance their personal and their professional responsibilities (Moorosi, 2007). One participant in Moorosi's study revealed that "The fact that you had children, it is difficult to be a working mom and especially when I got divorced... I had to really make compromises with my children to make sure that I am there when I am needed and that I could do what I wanted to do" (Moorosi, 2007, p.41). This is due to the gender roles that women have historically been placed such as childcare, housework and wife roles and these roles continue to manifest in modern times. This originated from the biological considerations that women need to nurse their children and men must be breadwinners (Moorosi, 2007).

Furthermore, the current study found that the women who had both careers and the role of being mothers need to be able to differentiate between professional and personal lives which correlates with (Meryl's, 2016) study. Meryl suggests that in order to establish a balance,

women may need to routinely schedule their daily activities to be able to have equal time for work-related responsibilities and personal responsibilities which include being a wife, a mother and to make time for their extended family members (Meryl, 2016).

The overall understanding of the current study findings suggests that it is much easier for women to establish a balance between their personal and professional duties. At a later stage in their lives and when their children have grown up, it may be more challenging to establish a balance between home and work. This compares negatively to women have young children and they have to give their children excessive attention. Racial discrimination was identified as a subtheme to patriarchal society as Black leaders experience discrimination due to their race in their positions as school principals. Discussed below is the subtheme of racial discrimination that the participants experience in their positions that has contributed to their struggles to be taken seriously as school principals.

5.2.3. Racial discrimination

Racial discrimination, which is being unfairly treated and discriminated against due to the individuals' race, and skin colour, is an additional challenge that most participants revealed to experience as school principals. The study findings revealed that some participants experience racial discrimination in the schools they lead from both subordinates and school learners because of their race. For example, Participant D narrated that *racial discrimination did exist when I first started working at the school. I was a Black leader amongst majority Indian teachers, therefore it was problematic at first as some teachers would not talk to me, some would gossip behind my back and some would not greet me back.* Similarly, this is supported by Participant F who stated that *in 2014, it was the first time having a Black person in management. In the past, the majority of the learners were of Indian Descent but now the majority has become Black children. For example, I had a conversation with a parent who was telling me that people were asking her why she was keeping her children in that school. So, when you are Black, people don't think you are capable enough. They keep talking about the good old days as if you came in the school and everything changed for the worse. That is the mentality.* This mentality results in racial discrimination.

The current study revealed that it is harder to be accepted as a school principal when you are leading subordinates of different races. Furthermore, the issue of Blackness plagues Black leaders as they are associated with laziness which makes them have to work twice as hard to

prove that they are effective leaders and to remove the stigma that is associated with their race. This study finding correlates with the study conducted by Olubunmi (2013) regarding overcoming the stereotypical barriers in higher education management in Nigeria in which it was found that Black women were regarded and seen as subordinates and second-class citizens according to the African traditional belief. This traditional view has been embedded in the African day to day life that starts at home and is manifested in the larger communities in African societies (Olubunmi, 2013). Due to the patriarchal society that we live in, Black women are undermined and described as weak and passive while men, regardless of race, are described as strong and active. Therefore, due to the historical association of the Black race with being subordinates and second-class citizens, it has proven to be a challenge for others to accept authority from Black women. Black female leaders must work harder to be accepted as true leaders and to break the stigma of Blackness being associated with laziness that continues to plague society.

Intersectionality Theory: Understanding the complex experiences of Black female school principals.

The theoretical framework of this study is the Intersectionality theory. Intersectionality Theory refers to a feministic theory which was developed by Crenshaw in 1989. It plays a significant role in conceptualising the relations between systems of oppression which in turn defines several identities and social locations in hierarchies of privilege and power. The patriarchal society has caused discrimination against Black females in the form of gender and race. The patriarchal society has made it difficult for Black females to assume leadership positions due to the historical association of Black females to domestic and inferior roles. Piterman (2008) asserts that there are some studies that have identified an association between the underrepresentation of females at senior level. This underrepresentation is due to the patriarchal society that has associated women in inferior roles and males in leadership, more dominant roles. The role of sexuality, gender and power plays a significant role in shaping the experiences for women in leadership positions (Piterman, 2008). The interlocking systems of power affect those that are oppressed and marginalised which includes the study participants as they are Black females occupying leadership positions. The interlocking systems of power has historically viewed women as nurturing and caring and belong in a submissive and domesticated role which persists till today while men, are viewed as having the most power in society as they are seen as more capable of being effective leaders because of their gender, irrespective of race (Cooper, 2016). To unlock these inherent interlocking systems of power,

the participants have to work twice as hard to be taken seriously as school principals and as leaders in society.

Additionally, most participants suggested that it is more challenging to balance personal and professional life as younger female principals need to tend to their younger children as opposed to older female principals who have older children. The Intersectionality theory reveals a social stratification such as race, gender, and age that plays a role in how Black women experience their leadership roles. Young Black women are marginalized because of their race, gender, and age.

The South African research in relation to the Black female school principals is limited and most of the literature was drawn from international studies. This is due to Black women being underrepresented in these positions. This current study suggests that this needs to be rectified and more Black females must be appointed as school principals despite the racial and gender discrimination they face in these positions. The current study recommends that policy makers and the government review current gender policies in ensuring that they are more effective while addressing issues that are raised by women in networking programmes. There should be regular implementation of additional programmes such as workshops and meetings where educational stakeholders are made aware of gender policies that are directed at women in educational leadership positions.

5.3. Institutional challenges

Institutional challenges are difficulties that are related to professional, religious, and educational organisations (Becky, 2016). Institutions are generally established and are devised by binding laws, legal orders which set regulations on what constitutes acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour (Leftwich, 2006). Actors are constrained through sets of incentives or disincentives that enable human behaviour to be directed in a particular direction which creates structure that are stable and promotes efficiency in human interactions (Andres and Argentina, 2016). Institutions provide order and structure by aligning actions and expectations of individuals in schools, religious and other professional spaces as well as in society (Andres and Argentina, 2016). According to Fligstein (2001) Institutions define and shape preferences and power in society, while establishing the cognitive frames and shared meanings that influence how people perceive other people's behaviour. Although it is stated that humans consciously

design institutions to assist them in meeting their goals, it is rather argued that institutions evolve based on the preferences of the cultural and historical context rather than it being human designed (Andres and Argentina, 2016). These historical and cultural contexts have established men to be leaders in schools and communities as these inherent structures have made it difficult to accept women as school leaders. Institutional challenges were identified as the common theme that participants experience in their positions. There are four subthemes that were identified. Under these themes, it was found that the daily challenges participants encounter derive from most of the school stakeholders which include school learners, management and parents. Discussed below is the sub theme of the issue of discipline which refers to a daily struggle for school principals as they find it difficult to discipline school learners.

5.3.1. Issues of discipline

To be disciplined is to be obedient to authority and to follow instructions (Krishnan, 2009). To correct disobedient behaviour is to exert multiple forms of punishment. Discipline is normally used in situations or contexts where a distinct chain of authority exists such as in schools and/or other institutions (Krishnan, 2009). Maphosa and Mammen (2011) states that the issue of discipline has had a central focus both nationally and internationally. These findings correlate with Bisetty's (2001) studies who states that learners are generally disrespectful, noisy and rowdy in classrooms directed at their educators. Other forms of indiscipline include the joining of gangsters, the use of drugs, foul language, fighting, bullying and lack of attendance at school without valid reasons. This lack of discipline invariably leads to a drop in educational standards in South African schools (Wright and Keetly, 2003). The South African policy on school discipline has banned the use of corporal punishment by educators at schools which has made it difficult to discipline school learners (Mugabe and Maposa, 2007). Human rights organisations regard corporal punishment as a dehumanizing method of curbing misconduct. Nwideeduh (2003) states that parents have been accused of not raising responsible children which causes problems for educators. This lack of discipline manifests itself in multiple ways which includes criminality, drug and alcohol abuse, lack of willingness to do homework, vandalism, and truancy (Douglas and Strauss, 2007).

There was an issue of discipline that was identified in the current study. Some participants revealed that they encounter issues of discipline and behaviour with regards to school learners. Participants revealed that it is a daily struggle as most learners come from female headed

households and absent fathers. The issue of authority is a challenge as boys at times will believe that they should not be disciplined by a female, therefore, it is a struggle to enable them to understand that they need to listen to authority and abide by school rules. For example, Participant F narrates that *the issue of authority is such a challenge as boys will sometimes believe that they are better than their own mothers so they come with that attitude so the school principals have to make them understand that they are the authority and they have to abide by the school rules. There are some learners that experiment with drugs at a young age, who form gangs and physically assault other learners by stabbing them.* Similarly, Participant B stated that *absenteeism is an issue as learners absent themselves without a valid reason that is given to the school. Late coming is an additional issue from both the school learners and teachers.* One participant in particular revealed that it is difficult to effectively discipline certain learners because of the way they were raised. The findings stated that Black children believe that they need to get beaten up to listen as a form of punishment. However, corporal punishment is now illegal, therefore, due to this, the school principals have to come up with new methods of enforcing discipline. For example, Participant D stated that *I teach Black children and the Black children I teach believe that they need to get beaten up to listen as a form of punishment. However, now there is no corporal punishment so we have had to come up with new ways of disciplining children, however, this has been proven to be problematic as when you tell them to sit in the corner or pick up litter, they will not see that as punishment so they will still be naughty because they don't get beaten.*

Maphosa and Mammen (2011) states that the issue of discipline has had a central focus both nationally and internationally. These findings correlate with Bisetty's (2001) studies who states that learners are generally disrespectful, noisy and rowdy in classrooms directed at their educators. Other forms of indiscipline include the joining of gangsters, the use of drugs, foul language, fighting, bullying and lack of attendance at school without valid reasons. This lack of discipline invariably leads to a drop in educational standards in South African schools (Wright and Keetly, 2003). The South African policy on school discipline has banned the use of corporal punishment by educators at schools which has made it difficult to discipline school learners (Mugabe and Maposa, 2007). Human rights organisations regard corporal punishment as a dehumanizing method of curbing misconduct. Nwideeduh (2003) states that parents have been accused of not raising responsible children which causes problems for educators. This lack of discipline manifests itself in multiple ways which includes criminality, drug and alcohol

abuse, lack of willingness to do homework, vandalism, and truancy (Douglas and Strauss, 2007).

The current study revealed that the issue of discipline includes absenteeism, lateness, and behavioural problems from both learners and subordinates. The participants revealed that it is difficult to discipline learners because of how they are raised. There are policies that have been implemented which have removed corporal punishment at schools, therefore, it has made it difficult to discipline school learners. Discussed below is the sub theme of the lack of support that school principals experience from subordinates, learners' parents and community members.

