UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

CHALLENGES FACED BY FEMALE EDUCATORS INTO PRINCIPAL POSITIONS

IN THE IMBALI CIRCUIT

Fikile Bongi Hope Ngcobo   Supervisor's Signature:…………………….

2015

SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT

Thisdissertation has been submitted with / without my approval

………………………………….

Mr S. D. Bayeni

December 2015

DECLARATION

IFikileBongi Hope Ngcobo declare that:

i. The research titled **"Challenges faced by female educators into principal positions inthe Imbali circuit"** is my original work.

ii. This dissertation has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.

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vii. This dissertation was submitted for the Masters in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

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

F.B.H. Ngcobo (952059545)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am deeply indebted to the following people who made my dissertation possible:

- ❖ To God almighty for sustaining me up to this far.
- ❖ My supervisor, Mr S. D. Bayeni for his invaluable intellectual stimulation, guidance and support and for never giving up on me.
- ❖ My lecturers in the School of Education, I salute you all for contributing in one way or the other for the successful completion of this programme.
- ❖ The eight women who so willingly and selflessly participated in my study.
- ❖ My husband Mr Zakhe Osborn Ngcobo for spending many sleepless nights with me, ensuring that I was never alone while I worked.
- ❖ My one and only daughter Bongiwe Siphesihle Ngcobo for her encouragement and love.
- ❖ My sister Sheilla Gloria Thembi Sishi for supporting me from afar to complete my scholarly work.
- ❖ To all my MEd group mates, Zamo Ncokwana and Stephen Phiri for moral support, encouraging, motivation and for not allowing me to ―call it quits.‖
- ❖ To the four principals of schools where the study was conducted, you were so supportive and very understanding.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is firstly, dedicated to my late parentsNomusa Ednah and Mandlakapheli ElijahHlongwa who has never been at the University but believed in me that I can make it up to this far. Secondly, to my late sister: Thandaza Bajabulile Marigold and my late brother: Christian Bhekumuzi Khehla Hlongwa.Lastly, to my late mother-in-law: Isabella Ntombi and my late father-in-law Victor Herbert Bafana Ngcobo for allowing me to further my studies.Your kind love has impacted my life so much; you will always be a pillar of my strength. May their souls rest in peace.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate challenges faced by female educators into principal positions in high schools especially in the Imbali Circuit.

The methodology used was qualitative. A case study method was adopted. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with the four female head of departments and four female deputy principals in four selected high schools. Four high schools in the Imbali Circuit were purposively selected for the study. The data gathered was transcribed, coded, organised into themes, categories and sub-categories. Finally, the data was analysed.

The study was located in the feminist theory because what is happening in high schools today can be explained in terms of the assertions made in feminist theory. This theory provides an explanation as to why women are under-represented in leadership and management positions in high schools.

Findings reveal that gender stereotypes, societal norms and cultural factors has a strong impact in the appointment of women in leadership and management positions of principals, because are rather based on the perception that women are viewed by someas being incapable of leading.On the other hand, the findings have revealed two set of groups; those who are positive about the outcome and those who are negative. Three participants indicated that though women are under-represented in principal positions in high schools but they are still positive and always willing to comply and accept the situation as it is.

The study recommended opportunities for further research into gender issues in education which is an under-researched area as evidenced in the literature reviewed for this study. Again, it was recommended, based on the fact that most female educators in South Africa started their teaching careers during the apartheid era in which they pursued their careers in an environment that was influenced by gender segregation. This negative perception towards them still persists in the post-apartheid South Africa; therefore, there is a need to instil in them a positive mind set which is in line with democratic contemporary South Africa. This can be achieved through the intervention of the Department of Basic Education and ensure that the Gender Equity Act, the Constitution of South Africa (1996), the Employment of Educators Act, the Employment Equity Act, and the White Paper on Affirmative Action are

referred to, to ensure fairness and equality in the appointment of candidates for principal positions.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND, FOCUS, PURPOSE AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study explored the under-representation of women inprincipalpositions in secondary schools and their experience of this phenomenon in schools. Research has shown that globally, women dominate the teaching profession across most sectors of schooling, but when it comes to principal positions, women were generally still in the minority (Owen & Todor, 1993; Bush & West-Burnham, 1994; Morris, 1999).

In South Africa it was noted that the workforce that made up the education sector was predominantly female. Yet the females were highly under-represented in principal positions and that was strongly evident in secondary schools. That happened in spite of equitable representation of women in all sectors in terms of gender equity. Motshekga (2013) argues that this is not representative of the government's vision of addressing historical injustice such as gender inequity. Unfortunately, there are people who maintain that women should not be leaders. To this end, Baxter (2009, p. 58) says ―Women are seen by the society [South African] as people who are not made for principal position in spite of their academic achievements". Given this short background, this study sought to critically engage with the phenomenon of the under-representation of women at the level of principalship in secondary schools. Through this study I wanted to understand why there were few female principals in secondary schools especially in the Imbali Circuit despite the existence of gender equity policies.

My experience as a female principal at a primary school has made me aware of this problem and I suspected that there might be biased practices in the selection process of secondary school principals which sought to retain the *status quo*. The Imbali Circuit has eleven secondary schools but of the eleven schools none of them have a female principal. Under representation of female principals occurs even though the Gender Equity Act was passed in 1996 to promote the equitable employment of female personnel in all sectors of government

including secondary schools. The literature that I have reviewed thus farsuggests that very little has been done to address this challenge in the specific context of leadership and management in education. I was therefore convinced that there was a need to pursue this study.

1.2 Background of the study

Historically, South African women, especially black women were disadvantaged in many ways. They did not get the same opportunity to become leaders in schools as their male counterparts. Instead they were expected to be mothers, wives, caregivers and nurturers. Supporting the above statement, Phendla (2004) argues that black women school leaders are obliged to learn to cope across the pressure created by culture, language and customary law. Research, as shown by Thurman (2004) has shown that under-representation of women in secondary school principal positions is not only unique to South Africa but also found in the United States. Thurman's (2004) arguments correspond with the one made by Wrushen and Sherman (2008) when they state that the scarcity of women in principalposition in secondary schools is a worldwide phenomenon.

The South African situation is no different from other countries mentioned above. Even after twenty years of democracy when policies have been formulated to address this problem, in practice gender inequality still prevails in principal positions. Despite affirmative action and gender mainstreaming initiatives within education, women in South Africa continue to fight against sexist cultural attitudes in their communities environments (Moorosi, 2010). Gender inequality is still evident in the educational system especially in leadership and management where women are deprived of opportunities of senior positions (principalship) that they rightfully deserve. Hence, I felt a need and an interest to pursue this study.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Historically, women have been marginalised, discriminated against, oppressed and excluded from participating in principal positions (Mannah, 2008). Even today, in the Department of Basic Education, women numerically dominate the sector but still, they are on the periphery as compared to their male counter-parts who occupy central roles in decision making. Under-representation of women in principalpositions in secondary school is strongly evident, it still remains a male territory and this is a major concern (Coleman, 2001; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). We cannot deny the presence of females in the school management team but they

always serve as Deputy Principals and Head of Departments. Although there are many females in the school management teams as Head of Department and Deputy Principals, eleven Secondary Schools in the Imbali Circuit are all headed by male principals. This may suggest to the possible unfairness and injustice practices in the education sector.

Despite the existence of coherent policy on gender equalityand the urgent need to empower women for leadership, progress in women principalship is still at an unimpressive rate. This study is informed and inspired by a lack of realistic application of good policies such as, (Employment Equity Act, 1998; South African School's Act, 1996; Education Labour Relations Act, 1997) which aims at addressing the marginalisation of female in leadership. Hence, this study sought to affirm the need to give female educators a space to get into leadership. There is a need for us to understand why this situation continues and what the participants thinks about this.There are 11 secondary schools in Imbali Circuit but none of them are headed by a female. This raises a question of whether there were no qualified females who would have been appointed as principals in these schools. Under-representation of female principals occurs even though the Gender Equity Act was passed in 1996 to promote the equitable employment of female staff in all government sectors.

1.4 Purpose and rationale for the study

This study sought to explore the motivation and the reason for under-representation of female principals in secondary schools. This is mainly because what is happening in schools today can also be explained in relation to issues raised by the feminist theories. Prior to 1994 in South Africa, there were few women who occupied the position of principalship (Bhengu, 2005). However, after South Africa achieved democracy in 1994, the situation was supposed to start changing for the better. The democratic dispensation created an atmosphere that is conducive for addressing gender discrimination and imbalances in all educational sectors(Fester, 2000). The efforts of the government are evident in other circuits where women hold senior positions in secondary schools as principals but unfortunately female educators do not have that privilege in the Imbali Circuit where the study is conducted.