5.3.2. Lack of support

Support refers to strategies and resources that increase the functioning of humans (Luckasson et al., 2002). Human functioning is increased when the person-environment is decreased and personal outcomes are enhanced. Support services include all human and other resources that offer support to individual learners, subordinates, school principals and to all aspects of the system. Support services includes non-educational services that is offered to individual schools so that their education system can run smoothly. These services improve the effectiveness and quality of the educational activities based on the needs of the groups intending to support (Wolhuter, 2000; Steyn et al., 2000). Educators experience different kinds of problems that cause them stress which impedes their efficiency, execution of their responsibilities and duties. The issues that arise may include professional problems, personal and personality problems, vocational problems, socio-political-economic problems and environmental problems (Steyn, 2000). With regard to the current study, some participants noted that it is difficult to attain the position as a school principal when subordinates are not supporting them. It is particularly more difficult when they have not been working at that school in which they attain the position of a school principal as many subordinates will be doubtful of their abilities and think they are incapable of being a leader before being given a chance but other males do not have to experience the same challenge. Some participants further revealed that they felt rejected as they were not from the area that they were appointed to be a school principal in. For example, Participant C narrated that *There were some teachers that didn't trust me with the position and I became doubtful at some point as there were some people who had been here for longer than me so they had an advantage that I didn't have. I am not from Clermont; I am from Hammersdale so some people were saying we should get someone from within the area instead of getting someone from the outside. I came to this school then I became a school principal*

immediately afterwards, so some people are saying it was too quick. Similarly, this was supported by Participant E who stated that there are some colleagues who will tell you that they come from male lead institutions and that males are good and doubt women. It is up to you to prove them otherwise therefore it is a continuous educating people that you are worthy and not allowing their mentality to break you and your actions. Later they will become convinced that it is not whether you are male or female but rather is whether you can actually deliver on your work and what is expected.

These findings correlate with Lumby and Azaola's (2011) study who conducted a study in the ZF Mgcawu District, the Northern Cape Province. They reported school principals in this district experienced a challenge of not being accepted by the community as the school principal. One participant in their study stated that there were times when people refused to work with a female school principal because they question her abilities as a school principal. Lumby and Azaola (2011) state that this lack of support from community members causes a lack of confidence for Black female principals which makes them doubt their leadership skills. Furthermore, May (2016) asserts that women experience a lack of support from community members as there are gender-based perceptions about a women's ability to lead as a school principal when women are appointed in their leadership position and these perceptions are formed by parents and other teachers in that school (May, 2016).

The current study's participants stated that the lack of support they received from the learners' parents is detrimental to the learners and prevents the school from being productive in terms of learning and teaching. Most participants revealed that some children are taking care of their parents and leaders must deal with counselling their learners if there are troubles at home such as parents getting a divorce. Participant C stated that *some children are taking care of their parents and they have to take their parents to the hospital. If a learner is being abused, as a leader, they have to deal with it e.g. parents are divorcing, it will affect the learner so they have to get counselling for the learner.* Similarly, this is supported by Participant D who narrated that *There is also a lack of participation by the school learners' parents. Some parents are not living with their children and instead are gallivanting with their boyfriends and don't end up sleeping so the grandparents are raising the school children.*

Similar findings were obtained in Lumby and Azaola (2011) who states learners' parents are less willing to participate in activities that are school related (Lumby and Azaola, 2011). This

is attributed to the learners' parents doubting the female principals' abilities and have to work twice as hard as male principals to show their capabilities, particularly in sport and athletic areas to the parents of the school learners (Lumby and Azaola, 2011). The lack of support that they receive from the learners' parents from home is detrimental to the learners and the school being productive. These problems are the ones that hinder the performance of the school children (Lumby and Azaola, 2011). Discussed below is the subtheme of management issues which participants particularly experience when males make up the majority of management.

5.3.3. Management issues

Management forms an integral part of every school principal activity as it encompasses and is interconnected with the generic term of school administration. Place (2013) explains management as a process of applying strategies and material and human resources in the aim of reaching organisational goals and objectives (Place, 2013). In the current study, principal's management duties include, for example teaching and leading in the school, managing the school as an organisation, working with and for the community, shaping the direction and developing the school, and empowering and developing self and others (Department of Basic Education, 2019). Some participants revealed that there are challenges when one is in management as everyone has different leadership styles but they maintain that it is important to work as a team. For example, participant C stated that *in management sometimes you will communicate that something has to be done a certain way but it takes time for some people to see things your way and how doing things a certain way will be more effective*. Some participants of the current study revealed that when working in a team, there has to be one goal for the outcome to be successful. Some participants stated that there are also issues when there are males and females in the same management as males like to be more dominant and can be more aggressive towards other teachers. For example, Participant D stated that *when a teacher has not submitted in their work on time, male Head of Departments will be aggressive towards them instead of finding out why they haven't submitted on time*. Similarly, participant A supports this by stating that *they are times when male teachers, Head of Departments and Deputy Principals still look at the woman as soft and use their iron head approach to resist female school principals and other females making decisions and delegating duties*.

These management issues are supported by Lumby's (2010) study who reported that 47% of the survey respondents in his study stated that they experienced sexist attitudes, such as being ignored, being disregarded, and not receiving the respect from men in meetings. One Black

female principal stated the difficulty of attending a district meeting is that the women never had the opportunity to speak and only the men's opinions would be asked (Lumby, 2010). Female principals would experience sexism from male subordinates and other male principals from other schools as they found it difficult to have a female leader (Lumby, 2010).

Furthermore, Valian (cited in Hansen, 2014) states that a female assuming a leadership position is at a disadvantage as she will not assume the same status as an equivalent male leader as she will not be taken as seriously as a leader. Additionally, female leaders have to worry about being ignored as their ideas are less likely to be considered and implemented to than their male peers. Each time a woman's ideas are ignored, subordinates are less likely to take her seriously and she loses prestige (Hansen, 2014). Additionally, women have learnt to interact with men in such a way that men are more capable in succeeding and women play an instrumental role in empowering the males. This has resulted in certain perceptions that have had serious implications in the workplace (Gilbert and Rader's, 2001). Additionally, male and female challenges differ as males will experience conflicts that derive from some men wondering about the "manliness" of men who would prefer taking orders from others instead of being leaders themselves and being the ones giving orders (Hansen, 2014). Brundrette et al, (2005) states that men are typically described as being active and strong while women are described as passive and weak and that individuals tend to value the achievement orientation that is ascribed to males more than the affiliation and nurturing that is associated with females. Makura (2010) have stated that good management is ascribed in masculine terms therefore, good managers are believed to be men (Makura, 2010). Men are encouraged to remain powerfully intellectual, have high esteem and prestige while maintain his masculinity as in order to succeed, a male leader requires "masculine abilities and traits as a successful man can reasonably credit himself with the abilities and traits that are necessary for success and feel masculine. A man's success and his masculinity reinforce each other" (Valian, cited in Hansen, 2014, p.18).

The current study reveals that males have a tendency to dominate and exert aggression towards female subordinates as they undermine women. This proves to be a challenge for Black female leaders and teachers as they are made to feel inferior which makes them doubt the power they have in their roles. Discussed below is the subtheme of learning disabilities and mental ill health that affects the school learners' learning experience.

5.3.4. Learning disabilities and mental ill health

World Health Organisation (2005) defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community” (p.1). According to Ainscow and Cesar (2006) rather than conceptualising disability as deficiency for the school learner, emphasis should be placed on adapting the environment to facilitate a positive outcome for all learners with mental ill-health and learning disability. Learning disabilities are a form of learning difficulties that may or may not be diagnosed (Department of Education and Learning, 2019). School children with learning disabilities are predisposed to difficulties with their learning regardless of their school environment, the circumstances they are born into and/or the quality of teaching they have experienced (Department of Education and Learning, 2019). Some participants revealed that other challenges they encounter are mental health issues and learning disabilities amongst school learners. There are many children who cannot read or write, and some have learning disabilities. For example, participant E narrated that *we have tried to open a remedial class but sometimes parents are in denial because there are times when a child can do well in the lower grades but may struggle in the higher grades thereafter parents start questioning assessment abilities of the school instead of accepting that their child may need to be a part of remedial class.* Some participants have identified that the learners’ mental health is not taken care of which is the governments problem and there is no counselling offered for teachers and children. For example, Participant A stated that *there is only employee assistance programmes and they are available outside of the school. Therefore, I have to counsel learners and teachers who have personal issues that are affecting their work, which takes away time from their daily duties. Even when children have problems that need social workers, it is hard to get them to help you which affects the school learners negatively. These problems are the ones that hinder the performance of the school children.*

Similar findings were obtained regarding mental ill health by the World Health Organisation (2014). Mental ill-health is distributed according to the gradient of the most economic disadvantaged in society as the poor and the marginalised suffer from mental illness disproportionately (Patel, et al., 2010). There is an association with mental illness with material disadvantage, low educational attainment, lack of concentration in classrooms and unemployment (Melzer, 2004). Mental ill health was found in poorer groups, women and among those who lack social support (Melzer, 2004). Mental disorders lead to decreased employment and income, which leads to further poverty and in turn increases the risk of mental

ill health. The people on the lower end of the social hierarchy tend to experience less favourable environmental, social and economic conditions and have had few support and coping mechanisms (World Health Organisation, 2014).

South Africa is a developing country that has large disparities between wealthy and poor that derived from the apartheid dispensation. Many people live in poverty, are unemployed and lack educational qualifications and skills (Naicker, 2018). There is a need to ensure that the right level of education is given to all school learners from an early stage to ensure that the cycle breaks. Families who are impoverished generally lack adequate resources to ensure that children achieve school readiness. Learner underachievement at school is contributed by poverty and the parent's low levels of education (Naicker, 2018). The most disadvantaged learners are Black and, therefore, are the least successful in the education system due to the Apartheid legacy. The socio-economic conditions in families is likely to determine the lack of learning environment at home (Naicker, 2018). This is because, there are limited educational resources in the form of few books, lack of oral language, little interest in school work and a lack in reading which hinders early literacy. The main barriers that deprive learners access to a single system of education that benefits all learners from all races includes (1) socioeconomic factors, (2) language (3) negative attitude, (4) parental attitude (5) lack of appropriate and clear policy (Naicker, 2018). These barriers have contributed to the learning disabilities that school learners, particularly Black or minority learners, experience compared to White learners who attend urban schools and have a good socio-economic background. Furthermore, too many learners in South Africa remain in the margins of society as a result of historical factors such class and race (Naicker, 2018). Overall, school learners with low socioeconomic backgrounds, low infrastructure and who have parents with low levels of education are more affected by learning disabilities and mental ill health rather than learners who derive from urban, more advantaged backgrounds.

The literature findings support the current study findings by stating that Black female leaders transfer their motherly nature to their learners, particularly if their learners need assistance such as counselling. Women being able to transfer their motherliness to school learners enables them to have a strong emotional attachment to the school learners and offer counselling (Lumby, 2010). Mothering the school learners brings about a direct transfer of positive values that they assert at home, to the school learners (Lumby, 2010). This is essential as many school learners and staff are living in areas where there is a lack of mental health care facilities therefore

learners and the subordinates are unable to seek professional counselling. Hence, a mothering style of leadership is seen as a positive and an imperative foundation to establish an effective learning culture which requires the right mental capacity (Lumby, 2010).

It is imperative for educators to understand learning disabilities as a risk factor for difficulties with mental health and to foster support and an environmental circumstance for students with disabilities to develop a positive mental health outcome (Jarvis and McMillan, 2013). The school needs to recognise and understand these issues to reduce the potential risk factors at both the environmental and individual level in order to increase meaningful participation. Schools need an inclusion of special education field, where classroom practices are designed in a way to remove barriers and to increase progress, a sense of belonging for learners who have special educational needs and have disabilities (Jarvis and McMillan, 2013).

Intersectionality Theory: Understanding the complex experiences of Black female school principals.

The Intersectionality theory enables an understanding of how race/ethnicity, gender and social class and other forms of inequality perpetuate institutional challenges. It seeks to understand the individual and collective struggles for equality by placing the experiences of Black women and other marginalised groups as the point of focus. Dill and Zambrana (2009) asserts that attention is directed to the broader institutional context of these struggles by disclosing how "interconnected domains of power organize and structure inequality," (p. 5). Furthermore, it encourages "social justice and change by linking research and practice to create a holistic approach to the eradication of disparities and to changing social and higher education institutions" (Dill and Zambrana, 2009, p.5). The current study participants experience a lack of support from the learners' parents, community members and subordinates due to their race and gender. When a Black woman assumes the role of a school principal their abilities are questioned as leadership has been historically viewed to be for white males. The institutional challenges that are experienced may be explained by males as being due to the school being led by Black females and may think that if a male was leading, there would be less challenges experienced. Additionally, there are management issues that Black female leaders experience that includes their decisions being undermined due to their race and gender which causes a power struggle with male managers/subordinates. Male managers will be aggressive with the Black female leaders/subordinates and exert their power over them. Black women are

increasingly assuming leadership positions of being a school principal in places where they were previously marginalised with respect to gender and race as white males predominately assumed these positions. This shift in the positioning of race, class and gender through the changing power relations has led to patterns of institutionalised racism. There are surveillance strategies that Black women experience when they enter institutionalised spaces of whiteness from which they were historically barred from. Collins (1998) states that Black women are “watched” in the work environments to see how they carry out their duties as school principals compared to the “white other”. (Ahmed, 2012). This certain type of surveillance can seem benign but is very distressing and evokes negative feelings for Black women (Ahmed, 2012). Collins (1998) states that black women are predetermined by prewritten script where she is seen yet is silenced and overlooked. This finding correlates with the current study’s findings as Participant C mentioned that *A negative experience is the fact that I have to work harder to prove myself than a male would in my position. When people don’t trust me to lead the school as any minor thing that happens-they will say it cause this school is being led by a woman. I feel alone sometimes so there is an element of loneliness.* Collins (1998) states that “her body becomes “written on” by other, more powerful interests, rendering her powerless to speak for herself” (p.38). This finding is supported by Participant F who mentioned that *towards the end of 2019, a neighbour was swearing at me in front of the school learners because he used a parking bay that is designated for the school transport and he parked his truck there and the children played under the truck then without consulting from me or other members, he locked the gates and he didn’t want the learners to leave the premises and he said “until the learners learn how to behave, they will not leave the premises.” When I questioned him about it and what gave him the right to do that he was swearing at me. To protect myself, I had to call my husband and he came with some of his and spoke to him then he calmed down. Those are some of the challenges I had to deal with.* A Black women’s journey into assuming a leadership position takes her into the “heart of whiteness” where the Black woman is established “a white gaze which perceives her as a mute visible object (Casey cited in Mirza, 2015). Black Female principals experience a surveillance gaze in their positions as school leaders which is stated to be a form of institutionalised racism. When challenges occur at schools, these challenges will be explained as occurring due to the school being led by females instead of males which causes a power struggle at school.

The study suggests that it is imperative that the school principals receive support from community members as support assists Black women to succeed in their leadership positions.

The school principals should solicit involvement from the community and parents of the school children. The Black female leaders can develop programmes that enable the broader school community to interact with the school principal, their children and the learners' class teachers outside of the school. These programmes are aimed at developing better positive relationships between the community members involved with the school. Furthermore, it is recommended that the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education provide funding to appoint professional counsellors in the school to counsel learners' who may be going through difficult times at home such as parents getting divorced etc. Mental health should be made a priority in primary schools to encourage learners from an early age to take mental health issues seriously. Additionally, the researcher recommends that school principals should continue to implement remedial classes for learners who are mentally challenged and having learning difficulties. School teachers could offer tutoring to school learners' whose parents lack the time to assist them with studying for tests and/or exams. The main theme of positive experiences and its related subthemes are discussed below.

5.4. Positive experiences

Positive experiences are referred to the capacity of happiness and the building blocks of happiness. Positive experiences refer to the ability to make the most of happiness, sharing happiness and experiencing happiness. Positive experiences increase positive affect and increases mood for school leaders (Lambert et al., 2013). For the purpose of this study, positive experiences are referred to the successes that Black female principals experience in their positions and what keeps them motivated and dedicated to their roles. These positive experiences serve as motivating factors for Black women to continue assuming these roles as they make a difference at schools and communities. This study revealed a number of positive experiences related to work associated with school leadership. Most participants enjoy working with school learners who take pride in their work, some enjoy helping the community grow and produce successful future leaders while others enjoy giving school learners better facilities and opportunities. Discussed below is the subtheme of motivated school learners identified as a positive experience by study participants.

5.4.1. Motivated school learners

According to Baker (2014), motivation forms part of human psychology, behaviour that has an impact on how much energy individuals give in their tasks, how much time they invest in their

tasks and how they feel and think about the task at hand. Luthans (2012) describes motivation as a need that drives certain behaviour aimed at obtaining an incentive or achieving a goal. Baker (2014) states that motivation is reflected on the amount of time and effort learners' put in their tasks such as learning for tests and completing their homework. Furthermore, motivation reflects on their persistence on learning how to effectively complete these tasks and how they overcome obstacles they encounter at schools in the learning process (Baker, 2014). The general consensus revealed that working with diligent learners provide participants with joy and is the main reason why they love their job as school principals. Most participants enjoy working with school learners that are serious about their work as it gives them hope that there is a bright future in South Africa as they produce well adapted learners. Study participants state that working with children that want to succeed provides them with joy and happiness and is the main reason why they love their job and being employed as school principals. Participants stated that children are more exciting to work with. Participant A stated that *I love working with children, children make me forget about my problems and I enjoy communicating with them, especially the ones that do well at school.* Similarly, participant C states that *I enjoy working with children than adults as sometimes with adults you can tell them to do something and they fail to listen.* Participant B revealed that *I enjoy working with school learners that are serious about their work and do their work diligently as it gives me hope that there is a bright future in South Africa as they produce good results.* Similarly, participant E stated that *seeing my kids succeed is a fulfilling experience for me as just to see them do well and to know that I have played a role in their success makes me happy. When parents approach me to say "thank you for helping their child" it is fulfilling for me.* Participants are delighted by motivated school learners as they represent the school and have a bright future in South Africa.

The current study suggests that teaching motivated school learners. Motivation gives school principals joy and success to teaching and learning. Teachers are the key factor to the motivation behind learners (Wood, 2019). Positive enthusiasm of teaching makes the learners more enthusiastic and have a positive affect regarding learning at school (Tymms et al., 2008). Motivation to learn can be from a long-term interest in completing something or can be a personality characteristic. Achieving high levels of motivation in the classroom leads to creativity, understanding, productivity and achievement which makes school principals proud (Gibbens, 2019). School learners' motivation is essential for quality education. To motivating learners to take their work seriously is challenging for education. Hadre et al., (2007) states that motivation determines whether the school succeeds or fails. It is up to the teachers and

school leaders as part of a teaching-learning strategy to encourage students to engage in academic activities. Seifert and Sutton (2009) states that a learner has to have motive which can be a desire, drive, need, interest and an urge to succeed. Seifert & Sutton further state that it is the kind of goals that are set that includes mastery, failure-avoidance and good performance. Baron and Donn (2000) states that learners who are highly motivated have certain characteristics that include being disciplined, punctual, diligent and active in learning. Additionally, motivated learners achieve academic excellence by participating in classes, studying, engaging in study groups and asking questions for clarification (Schunk et al., 2009).

According to Heckman (2011), it is essential for learners' parents create a home environment that encourages motivation, but it proves to be problematic for families that are socioeconomically disadvantaged. Families that have low education, limited financial resources, single-parent households and other stresses. This causes a huge achievement gap between learners with higher-income families and those of different ethnic/racial backgrounds (Heckman, 2011). For example, Heckman revealed in his study that learners who derive from wealthy families are able to overcome academic challenges than learners with low socio-economic families. As stated by Heckman (2011), disadvantaged parents, as a group, "talk to their children less and are less likely to read to them daily and tend to encourage their children less, adopt harsher parenting styles, and be less engaged with their children's schoolwork" (Heckman, 2011, p. 80). In other words, school learners that come from disadvantaged backgrounds lack opportunities of being encouraged to foster competence to value learning, achievement and to promote autonomous learning (Heckman, 2011). These findings do not mean that learners from disadvantaged families all lack motivation as there are some learners that are mentioned in the current study that are highly motivated and have a high need to succeed. The motivated school learners serve as a positive experience to the school principals as they do well in schools and have the ability to improve their disadvantaged communities. Discussion of schoolteachers is discussed as the next subtheme as school principals mentioned their appreciation for schoolteachers that are dedicated and who take their work seriously.