Greyvenstein (2000) argues that there are serious gender biases in educational management which place female educators at a major disadvantage. The limited number of women in senior management positions such as principalship shows that there is still gender

discrimination in the education system and also suggests that women are not fit to hold senior positions in the education system (Greyvenstein, 2000). As a female principal at a primary school, my observation in the selection of candidates for senior positions at secondary schools shows that female educators are not prioritised for these positions. That could be linked to the stereotypical assumptions that women are soft and not assertive enough to make rational decisions (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

These assumptions about women having not been created to lead make women to be conceived as inferior compared to their male counter parts although they are qualified to be in those positions (Pillay, 2005). International literature (Koch & Irby, 2002; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Pillay, 2005) indicates that female educators in secondary schools have experienced lots of challenges when they apply for senior positions of principalship (Pillay, 2005). This view is also shared by Makura (2009) who argues that some of these challenges are not official but of a societal and cultural origin. In the area of academia, I have interacted with a number of literature reviews both internationally and locally. Such engagements with literature suggest thatvery little has been done to address these challenges in the specific context of education and education management. Hence, I am of the view that there is a need to pursue this study.

1.5Significance of the study

This study is important because leadership and management styles play a pivotal role in the success of the school. This study sought to investigate the under-representation of women in principalpositions within secondary schools especially in the Imbali Circuit. This study was deemed significant, not just because it was conducted with secondary school deputy principals and heads of departments (HODS), but because it provided a platform for them to share their experiences about their challenges. Their challenges were deemed to be important because they were particularly grounded on the issues of gender and whether or not the policy of gender equity was being effectively implemented. Gender equity issues are more of a societal transformation issue and it is important we obtain deeper insights about transformation in schools as principals were tasked with the responsibility of being agents of transformation (Bhengu, 2005).

1.6 An overview of research methodology

This study was a qualitative research which adopted a case study methodology. Case study methodology was deemed relevant for the study because it is the most dominant methodology that is used in qualitative research designs. According to Yin (2009), a case study is a study which is rich in descriptions and details. A qualitative research design is the appropriate design for the proposed study because it is used to find in-depth insights of people's attitude, beliefs and experiences (Marys & Pope, 2000). In this case study semi-structured interviews were used and they took a face-to-face format. More details about issues of methodology are provided in Chapter Three.

1.7 Objectives of the study

The main objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To understand why womeneducators are under-represented in principalpositions in secondaryschools in Imbali Circuit.

2. To identify strategies (if any) that can be employed to promote fairness and justice in the appointment of women educators to principal positions in secondary schools.

3. To obtain an understanding about how female educators view and interpret their under-representation in principal positions in secondary schools.

1.8   Key questions

1. Why are womeneducators under-represented in principalpositions in secondary schools in Imbali Circuit?

2. What strategies (if any) can be employed to promote fairness and justice in appointing women educators to principal positions in secondary schools?

3. How do female educators view and interpret their under-representation in principal positions in secondary schools?

1.9Definitions of key terms

For the purpose of this study, operational definition of key terms is done. These terms are leadership and management and are discussed below.

Leadership

The concept of leadership is defined by various scholars differently. For instance, Bush and West-Burnham (1994) define leadership as an aspect of the relationships between members who are coordinating the efforts of various people in the organisation with a view to ensuring that common organisational goals can be achieved. The notion of leadership is couched in its imperative to influence the behaviour of people in organisation so that they willingly strive to achieve organisational goals (Maree, 2007). That is why the practice of leadership is important; it is through leadership that the life and direction of the school is given and realised (Ngcobo, 2010).

Management

According to Bush (2003), management is more about the attainment of organisational goals in an effective and efficient manner through planning, organising, leading and controlling organisational resources. Implied in this definition is the notion of utilising management function such as planning, organising and other functions in order to achieve the set goals. Therefore, the leader has to set goals and give directions about how such goals have to be realised. In the light of the above definitions, management and leadership can mean that, within the school context, these activities are performed by a person in the position of the head of an institution. In the case of the school, it is the principal. This suggests that a person may become a manager and a leader simultaneously depending on the situation.

1.10 Demarcation of the study

The study was conducted in KwaZulu-Natal province, in the Imbali Circuit under the UMgungundlovu District. Four secondary schools and eight participants were sampled. The participants were Deputy Principals and the Head of Departments.

1.11 Outline of the study

The report of this study is composed of five chapters. Each chapter focuses on one specific aspect of the research process and each of these components is explained in the section below.

ChapterOne

This chapter introduces the study by providing an overview of the study. The chapter provides a historical background regarding the position of female educators and challenges

they faced as they attempted to occupy leadership positions such as principalship in the pre and post 1994 period.

ChapterTwo

This chapter contains a discussion of the literature that was reviewed in relation to the study. Towards the end of the chapter, there is a discussion of the theoretical framework used in this study.

ChapterThree

This chapter describes the research design and methodology that was used in carrying out the study. This chapter also describes the instruments that were used to generate data. Furthermore the sampling methods used are explained, justification for the use of four secondary schools and eight participants sampled is also discussed.

ChapterFour

This chapter discusses the presentation of data that was generated from eight selected participants from four secondary schools in the Imbali Circuit under UMgungundlovu District.

ChapterFive

This chapter presents the findings and makes recommendations based on the findings. As part of presenting the findings, this chapter also attempts to provide the reader with a clear picture of challenges faced by female educators as they attempt to get into principalship positions.

1.12 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an orientation and overview of the study. Various aspects of the research process, such as the background, the statement of the problem, the rationale, the significance of the study, are presented. The next chapter discusses the review of literature on the challenges faced by women principals.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the study and thus provided an orientation of the study and the focus of the research. This chapter presents and discusses the review of literature on women leaders and their experiences as well as the challenges that they face when they assume management positions. Literature has shown that females have been, and still are facing a multiplicity of challenges at work place. Such challenges are influenced by contextual underpinnings which take the form of micro political and social factors. This study focused on challenges that females, particularly, aspirant female leaders face in the education sector in South Africa. It is noted by good policies such as the (Employment Equity Act of 1998; the South African School's Act of 1996; the Education Labour Relations Act of 1997) were aimed at addressing the marginalisation of female leaders at school level(DoE, 2000). These pieces of legislation also aimed atembracing the practice of affirming and giving female leaders and managers space to get into leadership which apparently is not happening as originally anticipated.

Officially, female teachers are not barred from getting into school management positions such as principal mainly on the basis of gender. However, unofficially, they experience marginalisation which hinders them from taking on principalpositions and this constitutes a challenge which is the focus of this study. These challenges, contrary to what the policies are saying contravene the code of good ethics(Blackmore, 1999). This has created a situation where some women themselves have become docile in demonstrating competence in their workforces(Diko, 2007).Furthermore, Morley (2013) in stimulus paper series suggests that women and men in higher education are largely placed differently, with differential access to leadership, and hence influencing meanings, discourses and practices. While numbers have increased in some countries, for example, in Sweden it is indisputable that women are under-represented in senior leadership positions internationally. Gender in leadership is more about focussing on women's under-representation. In other words, the gendered world affects the very nature of knowledge production itself.

In some cases women are not offered the opportunity to exercise leadership and management in the position of principals in secondary schools (Nkonyane, 2008).Therefore, many ambitious women opt to exit the schooling system to access other fields that promote bias-free and fair labour processes (Coleman, 2001). The discussion of literature is organised according to the main themes such as Historical position of South African women in leadership positions prior and post democratisation in 1994; the challenges faced by female educators in occupying principal positions; strategies to promote fairness and justice and power dynamics between women and their male counterparts.

2.2.A historical position of South African women in leadership positions prior and post democratisation in 1994

Prior to 1994, the South African education system was based on and informed by apartheid. Such education system was founded on the principle of division and segregation in terms of gender, race and lack of representation(Lumby, 2011).Mohlala(2010) documented evidence that shows that women were under-represented in the positions of leadership in schools, moreso in secondary schools. Leadership positions were occupied by males while women occupied Post Level One educator without any position and with fewer opportunities to be appointed in senior positions.