5.4.2. Dedicated schoolteachers

Dedicated school teachers are able to help school learners to actively engage in classrooms as their main objective is to get learners to learn and sustain their interest. (Filgona et al., 2020). They are able to understand their learners needs, interests, purpose and their attitudes to be able to encourage them to learn effectively. Furthermore, dedicated teachers are able to provide an

environment that encourages maximum learning as it is their duty to ensure that they create and sustain interest in learning (Gibbens, 2019). Some participants noted that they take pride in working with teachers that are both dedicated to their work and who enjoy the teaching profession. This means they are taking their job seriously and they actually care about creating a better future for school learners. Some participants stated that when teachers share in their vision, it is a pleasurable working experience. Participant D narrated *I enjoy working in a conducive environment as I feel as though I am a part of a family. I enjoy speaking with my colleagues as there is a mutual respect we have which makes it easier for us to get along and be a family.* Similarly, participant F mentioned that *We have some teachers here who are a marvel to work with, they never come late at school. When it comes to doing their work they make sure that everything is done at the best of their ability and you get positive response from parents. When you share a certain vision with your teachers and your teachers give you support it becomes a wonderful experience.* One particular participant stated that she is proud of how empowered their teachers are since they have assumed their position as a school principal. Participant C further stated that *I am proud of my teachers who have grown tremendously in their work. I love seeing how empowered my teachers are as they have become computer literate thanks to the idea that I came up with to teach them computers. This gives me joy and makes me proud.* Dedicated teachers recognise that they can facilitate students' learning and achievement and are able to facilitate and regulate learners' behaviours to ensure that they complete their tasks and learning activities.

The above findings correlate with Wentzel and Battle's (2001) literature findings who revealed that empirical studies showed that feelings of belonging and perception of teacher-student relationships both relate to the pursuit of social responsibilities, academic motivation, and achievement. Dedicated teachers recognise that they have the ability to influence learners' motivation through expectations, classroom management, their teaching style, beliefs and their interactions with learners. According to the National Research Council (2004), teachers can show their dedication by increasing motivation in learners. This occurs by them encouraging learners to set high expectations of themselves, to do their best, to use lessons that involve collaboration, high order thinking and student participation. Hardré and Sullivan (2009) states that dedicated teachers focus on their interpersonal dealings with students, encourage autonomy rather than control in classrooms. Dedicated school teachers who also show their caring nature by reaching out to learners' parents and encouraging their involvement in

educating their children (Hardré and Sullivan, 2009). Discussed below is the sub-theme of participants taking pride in improving their schools and community.

5.4.3. Improving the school and community

Clermont is a township of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Clermont under the apartheid days was a Black middle-income township. It is surrounded by Westville, Kloof, and New Germany. It was the only place in Durban where black people were able to buy property and build houses. Since the end of apartheid, Clermont continues to have informal settlements as people from the rural areas seek work opportunities in the nearby suburbs of Westville, New Germany, Pinetown and Durban. Clermont has a low socio-economic status, therefore, it needs improvement in the infrastructure of schools and communities. Clermont schools have large numbers of school children and not enough classrooms. Auerbach (2011) states that school principals who seek to improve external communities enhance their chances of being supported by the public and minimise being criticised. This enhances the chances of receiving resources and sponsorships for learners. Auerbach (2011) states that community and school partnerships are built on relationships of effective interpersonal communication and trust. The key factors revealed for community partnerships, improvement and successful schooling are created through leadership, readiness, trust, sustained outreach, and stability (Auerbach, 2011). Most participants stated that they enjoyed serving the community of Clermont and also improving the schools which they lead. Improving the conditions of a township school was identified as important to participants as it meant they have served their purpose. Some participants stated that being able to obtain sponsors that provide learners with school uniforms and food makes them proud and fulfils them. Participant B narrated that *improving the conditions of a township school is important to me as a school principal as it means I have served my purpose. Being able to solve certain problems and implementing certain things is a huge experience for me.* Similarly, participant E stated that *if you try to improve on the conditions of the school, not only physical infrastructure but also social interaction and those relationships and not giving the bullies an opportunity to rule the school. It may look minimal but for me achieving that means a lot.* Furthermore, participant E states that the government making school learners be exempt from paying school fees has made them happy as they are aware of the financial struggles that parents living in townships have. Participant F stated that *being able to obtain sponsors that provide learners with school uniforms and food and it is something that I as leaders can look back at someday and say I have done it, makes me proud and fulfils me. I am also impressed with the government making school learners to not pay for their school fees.*

The improvements of schools and communities is fulfilling for participants as they see themselves as making a positive difference in the community.

The Clermont area and its related schools have low infrastructure, lack adequate resources and has low technological advancements, therefore, improving the schools and the communities serves as a huge purpose for Black female leaders. Black female principals who lead Clermont schools have a bigger role to play in the community as they feel the need to do more than what is expected of them in the community. These principals are seen as leaders in the schools and their community. Whereas school principals from urban areas are only leading their schools as their surrounding communities have good socio-economic backgrounds and no major improvements that need to be made (Kladifko, 2013). In order to effectively improve schools, many efforts are being made. Schools are must be structured for the number of students, student groupings, their size, scheduling, and the school's climate (Kladifko, 2013). School principals have made more attempts to create more personalised environments which includes breaking large schools into smaller schools, ensuring that teachers stay with the same group of learners for more than two years as they have formulated a strong relationship with learners (Honig et al., 2010). Furthermore, adopting block sessions which allows more individualised time that facilitates teacher-learner interactions for further assistance are implemented in schools to facilitate learning. Some schools have sought to establish relationships with social service providers who are able to deliver on non-academic needs such as health and social problems that affect learners from learning effectively (Honig et al., 2010).

According to Bridgeland et al., (2008) a further way to improve schools and community is to integrate academic study and community service through service learning. For this to be effective, service learning can be aligned with academic standards and curriculum, connect curriculum content to community problems, allow learners to engage in reflection, and to incorporate learners' opinions (Bridgeland et al., 2008). In a survey conducted by Bridgeland et al., (2008) of service-learning participants, learners felt motivated to work harder as they viewed service learning as more interesting than traditional classes. The current study findings is supported by Lumby's (2010) study who asserts that Black female principals motivate school staff, learners and the community to focus on developing the school learners. This study also develops staff, co-opt the parents to participate in the cost of schooling, school responsibilities and at the same time facilitating school growth, supporting and accommodating learners (Lumby, 2010). This is essential as many school learners and staff are living in areas

where they constantly face a range of issues that are associated with poverty, health and other related oppressive attitudes, hence, they assume these positions to establish an effective learning culture (Lumby, 2010).

Intersectionality Theory: Understanding the complex experiences of Black female school principals.

The Intersectionality Theory describes the oppression and discrimination that Black female leaders endure in the positions as school principals (William, 2013). This theory focuses more on negative experiences that Black women face, the positive experiences identified reveal a different form of experience that has been overlooked by the theory. As far as Black school principals are concerned they experience both positive and negative situations. Some participants state that they take pride in improving the school and the community which ensures that they are successful in leading schools effectively. Additionally, when Black women assume leadership experiences, they refrain from solely benefiting from this position, as they seek to ensure that there is a communal benefit that derives from them assuming this role. Black female leaders have a caring, motherly nature that encourages them to actively participate in activities that will benefit the school and community as a whole (Lumby, 2010). It may be due to the fact that some of them derive from socio-economic backgrounds and attended township schools, therefore, they feel the need to improve school and community conditions. This makes a real difference and teaches learners to have a potential of raising the bar of schools and community. White males may be merely concerned with being school principals and lack the concern of adding value to communities. However, if they do improve their communities it might be for the purpose of exerting their power and dominance. Dunbar (2015) states that Black females' leadership skills promotes a positive learning environment as they define the school's mission and possess strong instructional leadership (Dunbar, 2015). Through these leadership skills and other qualities such as innovative thinking and creative problem-solving, they are able to drive social change which improves the schools and community's environment (Tillman, 2008).

The Black leaders do experience negative experiences such as gender and race discrimination, however, working with motivated school learners and dedicated teachers who take pride in their work makes it worthwhile for them to work as school principals. The intersectional theory lacks research on the positive experiences of Black female leaders. The negative experiences

of Black women are due to the marginalisation, discrimination due to the race and gender. Therefore, thorough research needs to be made to ensure that there is a balance established in the experiences that Black female leaders face in their roles as principals.

5.5. Leadership

Northouse (2010) defines leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 3). Yukl (2006) defines leadership as “the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives” (p. 8). Omolayo (2007) defines leadership as a social influence process in which participation of subordinates is obtained voluntarily in an attempt to obtain goals of the organisation. There are several components that are involved in the definition of leadership that states that: (a) leadership is a process, (b) that involves influencing others; (c) it involves goal achievement, (d) and these goals are shared and aimed to be achieved by followers and leaders (Northouse, 2010). Rather than leadership being a one-way event, it is an interactive, two-way event between leaders and followers (Northouse, 2010). The schools in Clermont are similar, they have the same low infrastructure, the same large amounts of learners in the schools and participants manage the same amount of teachers and subordinates, therefore, the study revealed that participants have similar leadership traits and styles. Discussed below is the subtheme of leadership traits that Black female school principals possess in their leadership roles.

5.5.1. Leadership Traits

Daft (2015) describes leadership traits as “the distinguishing personal characteristics of a leader, such as intelligence, honesty, self-confidence, and appearance” (p. 36). Leadership traits are qualities that individuals possess such as abilities, values, temperament, personality, dispositions, needs and motives- that enable individuals to produce leadership performance in their organisations. Yukl (2013) says the term refers “to a variety of individual attributes, including aspects of personality, temperament, needs, motives, and values” (p. 135). These integrated personal characteristics enable effective leadership performances across a wide variety of institutions such as schools (Antonakis et al., 2004).

1.) Leading by example

The current study findings revealed that a leadership trait that leaders possess is leading by example. Leading by example entails leaders setting a good example where their subordinates will be encouraged to act out positive behaviours (Thatcher, 2012). Some participants have to lead by example as it is imperative in successful leadership as subordinates look to them in setting good examples. Some participants revealed that leading by example is imperative in successful leadership as subordinates look to them in setting good examples. Participant A stated that *A leader has to be fair in her decisions and practice what they preach. You teach by example. This is because teachers are always watching principals and if we tell them to do certain things or tell them to be punctual but then we fail to do that then it will be an issue and they will end up not respecting the leader. It is about setting a good example. People must always see leaders due to their conduct and how they dress and how they speak to people.* Similarly, participant D stated that *subordinates respect and trust leaders more when they follow rules, procedures and when they do things the right way.* Similarly, participant F stated that *When I tell the teachers that they have to be here at 7:30, I am not supposed to be here at 7:35, I have to come on time, so when you want to discourage absenteeism, it starts with the leader, you can't just stay away because sometimes it is easy to think and say that you are entitled to these things.* Similar findings were obtained by Thatcher (2012) who states that by leading by example, leaders have to instill right behaviour and values and should not solely rely on rules and procedures to set the tone on how they should lead. Furthermore, leaders are constantly being watched and they are never off duty. Their actions and rules set the tone for their subordinates as leaders as their verbal and non-verbal cues are constantly being scrutinized and copied (Thatcher, 2012). Additionally, leaders must behave the right way consistently and encourage good positive behaviour to their subordinates. Leaders cannot encourage their subordinates to behave in a way they would not act. If leaders set low standards for themselves, then they cannot be surprised when subordinates act within those low standards (Thatcher, 2012).

1.) Delegating duties

Most participants stated that they have to lead with others and delegate duties and responsibilities. Delegation is defined as transferring tasks and duties in the hopes of decreasing the workload from the leader to subordinates. Stonehouse (2015) states that delegation is defined as giving subordinates work that is meant to be for managers by giving them responsibility and authority. Most participants stated that they have to be visionary and promote the school's vision and mission, and to be transparent as they cannot make unilateral decisions.

Participant F stated that *leaders must take risks as long as it benefits the organization and is worth the risk. Leaders must consult and not think they run the organization by themselves. They must delegate. They must be transparent when it comes to finances, you have to report to the finance committees. You must have knowledge as when you have knowledge, you are able to solve most of the problems and you must have the skill of conflict resolution when you solve problems amicably.* Similarly, Participant E stated that *whenever there are important tasks to be taken, I can't just make decisions by myself as there are stakeholders that are informed of any challenges and progress that the school is making.* Furthermore, it is imperative for Black female leaders to be able to take criticism. Participant C stated that *it is important to not be afraid to be criticized as it gives the opportunity to grow as a leader. There are some teachers that will not be afraid to pull me aside and suggest that we can do certain things in other ways. I listen to that and I also encourage that people should talk to us if they are not happy about something or feel that we can improve about something then we can have those discussions.* By being transparent, subordinates and other relevant stakeholders must feel included in the challenges and progress of the school which enables them to feel important. This ensures further commitment from them as they feel valued by management and the institution.

This current study finding is supported by the literature review that stated that leaders enable followers to obtain a clear view of a problem from a new perspective, provides support and are able to articulate a clear vision of their organisations and communicate the vision to their subordinates (Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy, 2014). Delegation transfers power from leaders to subordinates and involves subordinates in decision-making and allows them to guide direction and course of action. Speed of delivery and overall quality is enhanced when subordinates are given power as it is a form of effective management (Lieberman and Boehe, 2011). Delegating increases knowledge sharing, learning experiences and increases responsiveness (Lieberman and Boehe, 2011).

2.) *Leading with Compassion*

Some participants mentioned that they must not only think of the business side of things but should also show that they care about their subordinates as people. Compassion is the act of responding to another's situation and his or her needs in the hopes of alleviating their sad situation and to make their conditions better (Hansen, 2018). Compassion states that individuals should not simply be human beings but must also be proactive in being morally responsible to other individuals (Duckworth, 2018; Hansen, 2018). Compassion is also referred

to loving others and treating others how one desires to be treated (Confucius and Dawson, 2008). Leaders who act with compassion act “to contribute to the fulfilment and wellbeing of themselves and others to make them feel better about their situation” (Pharoah, 2018, p. 21). Some participants revealed that showing compassion for others makes one a better leader as it shows an individuals’ human side. Participant E noted *that when people are ill, show compassion and give them time off so they can feel better. When there is an absenteeism pattern, enquire about it and pay attention to what the teachers are going through. Perhaps there are problems that are hindering them from doing their job well in class.* Participants revealed that having compassion for others enables one to be a better leader. Similarly, Gyatso & Tutu (2016) state that leaders who lead with compassion accepts others’ imperfections. Compassions allows subordinates to benefit from kind words, good wishes and given a benefit of the doubt (Gyatso and Tutu, 2016). Leaders with compassion seek the betterment of their followers, honour their duties and create values for stakeholders (Shuck et al., 2016). When leaders lead with compassion, the subordinates become more productive, independent and their self-efficacy increases (Grant, 2008).

3.) Parental Nature

The quality of the parent-child relationship is described to be in the dimensions of affection, warmth and positive affect instead of rejection and negative affect (Kiff et al., 2011). One participant in particular stated that being a parent assists them in being strong leaders as they are able to walk in the parent’s shoe and are able to guide them on how to discipline them effectively. Participant A stated that *I am a parent too so I know what it’s like to have a school all you because of your child. So, I can walk in the parents’ shoe and can guide them on how to discipline them effectively and what you can do to have a great relationship with your children.* Furthermore, they are able to give parents advice on what they can do to have a great relationship with their children. This current study finding correlates with what the literature findings revealed that female educational leaders identify the most with being nurturing, providing care, mothering the school learners and being responsive to the needs of the school community as forms of leading the school (Lumby, 2010). Mothering the school learners brings about a direct transfer of positive values and their qualities that they assert at home. Mothering school learners make them feel better and talk to them about their problems (Lumby, 2010). Women being able to transfer their motherliness to school learners enables them to have a strong emotional attachment to the school learners (Lumby, 2010). These attributes are inherent in women generally, however, they are heightened if the females are parents as they can direct

that motherly nature to their learners. Female principals motivate school staff while facilitating school growth, supporting and accommodating learners (Lumby, 2010). Discussed below are the different leadership styles that participants reportedly employed in their positions as school principals.

5.5.2. Leadership Styles

According to Mitonga-Monga and Coetzee (2012), leadership styles is regarded as a combination of different personality traits, characteristics and behaviours that are used by leaders in the way they communicate and lead their followers. Harris et al., (2007) states that the leadership styles that individuals employ enables them to work together to achieve a common objective or goal. According to modern leadership styles, leadership styles can be categorized as follows: (1) transformational leadership style, (2) transactional leadership style, (3) democratic leadership, (4) autocratic leadership style, and (5) Laissez-faire leadership style (Harris, et al., 2007). Different leadership styles have the ability to affect organisational performance and effectiveness (Nahavandi, 2002). The successes and failures of organisations is largely due to the leadership styles employed by leaders (Oladio et al., 2013). Discussed below are the different leadership styles that participants employ as school principals, namely the transformational and the democratic leadership styles.

1.) Democratic Leadership Style

Democratic leadership focuses more on teamwork as it emphasises on participation. The democratic leader delegates authority to their staff members and it offers the subordinates responsibility to complete their assignments and tasks (Campher, 2003). Staff members complete the tasks using their own work methods and are involved in decision making, resulting in acquiring a sense of belonging and enabling the staff members to bond (Campher, 2003). Some participants employ the democratic leadership style when managing their schools. Some participants state that it is instrumental to be approachable, to be a people's person and to be democratic. They stated that this style of leadership is efficient, and it ensures that all stakeholders are satisfied as the teachers have an input to the decisions that are made at school. The study participants stated that they have a democratic leadership style. Participant D stated that *I listen to others, but I do not always use their ideas as I have a final say as the school principal. I believe in people buying in so I can have happy, efficient employees. I also overestimate myself. I don't look down on myself because it is the same attitude I plunge onto*

others. *I believe that I can make a difference in the school and the community. I always make sure that the learners are always happy, and they see school as a happy place as it prevents them from skipping school or committing suicide, regardless of the absent parents.* Similarly, participant A narrated that *I listens to my subordinates' ideas and perspectives as this ensures commitment and efficiency, however, I have the final say as a school principal and I make decisions with the subordinates' ideas and perspectives in consideration.* Similarly, a particular participant stated that she consults her teachers and other subordinates on urgent matters rather than solely making decisions by themselves. Participant F noted that having one on one meetings is instrumental when behaviour is persistent such as late coming and failure to make submissions on time. The principal must inform the teachers and parents of challenges and progress. Participant F stated that *I consult my peers and my second manager to make sure I make the right decision whenever I have to make a serious decision. I believe in showing respect to everyone be it care takers, teachers or people cooking in the kitchen. I show the same level of respect among staff because that is what I expect from my colleagues. I make sure that I learn from my teachers as it facilitates a peaceful coexistence.* Participants consults their peers and managers prior to making important decisions.

The current study findings revealed that it is imperative for them to consult their peers and their managers as they always want to ensure that they are making the right decisions. Participants stated that by including their subordinates in the decision-making process, the subordinates feel respected and valued. The current study findings correlate with this style of leadership as it facilitates in easing the pressure on leaders and allows subordinates to participate in generating new ideas, encourages team tasks and collective decision making (Campher, 2003). It is also referred to as participative leadership as subordinates are encouraged to be included in problem-solving and decision-making. The democratic leader leads their subordinates through effect and illustration as opposed to coercion and fear (Kaleem, 2016). Democratic leadership produces work that is of high quality and quantity and enables subordinates to feel trusted which leads to them responding with high morale, team spirit and cooperation (Kaleem, 2016).

2.) Transformational Leadership style

Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy (2014) assert that transformational leaders enable followers to obtain a clear view of a problem from a new perspective, provides support and are able to articulate a clear vision of their organisations and communicate the vision to their subordinates. Additionally, they state that their leadership style involves grooming other people, making

them believe in themselves and promoting them to lead in different scenarios. Furthermore, transformational leaders can “transform” individuals and organisations and increase motivation which leads to subordinate performance and satisfaction (Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy, 2014). Most participants stated that their leadership style is a transformational leadership style. They assert that they do not pass out an opportunity to give praise to their teachers when they are doing well and when it is due. Additionally, they stated that their leadership style involves grooming other people, making them believe in themselves and promoting them to lead in different scenarios. Participant F narrated *that we have competitions when we give opportunity to learners to read. Keep on encouraging teachers to do well. We also want the opportunity for the government body to issue out certificates to those teachers doing well as it will make a huge difference. You lead but you also allow other people to lead in different scenarios and work as a team as well.* Participants stated that they encourage their teachers to keep doing well. The study participant state that they encourage teachers to start leading themselves and be assertive when dealing with others. Participant E mentioned *that I am only left with 8 years so teachers need to lead from now and exploring their leadership opportunities as well. if they don't start now in exploring their leadership then it will be very difficult to exert their leadership 8 years later so whatever they feel they need to contribute in the institution then they should do that and must allow themselves to be corrected as well as when you a leader you can go astray so I need to teach them and coach them.* Similarly, participant C further stated that *schoolteachers should feel their worth and feel valued in whatever contribution they make. They must be appreciated and in whatever they implement, if it works it works and if it does not then they need to review what they are doing and start anew.* Participants state that they encourage their teachers to keep doing well. They encourage teachers to start leading themselves and be assertive when dealing with others.

Transformational leadership style focuses on developing follower's potential and their needs and focuses on their growth and improving the value system of the subordinates. The current study findings revealed that Black female leaders encourage their subordinates to have to be innovative and be risk takers as they are able to adapt to change. The literature evidenced that women are said to have a maternalistic and transformational approach to leadership. Furthermore, female principals assert flexible leadership styles with subordinate staff members when working on tasks and when guiding learners as they value their input (Heilman et al., 2004). This is also indicative of a democratic style of leadership which is effective for female

principals as by employing this style, they are viewed as leaders who are willing to encourage participation due to the inclusion of everyone in decision making (Campher, 2003).