The constitution of the Republic of South Africa defines South Africa as ―being a sovereign, non-racial, non-sounded exist state" (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) and which establishes amongst others, the right to gender equity, this is provided for in the Bill of Rights as well as in section 187 of Labour Relations Act (No. 66 of 1995). The first structure that is put into place in the constitution of South Africa by the South African government is to promote gender equality and empowerment in South Africa as the Commission for Gender Equity (CGE) which is Act No. 108 of 1996(Department of Education, 2000). The Commission for Gender Equity was given a responsibility of monitoring the compliance of the principle of gender equity, educating and informing the public about gender equality and processing gender complaints from the public (Republic of South Africa, 1996a).

In 1994, when the African National Congress took over to lead the government, they had to address the imbalances of the past. New policies had to be formulated and implemented such as the Employment of Educators Act (No. 76 of 1998); Employment Equity Act (No. 55 of

1998; Labour Relations Act (No. 66 of 1995). These policies aimed at phasing out the unfair and the unjust practices of the apartheid regime including the discrimination of women in leadership positions that were victims of gender-based discrimination are addressed in the Employment Equity Act No. 76 of 1998(Department of Education, 2000).The democratic government that came into power in 1994 put considerable efforts through the introduction of gender equity policies to transform opportunities for women. However, it is clear that the gender equality principles espoused in such policy documents have not been translated into practice. For instance, the HRM Circular No. 62 of 2008 shows that the number of males of all races occupying the top levels positions in schools such as principals and deputies make up 77%, while females of all races make up 23% in each of these two levels in education.

This statistics is vital in that itshows that in the 21 years after democracy, very little has changed in the pursuit for gender equality in education in so far the KZN Education Department is concerned. Therefore, one may conclude that this has relevance in this study as the focus is on the challenges faced by female educators into principal positions especially insecondary schools of the Imbali circuit. The argument made in HRM Circ. No. 62 of 2008, appeared to be contradicted by the findings which posit that after 1994 there has been an increase in the employment of women in leadership positions of princpalship both in primary and in secondary School. However, in the Imbali Circuit nothing has changed (Nandraj, 2003). However, there is a contradiction between Nandraj's (2003) findings and that of Motshekga (2013) where women were found to constitute a majority in the society and subsequently in the education sector, yet senior positions such as principals are still dominated by males. This is not the government vision on policies formulated on Employment Equity Act and Labour Relations Act. These pieces of legislation aimed at phasing out unfair, unjust practices and the discrimination of women in leadership positions of principals.

2.3 Challenges faced female educators in acquiring leadership positions

Literature points to various challenges that female educators face in their duties within the organisation. These can be internal or external challenges which hinder the progress of women aiming towards leadership (Coleman, 1997). Whatever the cause of these challenges, their consequences constitute barriers to the educator's progress. The next sections deal with both the internal and the external challenges.

2.3.1 Internal challenges

By internal challenges I mean that society prescribes and divides individuals and ascribes roles to them accordingly(Coleman, 2001). In the African society a mother is a caregiver to the family and supports the husband in keeping a stable home.All these activities are evidently domestic roles. Internal challenges are issues within women themselves which obstruct their progress in the day-to-day work. Madlala (2007) reveals that women's progress is hindered as a result of multi roles. It may be important here for me to share my experience as a woman in the position of a principal at a primary school for 7 years.

During office hours I attend to my leadership and administrative duties with diligence. When I go home I have to then switch roles to attend to my domestic duties as mother to my daughter and a wife to my husband. While my family is supportive, they do not shoulder a reasonable share of domestic duties with me. Towards the end of the day I am physically exhausted without much rest. This daily struggle wears me out and contributes negatively in the process of balancing my work and family responsibilities. Even in the 21st century there is a glass ceiling shocking around women in positions of leadership (Cubillo &Brown, 2003).

These circumstances mean that women are still prohibited from making a remarkable increase on the top as it is a space dominated by males (Diko, 2007).This makes it difficult for them to move to the next level of leadership because of too much responsibility that they are unable to compete in actual world (Oplatka &Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2006). This scholar further suggests that many will lose ambition to apply for promotion because of anxieties surrounding the thought of failure, lack of awareness of the promotion system, gender based socialisation, low competitiveness, and low self-esteem. Interrupted career development pattern are some of these internal challenges.

2.3.2 External challenges

External challenges are actual competition where men dominate and discourage the progress of women(Coleman, 1997). These are issues that reside outside of women themselves but which hinder their day-to-day duties. According to Madlala (2007), external challenges refer to environmental factors which discourage the progress of women into the previously male dominated world that women do not belong to the work place. This implies that when an environment assumes that men's values and practices are the norm for leadership, women are excluded from principalship(Eagly & Mladinic, 2004). As a result even in the School Management Teams, under-representation of women has been witnessed. Those who are

lucky to aspire for and get into senior positions of management face discrimination (Coleman, 2001).

Some scholars view under-representation of women in principal positions as a result of male dominated power structure and relations in schools (Morris, 1999; Coffey &Delamount, 2000). Van der Westhuizen (1991) defines power as the ability and the manner in which an educational leader executes his authority. Power is further defined by Jorgensen (2007, p. 79) as ―a relation between forces, and every relation between forces is a power relation." In the words of Foucault (1993, p. 336), ―where there is power there is resistance." According to these authors, power is everywhere. However, Pillay (2005) expresses a different notion of power. Pillay (2005) claims that a democratic perception of power means that one can attain decisive power by giving it to the people who are led. Power structure and associations to schools not only reproduce male dominance in educational administration, but also hinders the leadership chances of many women (Oplatka & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2006). Males end up recruiting other males in principal positions because leadership positions are dominated by them.

Power is over emphasised by different scholars because it is still adapted to the society and its stereotypes of thinking hierarchy of male domination that leads to under-representation of women in leadership positions(Inglehart & Wetzel, 2005). A wide range of research explains why women are under-represented in education leadership (Cubillo &Brown, 2003;Oplatka& Hert-Lazarowitz, 2006; Motshekga, 2013). Some of these challenge are societal and its stereotype of thinking cultural background and gender discrimination.

2.4Society and its stereotype of thinking

The consequential explanation is an old cultural stereotype which says that women cannot lead in secondary schools (Lumby, 2011). These are stereotypes that inform the ways in which women are treated in the education sector (Lumby, 2011). According to this line of thought, the word leader is associated with masculinity and patriarchal system still exists which maintains that women cannot lead; people still believe that women's place is in the kitchen(Gray, 1989). The stereotypes of how women operate and how society expects them to operate, still exists. Unfortunately, some men still hold such stereotypes which inform them that they can do one thing at a time but women multi-task yet they are seen as inefficient by the society(Eagly & Mladinic, 2004).This implies that when an environment

assumes that men's values and practices are the norm for leadership, women are excluded from principals and those who are lucky to aspire to senior management positions face discrimination (Coleman, 2001).

According to Gobler *et al.*(2006),outlook denies people's individuality and restricts their potentials. However, research indicates that competency, ability and capability are not related to gender, therefore, the notion that women managers are less intelligent, emotionally unstable and lack focus are also very disturbing (Lumby,2011). Drawing the discussion above, it is evident that gender has nothing to do with competency; therefore, what may be causing women to be under-represented in principal positionscould be related to the view that they have already been prejudiced by the society. Based on the above findings, one may say it is clear that women educators were making the effort and were the majority when it came to upgrading their qualifications but they are not appointed to senior positions of principals.

Society and its stereotype of thinking state that men are better leaders than women (Growe & Montgomery, 2000). Even though this may be the truth in some ways, one may state that women are just as significant to leadership as men. Studies have shown that women lead differently from men, yet barriers occur that obstruct them in excelling into higher positions(Jorgensen, 2007). Nevertheless, one may say that there is a possible far reaching significance for female educators since they lack formal power and respect. Consequently, they are under-represented in the principal positions of the schooling system. A further significance of more males occupying senior positions in secondary schools is that it increases men's chances over females of moving into the higher ranks of education administration in key personal positions(Mannah, 2008).This view is supported by various scholars such as Diko (2007) and Ngcobo (2010) who confirm that there are far less women than men occupying senior leadership positions education and that patriarchal attitudes in the schooling system increase consistently, leaving many women marginalised from development and the system defrauded of the gains of an integrated workforce.

Patriarchal stereotypes frustrate a well-balanced understanding of reality to such a point that even the oppressed become limited in their thinking (Schoeman, 1998). Similarly, Sharpe (2000) indicates that the insight of gender in leadership positions makes men as natural or born leaders, thus implying that females, as opposed to their male counter-parts, are likely to struggle in order to become active leaders. Moreover, it is this reality that has drawn my

attention and interest in exploring the challenges faced by female educators into principal positions in secondary schools.