According to Eagly and Carli (2007) female leaders tend to be more democratic and transformational in their leadership styles compared to men. Pounder and Coleman (2002) revealed that male leaders move towards a more task oriented, impersonal or transactional approach compared to female leaders who are warm, relationship-focused, nurturing style that underlies the transformational leadership style approach. Trinidad and Normore (2005) state that male leaders adopt a more autocratic leadership style while female leaders adopt a rather democratic, participative style in education and in the corporate world. The characteristics of transformational leadership relate to female values which includes consensus building, communication, building relationships, collaboration, and power as influence. Therefore, femininity is positively correlated with transformational leadership (Kark, 2004). While men still occupy the majority of leadership positions, women differ from men when they occupy these positions (Hofstede, 2001). Male gender qualities have been characterised as assertive, opportunistic, decisive, aggressive, impersonal, ambitious, independent and confident and while female gender qualities are described as sensitive, intuitive, cooperative, emotional, empathetic, warm and receptive to tact and ideas. In terms of leadership traits, femininity is attributed to relationship-oriented leadership and masculinity with task-oriented leadership style.

Female leaders are equipped for empathy (they are caring and compassionate), motivation (they are enthusiastic and energetic), aspirations (they set high goals), communication (they inform their subordinates), feedback (they are transparent and update their subordinates on their performance) (Radu et al., 2017). Furthermore, female leaders are more assessed in terms of establishing a good connection, having a good working relationship with their subordinates, communicating clear demands from subordinates, expressing their thoughts and ideas clearly compared to their male counterparts (Radu et al., 2017). Contrary to popular belief, females have had good results on the leadership scale, due to the fact that they have high expectations of themselves and their subordinates in achieving organisational goals. Whereas men show success in leadership that evaluates the focus on the overall organisational vision and strategic planning of organisations (Radu et al., 2017). Traits that are associated with transformational leadership (empowerment and collaboration) are generally associated with women which indicates that leadership is associated with feminine features. The White House Project (2009)

found that companies with higher productivity of their own capital had many female leaders as opposed to companies with fewer female leaders. Despite this information, having leaders that are females may still persistently be seen as a disadvantage as individuals have a tendency to attribute leadership success to external factors rather than internal factors and tend to avoid placing women on leadership positions (Heilman, 2001). Furthermore, Eagly (2007) revealed that subordinates being led by females are found to be more satisfied with their leaders, as they are willing to make efforts in their jobs and are more efficient and effective competitively in comparison with the subordinates of male leaders. Gorman (2007) observes that women work harder than men in their leadership positions and this is explained by strict standards that are manifested towards women.

The current study findings assert that Black women employ transformational and democratic leadership styles which favours their feminine values of consideration and nourishing (de la Ray, 2005). The current study indicates that it is important to transform institutional procedures and to alter women and men's attitudes and way of thinking towards Black women in school leadership positions. By doing this, a more female friendly working environment that is free from racial and gender discrimination will be created and their capabilities as effective leaders will be acknowledged and valued.

Intersectionality Theory: Understanding the complex experiences of Black female school principals.

The intersectionality theory asserts that most people who are oppressed and marginalised in society fall under the multiple forms of minority and are socially stratified. It is a theory that identifies how the interlocking systems of power affect those that are oppressed and marginalised in society, mostly women of colour (Cooper, 2016). According to Smooth (2010) Black female leaders by virtue are privileged individuals' as they have the power and authority. However, Black female leaders still experience discrimination and marginalisation despite their power and authority due to their race and gender. Male leaders have the same power and authority on paper and are taken more seriously in their roles than females because males have been attributed to achievement, success and authority as they are still seen as breadwinners and females are seen as primary caretakers. These traditional roles have made it difficult for Black women to assert their power and influence in their leadership roles.

Furthermore, Murtadha and Watts (2005) argued that the lack of adequate resources of Black female leaders and the lack of understanding gained whether leadership has been successful or not, has limited the ability for researchers to adequately contribute to improving communities and schools in disadvantaged areas. Due to the lack of the narrative of Black female leadership and its studies, it has become difficult to provide and build schools that will efficiently respond to the Black children's lives in a positive manner (Murtadha and Watts, 2005). Additionally, understanding Black females' stories in their leadership positions serves as an effective resource in framing problems and applying strategies to implement and achieve school and community advancement (Murtadh and Watts, 2005).

One of the biggest misconceptions about the school principal position is that it is "a man's job" and it is highly patriarchal, or as noted by Panigraphi (2013) the position of a school principal is one that is generally held by men. The researcher has identified that the Black female leaders have attributed their feministic leadership values in their positions. Therefore, the researcher recommends the principals to continue applying these attributes in leading their respective schools in Clermont.

5.6. Coping mechanisms

Coping refers to the cognitive and behavioural efforts to reduce and/or tolerate stressful situations or demands (Baqutayan, 2015). The demands or stressful situations may derive from external forces which includes work, family, school, friends while internal forces include setting impossibly high standards for oneself or struggling with an emotional conflict. Matheny et al., (cited in Baqutayan, 2015) defined coping as "any effort, healthy or unhealthy, conscious or unconscious, to prevent, eliminate, or weaken stressors, or to tolerate their effects in the least hurtful manner" (p. 481). Applying coping mechanisms softens the effects of the stress and demands and is used to face potential stressors that are likely to be encountered in the future before the stressful situation occurs (Georgeta, 2018). The current study findings revealed that the Black women in the Clermont area have formulated their own coping strategies as there are no formal coping mechanisms that have been established to serve them. Because the study revealed that the participating principals shared similar challenges as primary school principals in both their professional and personal areas, they shared similar coping strategies in overcoming challenges. These coping strategies include applying codes of conduct to address the issue of discipline, gaining strength spirituality, establishing networks that encourage

mutual and emotional support and receiving support from family members. Discussed below is the subtheme of code of conduct that participants identified to apply to overcome the issue of discipline at school.

5.6.1. Code of conduct

According to the Department of Education (2008), code of conduct is defined as the rules and disciplinary system that is applied at schools that concerns and addresses the learners' transgressions and misbehaviours. It is a set of guidelines in which a set of ethical values or norms and standards of acceptable behaviour and conduct has been set (Department of Education, 2008). Codes of conduct are developed at a national level and are applied in schools to ensure that they are backed up on an institutionalized and legalized manner. They apply to the school staff, teachers, learners and the learners' parents. Codes of conduct involve clear procedures for reviewing incidents, reporting violations and related processes (Department of Education, 2008). When developing the code of conduct, major players which include school officials, parents, teachers, teachers' union students and training and raising awareness so the stakeholders are well informed about the code (Antonowicz, 2010). The way to mitigate the issue of discipline and behaviour is by relying on the school code of conduct and educating the learners and their parents on it. Some participants state that it is about making parents understand that by not acting on their child's behaviour, they are actually promoting it, e.g., denying a child the opportunity to participate on school trips and other activities that the learner loves. This will make the learner behave, eventually understand and to obey the school code of conduct. The findings revealed that Black female principals overcome challenges by listening to others and understanding the person and to not judge them. Participant A revealed that *when school learners are misbehaving then there is bound to be a problem and we try to talk to them to understand what the problem is. Then we work together with the teachers to overcome challenges and identifying the solutions to problems faced. It is very important to have a focus which is to teach.* Participant F stated that *A way we have tried to overcome this challenge has been to have parents' meetings, parents collecting school reports and when they have to fetch their sick child, we encourage them to meet up with the learner's teacher so they can discuss the child's performance. The biggest challenge is that many students' parents are always working and/or have deceased so there is no discipline at home and someone telling them to come to school early.*

The current study findings suggest that Black female principals overcome challenges by working together with the teachers and implementing solutions to problems identified. School principals have had to come up with different forms of discipline as corporal punishment has been illegalised. Codes of conduct have included the unacceptability of violence in any form (physical, psychological, sexual and verbal) against school learners (Antonowicz, 2010). They have set out professional rules that guides teachers in their conduct with school learners'. It is essential for teachers, school staff and learners to understand the code of conduct and to be held accountable for their actions if it defers from acceptable behaviour. It is therefore important to ensure that the school code of conduct is worded in an age-appropriate way to ensure adequate understanding from all stakeholders (Antonowicz, 2010). Discussed below is the subtheme of spirituality as Black female principals seek the higher power to overcome challenges.

5.6.2. Spirituality

Spirituality is the use of religious beliefs and practices to decrease the emotional distress in one's life that is caused by stressful events of life (Saad and de Medeiros, 2012). Abernethy et al., (2019) states that spiritual and religious beliefs and practices assist in helping individuals cope with depression and stress. The study findings revealed that spirituality plays an instrumental role in assisting them in overcoming challenges. Some participants stated that they look to Jesus and the Bible on how to lead their people as they claim there is no better leader than Jesus Christ. Participant C stated that *I am Christian so as soon as I obtained this position, I prayed to God and I asked him to help me get support from Post Level 1 teacher who will tell me to open my eyes so once a month, she tells me everything*. Similarly, participant E stated that *I look to Jesus and the Bible on how to lead my people as there is no better leader than Jesus Christ*. The study findings correlate with May's (2016) study who emphasises that the female principals relied on prayer, especially before making important decisions that are school related as he asserts that praying plays a positive role in the school. The research study results revealed prayer and spirituality proved to be an instrumental means to overcoming challenges.

The current study finding correlates with Paloutzian (2014) findings who states that individuals who use spiritual beliefs as a coping mechanism are able to overcome their stressful conditions as opposed to those who are not spiritual (Paloutzian, 2014). Applying spirituality in stressful situations may relieve anxiety and counteract feelings of despair and feeling hopeless (Greenstreet, 2006). Spirituality can also form part of individuals' self-expressing their way of feeling, thinking and their behaviour. This enables spirituality to be analysed in the dimension

of ethical sensitivity, religious attitudes, and harmony (Heszen-Niejodek et al., 2003). There is a strong relationship between coping and spirituality as individuals seek spiritual guidance during stressful situations. Pargament (2002) states that spiritual and religious practices provide resources for coping and affects the individuals' perception of the event which causes a positive effect on individuals. Spirituality can be seen as a first line of defence against pain and distress as it provides direction for the living and provides motivation (Krok, 2008). There are a number of mechanisms that reflect the correlation between spirituality and well-being and better health: (1) spiritual successes are empowering as people tend to be perseverance in pursuing their goals; (2) spiritual successes can provide stability as people can inherent a sense of purpose even when undergoing disturbing life events; (3) spiritual successes provides psychological strength to individuals in times of social chaos and disintegration (Krok, 2008). There is a significant positive relationship between spirituality and stress as those who have a positive spiritual journey live meaningful lives and have mental resources that serves as barrier to stress (Graham et al., 2001). Discussed below is the subtheme of support as Black female school principals seek support from their counterparts and family members as a means to overcome challenges.

5.6.3. Support

Supports are strategies and resources that increase the functioning of humans (Luckasson et al., 2002). Human functioning is increased when individuals receive resources and assistance when undergoing challenges and difficulties in their lives (Luckasson et al., 2002). For the purpose of this study support services include all human and other resources that offer support to school principals. This includes support from family members, and networking programmes and support from other school principals. Some participants revealed that networking has helped them to have a different vision. Being a role model is also fulfilling for the participants as they enjoy being an inspiration to female teachers. Some participants suggest that they enjoy the support that other female leaders and subordinates give to each other as they have a common understanding of the difficulties of being a female leader in South Africa. Participant C narrated that *I have also partnered up with FNB and we have partnered up on this thing called "partners for position"- I have a business partner who supports me in overcoming challenges. She has sponsored the school with cupboards. She helps me with school financial issues.* Participants stated that networking has helped them to have a different vision. Being a role model is also fulfilling for them as there are female teachers who approach them and tell them that they look up to them which makes them happy. The participants stated that they get motivated when women say they get motivated by them which makes them happy as it means they are making

a difference. Participant B stated that *school principals have to form a close relationship with companies around the area. For instance, Spar and our school have the best relationship and they are giving us windows and fixing our old ones.*

This current study is supported by the finding that networking programmes provides Black female school principals an opportunity to establish a good working relationship with subordinate teachers and staff. These programs offer career, work-related opportunities and emotional support (Mthembu, 2013). Establishing networking programmes provides and encourages mutual support, and offers emotional support structures between Black female school principals that are facing similar challenges in their respective schools that they are leading (May, 2016).

Although one of the biggest challenges faced by Black female principals is associated with family obligations, some participants revealed that they receive support from their family when undergoing challenges in their positions as a school principal. Participant C mentioned that *my family, my husband and my son support me. My child comes to my office to bring me lunch then I tell him what's going on at school. My husband is a teacher, so he understands the challenges that I face at school and he advises me. Sometimes it can be an issue cause sometimes he will advise me as my husband and not as a teacher.* Having a support system enables them to talk to their families when they have some things that are troubling them. Meryl (2016) supports this notion and states that in his study the participants felt that receiving support from their husbands, children, parents and their extended family was a useful coping mechanism (Meryl, 2016). Most participants revealed that they would not be as successful if they had not received support from their families.

According to Mascia (2015), women find it more difficult to network in male-dominated settings. Regarding networking, research indicates that the structure of personal networks between men and women differ, as well as the rewards received from being a part of networks (Stallings, 2008). Research revealed that when women take opportunities through networks, they may receive networking rewards such as endorsement and beneficial information from other school principals (Belliveau, 2005). Women are expected to make relationships with other women and their networking size is normally smaller than men's networking size as women may have trouble to commit the extra hours to interacting with other Black female leaders due to their parenthood commitments (Broughton and Miller, 2009). Therefore, women

may have a limited number of members to interact and associate with. Surangi (2014) suggests that women are likely to seek support and guidance from family members such as their husbands. Moreover, it was found that men expect friendships from other men who will be able to provide them access to organisational resources while females seek friendships from other females for support when undergoing challenges and need guidance (Surangi, 2014). Discussed below is the subtheme of self-empowerment as Black female leaders seek to empower themselves as a means to overcome the challenge of being undermined because of their race and gender.

5.6.4. Self-empowerment

Self-empowerment refers to taking control of one's life, making positive choices and setting goals and objective and executing action. It means believing in yourself and understanding one's own strengths and weaknesses. Self-empowerment refers to being hungry to succeed, to achieve more and to overcome challenges. One particular participant stated that the most effective way to overcome challenges is through education, as self-empowerment can enable you to prove your doubters wrong. Participant E stated that *it is difficult for people to vocalise their doubt for Black female principals when they have acquired an education, therefore, acquiring qualifications through education can prove we are deserving of the position which in it turn makes people doubt us less*. This current finding is supported by the literature which states that women empower themselves by furthering their education at a tertiary level as this would reduce individuals' doubts regarding their abilities to effectively lead (Gupton, 2009). Women who empower themselves by obtaining the relevant qualifications and further have a better advantage of improving their careers and becoming prominent leaders (Gupton, 2009).

Education is a key factor for women empowerment, development, prosperity, and welfare. There is an agreement that empowerment is a multidimensional process of change from disempowerment and individuals are active agents in pursuit of self-empowerment and cannot be bestowed by a third party (Mosedale, 2005). Discrimination against women persists till today as there is inequality of Black women not only in leadership positions but in almost all sectors, therefore there is a need for them to empower themselves (Sekar et al., 2014). Black women need to gain strength to fight against the socially constructed gender biases and discrimination, and this fight requires strength. This strength comes from self-empowerment which comes from women educating themselves (Sekar et al., 2014). Rural and township development comes from Black women empowering themselves first as when women acquire

knowledge and education, they acquire the strength and power to make positive changes in the community (Sekar et al., 2014). At the core of empowerment is power, however, when women acquire this power it is not in the form of domination in which most men will relate, but women acquire power to benefit the community as a whole (Karlberg, 2005). Self-empowerment of Black women is viewed as a process through which they come to recognise their inherent power and worth and seek to participate on an equal plane field with men and seek to dismantle patriarchy and advance economic and social development. Therefore, women's self-empowerment is an important step to establishing gender equality (Sekar et al., 2014).

Intersectionality Theory: Understanding the complex experiences of Black female school principals.

The intersectionality theory asserts that Black women are undermined in their leadership positions due to their race and gender due to the traditional roles that has assigned Black women to inferior roles (Crenshaw, 1989). A way to mitigate this is by Black women seeking spirituality and the support from other Black female leaders and their family members to overcome these challenges they experience. By seeking support from their counterparts, Black female leaders are able to share their experiences of being oppressed and discriminated against in society and being marginalised. Furthermore, Black female leaders may overcome the issue of being oppressed and undermined in their leadership positions by males and members of the community by gaining knowledge through education. It is difficult for Black women to be undermined and to have their authority questioned if they have acquired the education and knowledge that will enable them to effectively lead schools and the community (Gupton, 2009).

The Black female school principals suggest that an additional challenge they experience in their leadership position is the lack of support they receive from their community members. These challenges are associated with the stereotypical beliefs that may exist against the Black female school principals that are participants for this study. Therefore, the researcher recommends that as a coping strategy, the school principals solicit involvement from the community and parents of the school children. The school principals can develop programmes that enable the broader school community to interact with the school principal, their children and the learners' class teachers outside of the school. These programmes are aimed at developing better positive relationships between the community members involved with the school. The study suggests that it is imperative that the school principals receive support from community members as support assists Black women to succeed in their leadership positions.

The literature review confirms that establishing supportive networks is an essential coping mechanism for Black women employed as school principals as it enables them to talk about their challenges, their experiences and share their coping mechanisms (May, 2016). Therefore, the researcher encourages a continuation of these networking programmes that enables Black women to offer each other advice on pressing school-related concerns, to encourage, assist and foster mutual and support structures between each other in their leadership positions. Black female leaders in the Clermont area should continue to involve and familiarise themselves with networking programmes in their community. Furthermore, the researcher recommends the Black female school principals to continue to gain their strength as their religious views have positively contributed to the school principals successfully managing their schools, their learners and staff members.

5.6.4. Conclusion

The study findings revealed that Black female primary school principals attribute their negative experiences that they encounter in their leadership positions on the patriarchal society that exists in which they experience gender and racial discrimination. Additionally, negative experiences are not the only form of experience they encountered as there are positive experiences that they face such as improving the school and its community and working with motivated school learners and teachers that has made their job worthwhile for them. Furthermore, they employ certain leadership traits and styles such as transformational and democratic leadership which has enabled them to lead schools effectively. In the next chapter, the summary and the recommendations of the study are discussed.

Chapter 6:

Recommendations and Conclusion

6.1. Introduction

The research findings show that Black female primary school principals experience a number of different barriers and challenges in their leadership positions. In this section, a summary of the study findings are presented. Recommendations are also presented.

6.2. Summary of the study findings

The current research study was conducted in selected Clermont schools. The data was collected from Black female school principals with the aims of identifying the challenges and experiences that they undergo in their leadership positions as there is a lack of relevant South African research within this area. This qualitative research study is an interpretative phenomenology analysis. Purposive sampling was used as a sampling method as the researcher purposefully selected six Black women to conduct research as the research aimed to understand the experiences of Black women employed as school principals. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from participants and thematic analysis was used to analyse data.

The study revealed that there are patriarchal related challenges that Black women experienced in their positions that include gender and racial discrimination. Some decisions they make would not be trusted because they are female and they have to work twice as hard to prove their capabilities as school principals. Furthermore, the participants stated that they are undermined by male principals and male teachers as they are deemed to be too soft which leads to them feeling doubted, isolated, and excluded from their colleagues which proved to be a barrier for women occupying these positions. The study revealed that Black female principals experienced racial discrimination from subordinates and the issue of Blackness plagues Black leaders as they are associated with laziness which makes them have to work twice as hard to prove that they are effective leaders. A majority of the Black female principals who participated in the research study are married with children according to the responses obtained in the interview. Therefore, the study revealed that the participants delayed their careers of being school principals as they prioritised raising their families. The researcher concludes that the Black female principals had attained their leadership positions after raising their children successfully

which led to them being able to progress in their professional life. The research finds that participants received support from their husbands and children when facing challenges in their positions. Furthermore, the research finds that an additional challenge is the lack of community support that Black women receive. They suggested that community members struggle to accept authority from a Black woman which poses as an additional barrier.

The study revealed that the Black female principals in the Clermont area have formulated their own coping strategies as there are no formal coping mechanisms that have been established to serve them. Because the study revealed that the participating principals shared similar challenges as primary school principals in both their professional and personal areas, they shared similar coping strategies in overcoming challenges. These coping strategies include gaining strength and council through religion and prayer as Christians, by establishing networks that encourage mutual and emotional support and receiving support from family members. This current study revealed that Black women employ transformational and democratic leadership style which favours their feminine values of being considerate and nourishing. The study revealed that it is important to transform institutional procedures and to alter women and men's attitudes and their way of thinking towards Black women in school leadership positions. By doing this, a more female friendly working environment that is free from gender and racial discrimination will be created and their capabilities as effective leaders will be acknowledged and valued.