2.5 Cultural background

Culture creates hasa tendency of giving power to the boys and not to the girls(Morojele, 2011). There is a possibility for conflict to start from individual fighting over power (Bush, 2003). Furthermore, one may argue that this conflict must be handled with tact and diplomacy because it can be as a consequence of females trying to liberate themselves from outward male domination(Mukasa, 2008).Therefore, one may say that being women at a time and in a country that pursues to empower women is in itself a power base.

A number of scholars have recommended numerous clarifications to account for under-representation of women in principal positions in education especially in secondary schools. All explanations revolves around cultural factors which link masculine features as a contributing factor to effective leadership while feminine attributes and qualities contribute to ineffective leadership (Bush &West-Burnham, 1994). This view is also shared by Blackmore (1993) when arguing about the theories of management which give an impression that those who practice management must have male qualities.

Nonetheless, one may argue that the under-representation of females at principal positions at secondary schools stems from the problems both sociocultural and institutional. Gauss (2011) pointed out that in Indonesia the majority of teachers are women in almost all classrooms in secondary schools, however they are not majority in numbers in the principalship roles. In other words, women are under-represented in the position of principalships. According to the statistics of the Makassar's District of National Education Office, women make up the largest percentage with men (Gaus, 2011). However, the increase in the number of female teachers has not been accompanied by a significant change in the proportion of women at principalship levels, which are still dominated by men. Therefore, one may conclude that this is not only a South African challenge but an international one as well.

2.6 Gender discrimination

Gender discrimination constitutesexperiences of people based to their gender, due to unequal power between males and females in society(Chancer & Watkins, 2006).Furthermore, Chancer & Watkins(2006) state that these experiences conditioned by cultural background

tend to undermine females and make them feel inferior. Gender discrimination and freedom from discrimination is contained in the South African Bill of Rights that people should be treated fairly and without discrimination based on gender, race, or class (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). In terms of the provision of the Bill of Rights, female teachers and managers should also enjoy protection from discrimination. A study conducted by Ngcobo (1996) on secondary schools revealed that educators, both male and females, who have worked with female managers had observed how gender biases against women result in discrimination against women in management. Ngcobo's (1996) study revealed that preconceived insights coming from prejudice is considered to be real.

Gender bias is universal even though it undertakes different forms in different contexts depending on the cultural, social and economic parameters that define gender relations (Morojele, 2011). The negative attitudes of teachers at school reveal a certain influence from society that shows discrimination by gender, race and class (Anderson, 2005). This emotion is reinforced by Kanter (1997) who also points out that the cultures of the workplace can discriminate and downgrade women from progressing professionally. This occurs against the backdrop of male personnel who continuously network with the aim of perpetuating their advantages as males. Some of the gendered issues that hinder women from applying for senior positions are that of inequality and discrimination(Cubillo & Brown, 2003). It is more connected to power in teaching means challenging power throughout the society (Gray, 1989; Morojele, 2011). The downgrading of women can be credited to the consequence of particular power relations in our South African society (Grant, 2005). As a result, one may argue that leadership not only became to be assumed as a male domain but also the privilege of an individual in a formal position.

Moreover, Kattula (2011) contended that the present configuration of school administration is inextricably woven with traditional gender definitions that are premised on males controlling females. Women are viewed as capable when fulfilling the position of a classroom teacher; however when it comes to the administrative level, women are not viewed in the same capacity, (Kattula, 2011). One of the findings included the fact that while females have made progress acquiring elementary principalships, they have made little progress in acquiring secondary principalships. Moreover, in the Imbali Circuit where the study is conducted there is not even one single female principal out of eleven secondary schools.

2.7 Power dynamics between women and male counterparts

Gender and power reflects inequalities as well as imbalances (Connell, 2003). This scholar further argues that if authority is defined as legitimate, then we can deduce that the main axis of the power structure of gender is general connection of authority with masculinity (Connell, 1995). The assumption is that males are given first preference when it comes to promotion because of the belief that females should remain subordinate to men. This assumption makes one to go deeper in terms of understanding the subordinate position of female educators that hinders their upward mobility in the leadership and management ladder in schools. Therefore, one may argue that it leads to women being excluded by their male counter-parts in terms of doing other managerial duties within the school.

Furthermore, the marginalisation of female educators by male school managers through sexual division of power and sexual division of labour is understood in a broader context(Connell, 2003).My personal experience as a principal in my circuit indicates that, many schools, particularly secondary schools, are managed in a way that promotes patriarchy, where management posts are earmarked for male educators. Even the interview committee is structured in such a way that males are dominating in the panellists. Evidently, that may contribute to female interviewees feeling intimidated by their male counter-parts during the process of the interview session. Connell (2003) argues that those with powers find their way to avoid the gender equity legislation and other principles that speak to equity and side line their female colleagues. Patriarchy becomes the order for the day.

Throughout the last century, the role of females in secondary education has undergone many changes. The message ―women teach and men manage" still exists. Kattula (2011) states that female presence has dominated the educational field, however, male presence has continued to dominate the administrative positions within education. Furthermore, one may say that this means that educators tell students that they can become anything they want as long as they have the necessary will, determination and perseverance. However, tomorrow's future leaders continue to develop in an environment that reinforces and perpetuates gender. Nonetheless, Kattula (2011) states that, what happens in schools influences what happens in society, vice versa. Therefore this may indicate that the gender stratification that once existed still exists today.

2.8 Theoretical frameworks

This study was underpinned by the theory of feminism, and the discussion of feminism takes the form of three strands, namely, liberal feminism, radical feminism and social feminism. The liberal feminism was chosen because of the study focused on women educators and their under-representation in principalpositions particularly in secondary schools.

2.8.1 The theory of feminism and management

In this section I have used different feminist's theories to understand how they view gender issues. The Feminist theory is broad and can be divided into liberal feminism, radical feminism and social feminism(Harding, 1987). These theories are used to explore how we can comprehend social, cultural and historical practices which relate to the debates surrounding issues of marginalisation based on gender and such debates are relevant for this study(Hooks, 2000).This study explored gender-related challenges that female educators experience in their appointment to senior positions of principalship in secondary schools. Hence, this sub-section addresses feminist theories and their suggestions for school management.

According to Hooks (2000), feminism seeks justice for females and to eliminate gender inequality. Feminism holds that women are not treated the same as men, and that there is a necessity to encourage justice and the liberation of women (Hartmann, 2003). It is assumed that if women are treated in the same way as men that would have an influence in allowing effective school management (Oplatka & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2006). The reason the study is located in this theory is that, what I have consistently seen happening in secondary schools today can be better understood from the perspectives of feminist theory. Feminist theory seems to provide an explanation as to why women are under-represented in principal positions in education mainly in secondary schools (Hooks, 2000).

Feminist theory critiques the notion of male supremacy and suggests that all people are created equal and women should not be denied the equality of opportunities they deserve because of their gender(Hartmann, 2003). These theories include liberal feminism, social feminism and radical feminism. Liberal feminism suggests that both men and women should have equal rights(Grogan, 1996). Socialist feminist are concerned about the issues of social

class while on the other hand, radical feminist theory questions the notion of women as subordinates to men and looks at patriarchy as the perpetrator of domination, exploitation and oppression of women by men (Msane, 2007). Chancer and Watkins (2006) claim that the form of limitations that hinder such progress and success should be eliminated. Feminist theories also suggest that all people are created equal; therefore one may argue that women should not be denied the equality of opportunities they rightfully deserve because of gender. The next section pays special focus on liberal feminism.

2.8.2 Liberal feminism

Liberal feminists fight for equal opportunities and aim to improve the condition of females(Hartmann, 2003). Liberal feminists aim at eliminating all the barriers to education that causes inequality among women as a disadvantaged gender from working towards their fullest potential(Grogan, 1996). It fights against sex stereotypes and sex discrimination and advocate for equal opportunities(Hooks, 2000).This study was located in liberal feminist because of its focus on women who do not enjoy human rights;and therefore are arguably not free; women who do not seen to be recognised by society as being capable to be appointed in principalpositions. Furthermore, this theory is useful in this study because it encourages female Deputies Principals and Head of Departments to see themselves as capable, effective and good managers in schools and who qualify to be principals. This theoretical framing was preferred because female educators have for so long been deprived of senior positions of principals in secondary school due the prejudices they suffer in the hands of their male counterparts.

Therefore, it is important to explore and gain insights about what is taking place in secondary schools and understand what makes women educators to be under-represented in senior positions such as that of principals as policy prescribes. Liberal feminists strive for equal opportunities and present affirmative action as a significant approach to develop the position of females(Coffey & Delamount, 2000). However, it is worth noting that the realisation of equal opportunities is hindered by factors such gender stereotypes, and these are based on the grounds which suggest that the division of labour is not gender neutral (Calas & Smircish, 1996). Women's unequal treatment is unfair and must be remedied if the objectives of liberalism are to be achieved in the society as a whole. Liberal feminists appeal to the central values of liberty, equality and fairness for all to justify women's rights (Grogan, 1996). Liberal feminists believe that access to equality in education and school management position

should be provided equally for both sexes. Any laws that inhibit equal rights of men and females to participate in school management must be banned (Msane, 2007). The next section focuses on radical feminism which is different from liberal feminism.

2.8.3 Radical feminism

Radical feminists view women as biologically not as strong as men (Coffey & Delamount, 2000). There are two important concepts within radical feminism (Weiner, 1994). The first one is patriarchy and the second is the universal oppression of women. Patriarchy is described by Weiner (1994) as historical dominance of men over women.Universal political oppression of women projects men the oppressors and women the oppressed.

These dynamics may have a bearing on how women are viewed and respected in leadership positions as they give pointers to the nature of the challenges that women are experiencing in schools. Reynolds (2003) concurs with Weiner (1994) who argues that radical feminism view the oppression of females as the most fundamental form of male domination and that patriarchal power rests on the social meaning given to biological sexual differences between males and females. Whitehead (2009) argues that one site where men have been and continue to be at the centre is education management. This centrality is marked both by men's numerical dominance and a particular masculinity organisational hegemony(Grogan, 1996). Hence, one may argue that female manager's experiences are due to male domination and females have to perform their management duties in the way that impresses men.

However, Reynolds (2003) notes how this puts female managers under pressure to practise their management in ways that are acceptable to men rather than developing their own unique styles that draw from female experiences. A school is an organisation which requires harmony and good relationships in order to be successful but yet they are used as oppressive political factor for perpetuating and conveying stereotyped images that prevent women from climbing the ladder(Mukasa, 2008). It is not surprising that if some members of staff are to be dominant over the others it usually causes tension, mismatch and resistance, and therefore undermines the effectiveness of women in carrying out their duties. Male educators tend to despise working under a female leader. This is due to the inculcated philosophy of patriarchy which makes them to believe that they should always occupy leading position in society solely on the basis of their gender.

2.8.4 Socialist feminist

The socialist feminist theory is grounded on the issue of social class and gender inequality (Chancer & Watkins, 2006). This theory recommends extensive cultural and economic actions to challenge both capitalism and patriarchy(Oplatka & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2006). Such a theory embraces the view that there should be equal chances for both men and women labours and recommend policies that would escalate child care and family leave programmes and men's participation in domestic work(Nandraj, 2003).According to Nandraj (2003), socialist feminist states that capitalism and patriarchy result in women's subordination; those women are manufactures of cheap labour, and that women are subject to capitalist oppression are economically dependent on men.

2.9. Supporting female educators through policy implementation

Policies are considered as a key driving force in providing support for educators including female educators. The appropriate legislation includes the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996); the National Education Policy (No. 27 of 1996) and the Skills Development Act (No. 97 of 1998). In other words, if these policies are implemented correctly, we will be able to see women occupying principal positions such as principals in secondary schools. These policies set the values and the framework for non-discrimination andare centred on human rights protection, social justice and democracy (Jansen & Sayed, 2001). When such policies are in place, females need to be well-informed of them and immediate implementation need to take place.

However, it is also recommended that in order for people to implement policy they must have skills and knowledge (Fester, 2000). For instance, women School Management Team members need to interact with these policies so that they can get a clear understanding on how they should be implemented. In that way, they will be able to challenge their male counter-parts if they are implemented incorrectly. Successful implementation of policy depends on two main factors, namely, the will and local capacity(Jansen & Sayed, 2001). The will factor involves individual's motivation accompanied by beliefs, attitudes and implementers reaction. Motivation as defined by Heystek, *et al*. (2008) is the force that energises behaviours and gives direction to behaviour.

These policies mentioned earlier on as indicated in the Department of Education Manual on Instrumental Leadership (Department of Education, 2000) aimed to promote fairness, diversity and human right protection. These policies encourage ambitious women who assume school management positions and to accept a style of management which supports the values of gender equity. One may argue that policies are there but people need to understand and acquaint themselves with them. Nonetheless, one may also state that people who are the custodians of these policies need to make the policies available to everyone.

2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, literature has been reviewed with particular reference to challenges faced by female educators into principal positions in secondary schools both international and locally. This chapter has also presented a theoretical framework which was used to analyse the research. Furthermore, the chapter has revealed the theories underpinning the study and it drew from feminist theory. Feminist theory analyses the concept of male authority and suggests that leadership is not a biological function of a male. Meanwhile, policy implementation to support female educators suggests that the successful policy implementation depends on implementers will. The next chapter discusses the design and methodology utilised in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I have reviewed literature which focused on the challenges faced by female educators when they get into principalship positions. The reviewand of literature presented both local and international perspectives on the subject. Furthermore, Chapter Two also presents a theoretical framework which underpinned this study. This chapter discusses the research design and methodology underpinning the study. This chapter starts by discussing the research paradigm within which the problem is located, and the paradigm discussion is followed by the research design. The discussion of the methodology and methods that were used in generating the data follows. Issues of data analysis, measures to ensure trustworthiness and ethics are discussed later.

3.2 Research paradigm

A research paradigm represents a particular worldview that defines, for the researchers who carry this view, what it is acceptable to research and how (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). My study is located within the interpretivistparadigm. I am researching the challenges faced by female educators into principalpositions from a feminist perspective. The interpretivist paradigm was chosen because it is about how people attach meaning to their world and the way they see the world influences the way they interpret it (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Interpretivists aim is to understand the meaning which informs human behaviour. In the context of this study, I wanted to understand why women were under-represented inprincipal positions more especially in secondary schools.

There seems to be a belief that there is not one reality but rather a set of realities which are historical, local, specific and non-generalisable which may be the cause of this under-representation (Guba& Lincoln, 1994). Responding to what is said by these scholars indicates that there are cultural stereotypes and in the society as to how a woman is expected to behave. Thus, it is recognised that knowledge or reality is not out there waiting to be discovered by the researcher but that knowledge or reality is created through interpretation of data (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, in line with this thinking of interpretive paradigm, I acknowledge that each of the participants has her own reality about what it means for women to be excluded or denied access to principalpositions in secondary schools. This paradigm was

deemed appropriate for this study because it helpedme to understand how women viewed and interpreted under-representation between themselves and their male counterparts.

3.3 Research Design

The research design is the plan of how the researcher will systematically generate and analyse the data that is needed to answer the research question (Terre-blanche &Durrheim, 2002). It is a combination of many methods and methodology and how you will go about doing those methods. The aim of selecting this research design is closely linked with its suitability to answer the research questions.

This study utilised qualitative research design because qualitative research deals with qualitative data which is analysed not through statistical means but through words (Creswell, 2011). In qualitative research data is generated through the use of in-depthinterviews and various other methods of generating data and these methods can be used to try and understand the phenomenon being studied. Through qualitative research design I was able to produce in-depth description of the challenges faced by female educators when they attempt to get into principal positions in the Imbali Circuit.In qualitative inquiry, researcher are not concerned with numbers but with the meanings that the research participants attach to their situation. In the context of this study, I generated thick descriptions of the participants' stories about the challenges that they faced regarding their under-representation in principalpositions of secondary schools in Imbali Circuit.

3.4Research methodology

Methodology is defined by Creswell (2003) as procedural rules for the evaluation of research claims and the validation of the knowledge gathered. Harding (1987) argues that methodology refers to a theory of producing knowledge through research and provides a rationale for the way a researcher precedes. Similarly, Sekaran (2008) conceptualises methodology as academia's established regulatory framework for the generation and evaluation of existent knowledge for the purpose of arriving at, and validating new knowledge. According to Nworgu (1991), case studies employ a variety of data gathering techniques such as interviews, observations and questionnaires, to mention just a few of them. Furthermore, Terre-blanche *et al,* (2006) point out that methodology specifies the manner in which the researchers go about studying the phenomenon under scrutiny. In this study challenges faced by female educators into principal positions needed to be understood

from the perspectives of the participants. A case study methodology is one of the most used methodologies in qualitative research. A case study is defined by Lodico & Spaulding & Voegtle (2006) as a form of qualitative research that endeavours to discover meaning, to investigate the process and to gain insight into and in-depth understanding of an individual, group, or situation. This methodology was deemed appropriate for this study because it enabled me obtain insights about meanings that women deputy principals and HODs gave to their situations in line with the views expressed by Lodico, *et al*, (2006). Smith, (1990) describes case studies as differentfrom other forms of qualitative research in the sense that these studies focus on a single unit or a bounded system. In this study, the case that was studied was the challenges faced by female educators into principal positions in high schools.