The Intersectionality Theory was used as a theoretical framework for the current research study as it describes the oppression and racial and gender discrimination that Black female leaders endure in their positions as school principals. Notwithstanding this, the theory is limited in its research regarding the positive experiences as the study revealed that Black female leaders not only undergo negative experiences, however, they also undergo positive experiences in their positions as school principals as well. Black females leadership skills promote a positive learning environment as they define the school's mission and possess strong instructional leadership. Through these leadership skills, they are able to drive social change which improves the schools and community's environment. Therefore, the research revealed that thorough research needs to be made to ensure that there is a balance established in the experiences that Black female leaders face in their roles as principals. The following recommendations were made in response to the challenges that were identified by the Black female school principals in schools in Clermont area.

6.3. The Researchers Personal Leadership Experiences

The researcher found that some aspects of the research process were more challenging than others. The researcher found conducting research for the literature review was the most challenging aspect as there were limited research articles regarding Black women in leadership positions, particularly in the South African context. The researcher found particular interest in understanding the different experiences and challenges that Black women experience in their roles as leaders. The researcher learnt that their experiences were in relation to the intersection of their race and gender. The researcher was aware that Black women are discriminated against due to their race and gender, however, she only learnt the extent of this discrimination when the research was being conducted. As challenging as some aspects of the research were, there were some aspects of the research that the researcher found interesting. The researcher thoroughly enjoyed conducting interviews as interacting with Black women in leadership positions that the researcher aspires to occupy in the future, found to be inspirational for her. Learning and understanding how participants overcome different challenges proved to be of interest to the researcher and she looks forward to applying these methods in the future when facing adversity. The researcher was already aware of the different leadership styles that existed, however, the research process made her understand how to apply these styles in leadership positions and what different results they each yield. Additionally, the researcher has learnt the different leadership traits that leaders need to inherent within themselves to enable them to become effective leaders.

6.4. Recommendations

Discussed below are the recommendations that were identified to overcome challenges that were identified in the current research study.

Due to the demanding schedule that the Black female school principals have in their leadership positions, establishing a balance between their personal life and professional life is imperative to ensure that they do not neglect their respective roles (May, 2016; Mthembu, 2013). Therefore, the researcher recommends that the Black female principals need to delegate their school-related tasks and workload among other school members, subordinate teachers and form a collaborative relationship with them to ensure that teamwork is ensured and to overcome work-related stress. Furthermore, they should continue integrating leadership styles such as transformational and democratic leadership in ensuring that maximum effort in effective

leadership is exerted. The researcher recommends that those who find it challenging to balance the professional and personal roles need to surround themselves with supportive people who understand the hardships of assuming leadership positions and the duties and responsibilities accompanying the position.

The researcher recommends that some strategies be implemented to reduce the feelings of exclusion and isolation that they experience. The school principals can implement regular team building exercises and recreational activities with subordinate teachers and staff members. The researcher further recommends that new principals form close relationships and allies with the subordinate staff and school secretaries who have been employed at the school for a long time and have worked with the principal previously employed by the school. There may be already implemented school committees and additional task teams, therefore, the recently hired school principals need to develop working relationships with these group members. Formulating close and trusting relationships with other staff members may take some time, however, it is instrumental that school principals support and encourage their subordinate staff members to ensure that the subordinate teachers and staff feel respected and valued by their new school principal (May, 2016).

The researcher recommends that as a coping strategy, the school principals solicit involvement from the community and parents of the school children. The school principals can develop programmes that enable the broader school community to interact with the school principal, their children and the learners' class teachers outside of the school (Meryl, 2016). These programmes are aimed at developing better positive relationships between the community members involved with the school. The study suggests that it is imperative that the school principals receive support from community members as support assists Black women to succeed in their leadership positions.

The literature review confirms that establishing supportive networks is an essential coping mechanism for Black women employed as school principals (Mthembu, 2013). Therefore, the researcher encourages a continuation of these networking programmes that enables Black women to offer each other advice on pressing school-related concerns, to encourage, assist and foster mutual and support structures between each other in their leadership positions (Mthembu, 2013). Additionally, the networking systems enable Black women to talk about their challenges, their experiences and share their coping mechanisms. The researcher

recommends that Black female leaders in the Clermont area involve and familiarise themselves with networking programmes in their community. Furthermore, the researcher recommends the Black female school principals to continue to gain their strength through spirituality and prayer to overcome challenging aspects of their leadership positions.

6.5. Recommendations to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education

This section makes further recommendations to the KwaZulu-Natal Education Department, policy makers and South African government. The study recommends that Black women should be appointed in school leadership positions despite the racial and gender discrimination that they face in these positions. The research findings indicate that there is an underrepresentation of Black women employed as school principal in Clermont schools. Firstly, the study suggests that the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education need to attempt to rectify this and strive to appoint more Black female school principals in both primary and high schools. Secondly, it is recommended that the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education provide funding for networking and training programmes to enable and encourage school principals to share their coping mechanisms and unique experiences with other Black women in similar positions. Thirdly, the research study recommends that policy makers and the government review current gender policies in ensuring that their more effective while addressing issues that are raised by women in networking programmes (May, 2016). There should be regular implementation of additional programmes such as workshops and meetings where education stakeholders are made aware of gender policies that are directed at women in educational leadership positions.

6.6. Limitations encountered by the researcher

The researcher encountered some challenges conducting this research study. It proved to be a challenge to collect data as the researcher felt as though some participants were hesitant regarding being interviewed and were requesting the research questions a few days prior to being interviewed. There were research participants who attempted to convince me to interview other Black female leaders such as Head of Department and one participant refused to participate in the research study. The researcher attributed this to the Black women feeling insecure about having to explain their leadership position. There were, however, other participants who shared their excitement regarding being interviewed.

6.7. Conclusion

In light of the study findings, it can be concluded that Black female primary school principals from the Clermont area have the capabilities of leading their school effectively despite there being a number of challenges that they encounter in their positions. The research study revealed challenges that have both intrinsic and extrinsic factors: family and personal related challenges, school related, and community challenges. Additional challenges include gender and racial discrimination, and stereotypical perceptions against Black women and that of their capabilities to effectively lead schools in the Clermont area in Durban as primary school principals.

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Appendix 1



School of Applied Human Sciences
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Howard College
Durban
4041

Department Of Education

Pietermaritzburg
Private Bag X9137
3200

February 2020

Dear Miss Phindile Duma

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

Greetings

My name is Nokukhanya Luthuli and I am a Masters in Industrial Psychology student at University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am conducting a research titled **Leadership experiences of Black female principals in the Durban area**. This research project will be conducted under the supervision of Dr Shanya Reuben (Howard College, UKZN).

I am hereby seeking your consent to approach a number of Black female school principals in the Clermont area to interview and collect data from for this project.

Pseudonyms will be used instead of real names in the reporting of data. I undertake to uphold the autonomy of all participants. Participation is voluntary; therefore, participants are free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to themselves. There will be no financial benefit from their participation in this research project and participants will be asked to complete a consent form before the start of interviews.

Supervisors contact details:

Dr Shanya Reuben

Tel No. 031 266 2861

Email: reuben@ukzn.ac.za

My contact details are:

Nokukhanya Luthuli

Cell No. 081 305 2808

Email: khanyoluthuli3@gmail.com

I thank you in anticipation for a positive response.

Yours faithfully,

Nokukhanya Luthuli

Appendix 2



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma/Buyi Ntuli

Tel: 0333921063/1051

Ref.:2/4/8/4047

Miss Nokukhanya Luthuli

**P.O. Box
357
Clernaville
3610**

Dear Miss Luthuli


PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DōE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: “**LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES OF BLACK FEMALE PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE DURBAN AREA**”, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 28 January 2020 to 10 January 2022.

7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma/Ms Buyi Ntuli at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

UMLAZI DISTRICT



Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department
Education Date: 28 January 2020

Appendix 3



30 October 2020

Miss Nokukhanya Lorraine
Luthuli (215002583) School of
Applied Human Sc
Howard College

Dear Miss Luthuli,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00001695/2020

Project title: Leadership Experiences of Black Female Principals in the Durban Area

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 17 June 2020 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL** on the following condition:

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries,

please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 30 October 2021.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Professor Dipane Hlalele.

Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

Appendix 4

Consent Letter and Information Sheet

Dear Participant

My name is Nokukhanya Luthuli and I am the project leader for the research study we are asking you to participate in. I am currently studying Masters of Social Sciences (Industrial Psychology) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College.

The research study that you have been asked to participate is interested in identifying the experiences and the successes and challenges that Black female leaders who are employed as school principals at the Clermont area in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal face in their roles. Although there is an established body of empirical research on Black female experiences, it is mainly American research and little literature studies exist in South African. The title of the research is: Leadership experiences of Black female primary school principals in the Durban area.

We would like you to participate by agreeing to undergo a semi-structured interview where an interviewer will ask you various questions about the topic. The interview should last about 45 to 60 minutes.

Your participation in the project is entirely voluntary. No one can or should force you or put pressure on you to participate. All of your responses during the one-on-one sessions will be dealt with in a confidential manner. We are going to ask you for a name that is different from your real name. We will use this other name when referring to anything you might have said during the interview. In this way no one will ever know that it was you who was responding. In addition to this we will not state in which schools the studies were conducted in. We will only state that it was at the Clermont area in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. This further ensures that no one will ever be able to identify you as one of the individuals' participating in the interview.

You are free to withdraw from the research process at any point. There will be absolutely no negative or undesirable consequences for withdrawing from the research.

While there may not be any individual benefit for participating in the project, you will be contributing to a body of knowledge and it is hoped that what you tell us will elicit a better understanding of the experiences and the different challenges that Black women face in their roles as school principals.

If you have any queries or concerns please feel to contact me:

Khanyoluthuli3@gmail.com/ 0813052808

Kind regards,

Nokukhanya Luthuli

I _____ (please fill in your name) give my consent to participate in the above mentioned research study.

I hereby consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Your choice of a pseudonym (a name different to your real one that will be used in the write-up of the study report): _____

Contact details of the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC)

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X54001

Durban 4000

Telephone: 031 260 3587

Fax: 031 260 4609

Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za/ snymanm@ukzn.ac.za/ mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

Appendix 5

- 1.) Please tell me a little bit about yourself?
- 2.) Tell me about the decision you made to become a school principal. What are the steps you took in order to become a school principal?
- 3.) Does being a female impact on your position as a leader? Please explain.
- 4.) Does being Black African impact on your position as a leader? Please explain.
- 5.) Did you perceive or experience any barriers while trying to attain the position as a school principal?
- 6.) What are the daily challenges you encounter in reference to your position as a school principal? How do you overcome these challenges encountered in your position as a school principal?
- 7.) What do you love most about your job? What are the positive experiences you encounter in reference to your position as a school principal?
- 8.) What do you understand about the concept of leadership?
- 9.) What personal characteristics do you think one should have in order to be a strong leader?
- 10.) Please describe your leadership style?