3.5 Sampling method

Grinnell (1993) defines sampling as the selection of some units to represent the entire set from which units are drawn. Therefore, in this study purposive sampling was used to choose the participants as well as the four secondary schools.These secondary schools were selected because of their accessibility and convenience. All of them they were in the circuit where I am teaching. According to Leery and Ormrod (2005), in purposive sampling participants are chosen by the researcher because there are knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon the researcher is investigating. It is further explained by Cohen, *et al.* (2000) as a feature of qualitative research hand picks the cases to be included in the sample.

Therefore in this case, one may agree that a purposive sampling will help the researcher to decide who will participate as this type of sample is based entirely on the researcher's judgement. For this study woman deputy principals and head of departments were selected because they were members of the school management team who were close to the level of the principal. Therefore, theseparticipants were deemed relevant because they would be able to share their challenge experiences they encounteredwhen they got into principal positions. Purposive sampling is mostly used by researchers in the interpretive paradigms, who would be using case study; hence it is relevant for the study.

3.6 Data generation methods

The methods for generating data in a qualitative research are mainly interviews and observations (Babbie, 2007)**.** However, Mertens (1998) says that there are many data

generation methods in qualitative studies. Further, McMillan and Schumacher (2006) explain that data generation involves the gathering of information about the case in the study. Therefore, in this study semi-structured interviews and observations were employed as data generation method. In-depth semi-structured interviews with eight female school management team members who were sampled in four secondary schools within the Imbali Circuit were used because it assisted the researcher to engage with the participants in a relaxed way face to face format.

Semi-structured interviews were deemed appropriate for this study because they enable the researchers to control the content so that you get what you want from the participants. During semi-structured interviews I heeded the warning of Reinharz and Chase (2001) that the participant had something important to say and should not be interrupted in the process. Each interview was at least thirty minutes long and was only conducted at a time and place that was suitable for the participants. Interviews therefore formed the major technique for data generation in this study.

Semi-structured interviews are less formal but very effective in capturing participants' point of view (Creswell, 2011). The instrument that was used when I went to the research sites was the interview schedule. During the semi-structured interviews I was able to do observation of my participants' facial expression, gestures, eye-contact to receive the natural reality of feelings. Besides the questions already written on the interview schedule, I also asked probing questions and follow up questions in order to get clarity from participants on certain issues they raised. Ina semi-structured interview the order of questions might change, but this depends on the situation the researcher encounters (Robinson, 2002).The interview guide was prepared prior to the interviews as this help to structure the course of the interviews to follow. Each topic was broad and therefore was guided by an open-ended question. For example, a question about why women are under-represented in principalpositions in secondary schools was posed. Such a question was able to elicit richer and more in-depth responses from the participants than closed-ended question could. This is because a closed-ended question would allow only one answer.

In this study, all interviews were audio-recorded to ensure an accurate record of what was said in the interviews. During interviews, the researcher was able to do note taking as the interviews proceeds as a back-up mechanism. According to Bhengu (2005), the tape recorder

has advantages and disadvantages. The advantages include the fact that an accurate record is kept. The disadvantage could be that all technical devices at some points may fail and it may be difficult to retrieve the kept information (Bhengu, 2005). By using tape recorder I was able to transcribe the participants' exact words. The interviews in all four (4) secondary schools will start at 14:00 so that teaching and learning cannot be disturbed. No interviews were conducted during examination time or teaching time.

3.7 Profiles of participating schools

The study was conducted in KwaZulu-Natal province in the Imbali Circuit which had 11 secondary schools under the UMgungundlovu District. Four (4) secondary schools from Grade 8—Grade 12 were selected in an urban Zulu-speaking low income community. These secondary schools were selected because of their accessibility and convenience. All of them they were in the circuit where I am teaching. The profile of each of the participating schools is presented below. The names of the following participating schools are not real school names but pseudonyms.

KwaNomoyi Secondary School

KwaNomoyi Secondary School was about 12km away from town. The school had the staff composition of 53 educators (including School Management Team) and an enrolment of 1956 learners. There were 2 Deputy Principals, 5 HODs and 45 teachers (Post Level Oneeducators).

Isangqu Secondary School

Isangqu Secondary School was located 10km away from town. The school had the staff composition of 38 educators (including School Management Team) and an enrolment of 1287 learners. There was 1 Deputy Principal, 5 HODs and 32 teachers (Post Level One educators).

Qhamukile Secondary School

Qhamukile Secondary School was located 11km away from town. The school had the staff composition of 49 educators (including School Management Team) and an enrolment of 1527 learners. There were 2 Deputy Principals, 5 HODs and 42 teachers (Post-Level Oneeducators).

Songimvelo Secondary School

Songimvelo Secondary School was located 15km away from town. The school had the staff composition of 37 educators (including School Management Team) and an enrolment of 1283 learners. There is one Deputy Principal and five (5) HODs 31 teachers (Post Level One educators). In all the schools,the participants were the female Deputy Principals and HODs.

The table below summarises the participants involved in my study:

School	Deputy Principal	HOD	Total
KwaNomoyi	1	1	2
Isangqu	1	1	2
Qhamukile	1	1	2
Songimvelo	1	1	2
TOTAL	**4**	**4**	**8**

3.8 Data analysis

Data analysis is described by Leery and Ormrod (2005) as a process of transforming, inspecting and modelling data with the aim of highlighting useful information suggesting conclusions and support decision- making. According to Cohen, *et al.* (2007), data analysis involves organising, explaining and accounting for the data. Furthermore, data analysis can be regarded as the process of organising, selecting and sorting data in order to get pattern among the categories (Terre-blanche,*et al.*, 2006). In this study data generated from participants was analysed qualitatively using content analysis. The researcher listened to all the interviews and tried to make sense by identifying differences and similarities among them so as to develop themes.All responses of the deputy principals and the head of departments were categorised, coded and themes identified. Individual words of participants were used during data analysis to support the assertions that were being made based on the content of interviews. Thereafter, data will be read and re-read in order to facilitate understanding.

3.9 Ethical consideration

Ethical consideration is one of the important aspectsthat researchers have to consider before conducting the research and should be maintained throughout the study (McMillan &

Schumacher, 2006). Ethics in research can be defined as ‒what is or not legitimate to do, or what ‒moral" research procedures involve" (Neuman, 2006, p. 159). According to Cohen,*et al*. (2011, p. 75), ‒a major ethical dilemma arises when researchers need to strike a balance between their role as researchers in search of scientific truth, and their participants' rights and values which can be threatened by the research." For instance, it is very essential that the research participants are protected at all times during the research process (Neuman, 2006). This is one of the ways of ensuring that participants are not harmed in any way, including the possibility of victimisation by their superiors for participation in the research. To ensure that their identities were not revealed, *pseudonyms* were used when the research report was written.

Another important ethical consideration is that researchers have to be ethically cleared by their own institutions. To that end, I applied to the University'sresearch ethics committee to do research. After the University granted approval (Appendix A). I applied to the provincial Department of Education (Appendix B) to get permission to conduct research in their own schools. Because school principals are also gate keepers at school level, I therefore had to seek permission from them to conduct research in their schools (Appendix C). The principal granted me the permission to conduct the study (Appendix E). I then visited the participants to explain the nature of the study and to also request them to participate in the study. After they understood what the study was about and had agreed to participate, I then gave them informed consent forms to sign (Appendix F).Neuman (2006, p. 135) describes informed consent as ‒a statement usually written, that explains aspects of a study to participants and asks for their voluntary agreement to participate before the study begins." Participants were also exposed to their rights and autonomy. For instance, they were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the study without any negative consequences.

3.10 Trustworthiness measures

It is important that the findings of a research project should be trusted by the readers and other peers in the field (Madlala, 2007).Therefore, issues of validity and reliability are very crucial in research circles. Due to the fact that validity and reliability are not achieved in the same way in qualitative research as it is done in quantitative research, the former category of

researchers came up with their own techniques of ensuring trustworthiness and these are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

3.10.1 Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) regard the issue of ensuring credibility as one of the most important factors that researchers have to consider as a way of ensuring that the reported findings are credible. It is important that when people read the research report they must have confidence that what is presented as findings is believable as a finding. There are many techniques that are used for that. One of those techniques is to ensure that the findings are not contrived or fabricated or that the information on which the findings are based was produced through coercion or misinformation. In line with this view, I had to ensure that the way data was generated data was credible. First, I made use of a manageable sample of participants, which consisted on eight participants. These participants had volunteered to take part in the study and I visited them and held semi-structured interviewed with them in their contexts and at the time and place of their choice. The interview sessions were recorded in order to keep an accurate record of what transpired during such conversations. In addition, the participant encouraged to participate freely in the interview sessions as they had been promised that that the content of our discussions would held in absolute confidentiality and anonymity.

3.10.2 Transferability

There seems to be broad agreement among research community about what transferability in all about. For instance, scholars such as Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010), as well as Lincoln and Guba (1985) view transferability as the degree of similarities between the research site and other sites as judged by the reader. In short, this concept is the extent to which the results of the research can be applied in similar contexts by other researchers. To ensure that transferability of the findings was achieved, I provided a detailed description of all the research processes that were followed.

3.10.3 Dependability

Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010) regard dependability as a measure that one has to adopt in order to track the procedures and processes that were used to produce and interpret the data. Since this chapter is about issues of design and methodology, this chapter has to provide a detailed explanation about how the data was generated, analysed and interpreted;

this increases the dependably of the study. This lies at the heart of what the concept of dependability is all about (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2010). To enhance dependability of this study, I had to ensure that all interview sessions were recorded through voice recorder. Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010) argue that recording devices such as audiotapes are used extensively in all types of qualitative research to support dependability.

3.10.4 Confirmability

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), confirmabilityhas to do with ensuring that researchers maintain objectivity. Qualitative researchers view confirmability as comparable to objectivity in quantitative researchers. In order to ensure confirmability of the findings, I had to ensure that I checked my interpretations with the participants. By so doing I made sure that whatever my interpretations were, I could not rely on them and base my findings on them, but I had to confirm them with my research participants. In keeping with that undertaking, I had to ensure that after I had transcribed the interviews,I then gave the participants copies so that they could check for accuracy of what they had shared with me during the interviews. Shenton (2004) argues that steps have to be taken to make sure that the findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants and not the preferences and assumptions of the researcher.

3.11 Limitations

Each and every research has its own limitations. This sample of this study was limited to only four secondary schools in the UMgungundlovu District. Choosing four secondary schools when there are more than 150 secondary schools in the district can be regarded by some people as a limitation on its own. This can be regarded as a limitation because its findings can only be restricted to the context of these four secondary schools. However, researchers who are familiar with qualitative research are aware of the fact that the size of the sample is not important at all because the aim of qualitative research is never about generalisation of the findings to the broader population (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed description of the research design and methodological consideration. As part of that discussion, sampling methods, data generation methods, analysis and measures to ensure trustworthiness of the findings were discussed. The next chapter focuses on the presentation and discussion of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter issues of research design and methodology were discussed. This chapter focuses on data analysis and discussion of the findings. In this study the data was generated through the use of semi-structured interviews and unstructured observations.The sample was made up of eight participants, namely,four Deputy Principals and four Heads of Departments (HODs) from four secondary schools.Principals could have been included in the sample, but the problem was that there were no female principals in the circuit. The participants were expected to respond to a set of seven questions. Interviews were tape recorded and field notes were taken. The data that was gathered is discussed in detail in the following sections. The names of all four schools and that of the participants are hidden for purposes of writing this report and *pseudonyms* have been used instead of their real names. This has been done in order to ensure anonymity as promised during the study and as described in Chapter Three. The schools names are Isangqu Secondary School, KwaNomoyi Secondary School, Qhamukile Secondary School and Songimvelo Secondary School.

The names of the participants are Mrs Phuthini, Head of Department of Isangqu Secondary School, Ms Radebe, Head of Department of Songimvelo Secondary School, Mrs Ntunjambili Deputy Principal of Kwa-Nomoyi Secondary School, Mrs Mjoro Deputy Principal of Isangqu Secondary School, Mrs Mtolo Deputy Principal of Songimvelo Secondary School, Mrs Ntenza Head of Department of Qhamukile Secondary School, Ms Kraai, Head of Department of KwaNomoyi Secondary School and Ms Peters Deputy Principal of Qhamukile Secondary School.All the participants' responses were analysed using content analysis and interpreted to give their meanings, focusing on the challenges faced by female educators into principal positions in Secondary Schools.

4.2 Why women are under-represented in principal positions in Secondary Schools

It has been established before the study commenced that that women were under-represented in the management of secondary schools, particularly in the positions of principalship. The participants were therefore asked about the reasons for that scenario. Their responses showed that there were four main issues which gave rise to under-representation, and these were

unfair appointment practices, gender-based stereotypes, male domination and competence of female educators.

4.2.1 Unfair appointment practices

Unfair appointment practices emerged as the major factor which contributed to women under-representation in principal positions in secondary schools. Fiveout of eight participants highlighted the issue of unfair appointment practices of candidates by the panellists that they claimed led to under-representation of women in principal positions in secondary schools. The remaining three participants highlighted the stigmatisation of female candidates who had the potentials to be appointed to the position of the principals. The findings reveal that processes during shortlisting and interviews were not transparent enough. For instance, Mrs Phuthini, Head of Department of Isangqu Secondary School argued that unfair practices in the appointment of principals were still rife in the circuit. This is how she put her views across:

> *You know what? Before you can even go to an interview, you will hear people saying —This post is for so and so." I recall at some stage when the interviews were over and a male was appointed in the position, rumours pointed out that I was the best candidate compared to the male teacher with whom I was contesting the post of principalship. As a result there was tension in the school and that put me under serious pressure. The panellists were divided into two and there was a dispute.*

Ms Peters of Qhamukile Secondary School concurred with Mrs Phuthini of Isangqu high school by saying:

> *I got high scores than my male counterparts but the School Governing Body recommended a male to be appointed in the position of principal because the SGB believed that the school will be more functional under the leadership of a male than that of a female*

Against this background the Head of Department, Mrs Ntenza of Qhamukile Secondary School had this to say:

> *I will never apply for principal positions, I will remain the Head of Department until I die or retire. I don't want to stress myself with lots of preparations for interviews knowing exactly that the post will be given to the male even though his performance during interviews was poor.*

Ms Kraai, HOD from KwaNomoyi Secondary School added that:

Other females are discouraged to further their studies saying it is a waste of time and useless because you can be shortlisted, attend the interviews but never be appointed for the position of the principal no matter highly qualified you are because of this unfairness in the appointment of candidates that leads to under-representation of women in leadership positions.

Ms Radebe, HOD from Songimvelo Secondary School pointed out to the issue of nepotism and bribery as contributing to the perpetuation of women under-representation in principal positions. This is what Ms Radebe had to say:

Nepotism and bribery is also another contributing factor to unfair appointment practice, we have seen it as tangible evidence on cutting edge programme on television where higher officials of the department were involved in the scam of selling posts of senior positions including principal positions.

This view by participants regarding the unfairness in the appointment of women principals is in line with views expressed by Nkonyane (2008). Nkonyane (2008) argues that the attitude of some panellists during short listing and interviews process left much desired. What was said by these participants was also in line with the argument advanced by Lad(2000) which indicates that the under-representation of women is most strikingly in secondary schools principals which in sharp contrast with women's over representation in the teaching occupation.

A similar view of unfair practices in the appointment of female principals is echoed by Motshekga (2013) when she emphasised that women were found to constitute a majority in the education sector, yet senior positions such as principals were still dominated by males.After South Africa got democracy in 1994, the selection of personnel in senior positions of schools were decentralised to the School Governing Bodies in terms of various pieces of legislation such as the Employment Equity Act of 1998; the South African Schools Act of 1996 and the Education Labour Relations Act of 1997). Although the democratic selection process were aimed at objective decisions in terms of who got appointed, the practice of appointing people based on special subjective preferences persisted(Department of Education, 2000).

Three participants' responses addressed the question of under-representation along the lines of factors that could have influenced the under-representation of women inprincipal positions. The other three participants, Mrs Mjoro, Mrs Ntunjambili and Mrs Ntenza shared a similar view about the controversial issue of discrediting campaign launched against the female candidates with potentials to be appointed as principals. The Deputy Principals argued that this was another contributingfactor in the under-representation of women in principal positions in secondary schools.

> *If you have the potential and qualifications to get the post, lots of negative things will be said about you by other females including male counter-parts. The word ―deserve" will not be uttered by anyone, all comments made will be the one that will ruined your human dignity.*

This point is also affirmed by Manwa (2002) who suggests thatnegative societal perception of women stems from the stereotype which perceives and portrays leadership as a masculine contract based on masculine values. Manwa's (2002) position is further reiterated by some of the participants who argued that womenwere perceived as not competent sufficiently to lead because of the lack of confidence drawn from cultural stereotypes that leadership is not meant for women but it is associated with masculinity. The findings in this theme indicated that there were participants that shared similar views regarding unfair appointment practices while the other participants pointed to a different direction which also showed that male candidates during the interview process were preferred. Drawing from the findings it emerged that women candidates or potential candidates were not free to fully express their potential leadership contributions due to stereotypes which perceivedthem as subordinate to men. The position of the liberal feministtheory recognises the position of women as not free and advocates for women to be given the same platform as men(Oplatka & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2006). The Liberal feminist theory further emphasises the freedom and equal opportunities for all (Hartmann, 2003). Evidently what emerged from the data indicated that appointment practices were not consistent with what the liberal theorists maintain. These theorists focus on women who do not enjoy their basic human rights, who are not free, who are not recognised by society as being capable to be appointed in principal positions. The next section shifts the focus to specific issues surrounding gender stereotypes and their relationship with women leadership.

4.2.2 Gender stereotypes and women leadership

The question was posed to the participants about whether the qualifications of educated female influenced their employment into principal positions. The participants' responses to this question indicated thatthere was no agreement among them regarding this issue. For instance, four out of eight participants highlighted the fact that, the issue of gender-based stereotypes and discrimination based on culture seemed to influence and determine the leadership positioning of women in secondary schools. None of the eight participants mentioned qualifications in relation to leadership in response to this question. However, they all concentrated on the relationship between leadership and gender stereotypes.Mrs Mjoro, Deputy Principal of Isangqu Secondary School; Mrs Ntunjambili, Deputy Principal of KwaNomoyi;Mrs Ntenza, HOD of Qhamukile Secondary School and Mrs Mtolo, Deputy Principal of Songimvelo SecondarySchool all agreed that gender-based stereotypes contributed negatively to the appointment of women in principal positions. However, two of the participants did not share the idea of promoting women for principal positions. They supported the view that women were not good in principal positions.

> *The* word *leader is still associated with masculinity, patriarch system still exists that women cannot lead, people still believe that women's place is in the kitchen. The stereotypes of how women operate and how society expects them to operate, still exists. Men are stereotypes, they can do one thing at a time but women multi-task yet they are seen as inefficient by the society*(Mrs Mjoro, Deputy Principal of Isangqu Secondary School).

Mrs Ntunjambili, Deputy Principal of KwaNomoyi indicated that it is systematic.

> *Gender-based—certain sectors believed that schools would be held together and disciplined when there is a male at the helm. Some males refused to be led by the female.*

Mrs Ntenza, HOD from Qhamukile Secondary School had this to say:

> *People think that men are good leaders compared to women as long ago all leadership positions were given to man. Even today they still think that man are best leaders compared to women, especially in secondary school where learners are in their adolescence stage; so people think that women are so weak to handle learners*

behaviour in such stages of development where learners are so aggressive and in the stage where they have peer pressure.

Mrs Mtolo, Deputy Principal of Songimvelo Secondary School concurred with Mrs Mjoro, Deputy Principal of Isangqu Secondary School about the issue of stereotypes. This is what she said:

In some cultures it is believed that men are the ones to lead and not females. The above stereotype is linked with the idea that secondary school teenagers in which bullying is common, need a_German hand' to discipline them. Discipline is always referred to as best carried out by men because they are perceived as stronger than women. Members of the School Governing Body, who form part of the interview committee which shortlist candidates, comes from communities which support the idea which sees men's strength in as essential in controlling and disciplining bullying in schools. Strength is used as a criterion of choosing leaders in management. This militates against the chance of women being considered for the post.

Mrs Mjoro, Deputy Principal of Isangqu Secondary School pointed out that those men still discriminated against female gender especially in secondary schools. This is what she had to say in this regard:

They think schools are managed by exercising physical power rather than intellectual powers where women can use different leadership styles to manage the school. Because of gender women are under-represented. She further added that stereotypes can be considered as one of the important cultural constraints, where people think that men are good leaders compared to women as long ago all leadership positions were given to men. Even today they still think that men are best leaders compared to women, especially in Secondary School where learners are in the adolescence stage so people think that women are so weak to handle learner's behaviour in such stages of development where learners are so aggressive and in the stage where they have peer pressure.

The above extract is in line with the views expressed by Eagly and Mladinic (2004) whichmaintain that gender role stereotypes can be considered as one of the important cultural constraints which affect the extent of the progress made towards gender equity in school management position. Moreover, these scholars went on to say that gender role stereotypes have caused workplace discrimination against women managers. Drawing from what the

participants were saying it can be inferred that there are still cultural practices which often influenced the preference of men over women when leadership and management positions are vacant at school. One of these cultural practices is stereotyping. Stemming from the negative societal perception, leadership is perceived and portrayed as a masculine contract based on masculine values (Manwa, 2002).

The responses of these four participants seem to show that society has low expectations about the capabilities of women; the society did not believe that women can be good leaders (Ngcobo, 2010). My observation as the resource person with the Department of Basic Education, attests to the same elements noted by both participants.When I was requested by the Department of Basic Education to be the resource person in one of the secondary schools in the Imbali Circuit, I had a chance to observe positively shortlisting and interview level. One of the criteria that was suggestedwas that of balancing gender when shortlisting the candidates. When this was suggested the response from the union observer was that it is not their duty to do that but that it was the preserve of the HOD for the Department of Basic Education at Provincial level.If such an exercise is not done throughout the selection process, questions need to be raised about fairness that can occur at the final stage of the process. ? This scenario seem to show that women's path to principalship is not an easy one.

4.2.3 Male domination

The existence of male domination is interpreted as a product of societal hierarchy(Nandraj, 2003). The participants' views were solicited on how the females interpreted male domination in leadership positions. Responses from all the participants expressed that male domination was unacceptable. Though they all seemed to agree about the existence of male domination, some of them seemed to be optimist about the prospects for change while others were pessimistic. Ms Radebe, HOD from Songimvelo Secondary School acknowledged the presence of male domination. She further noted that the government did not take gender reforms seriously. This is what she said:

> *Affirmative action in some sectors is practised only in name.One may think there is still a lot to be done to correct this especially here in secondary schools; gender equity is something that is not taken seriously. Men are still dominating leadership positions, government still need to be more practical to redress the issue of equity. Implementation of policies needs to be monitored that all people are treated fairly*

with justice. She added that women have the same power as men; they can lead the same way as their male counter-parts or even more. We have seen in primary schools that are led by women, they are functional.

Mrs Phuthini seemed to have the same perception of male domination as Ms Radebe. The difference between the two participants lies in the fact that the former sawmale domination as a cause of submission of women while the latter went beyond domination and recognised the potentiality of women to thrive despite their predicament.

These responses clearly showedthe unavoidable influence of men power/control within the work place, specifically in the school administrative environment. In as much as there was room for women to thrive as expressed by Ms Radebe, womenwere condemned to submissiondue to the fact that they found themselves inenvironments dominated and influenced by men. The dynamics associated with the working environment mentioned above is understood by Connell (2003) in terms of gender and power. For Connell (2003), there is an imbalance of power within genders to an extent that authority is defined as legitimate in a way which ultimately disadvantage one gender as against the other. Hence, in an earlier addition Connell (1995) concluded his argument by pointing out that the main axis of power structure of gender is intimately connected to masculine authority. The observation that I have at Isangqu Secondary School revealed that male principals seemed to find it easy to humiliate female teachers not just on the basis of authority but also of gender. This perception was built around an incident which I witnessed when a male principal disciplined a teacher in front of the learners.The way he disciplined this female teacher seemed so normal that it got me thinking whether he would have done the same if it was a male teacher. On the other hand, there were those female leaders who were convinced that the domination of men was worsened by women who actual spiked and discouraged other women from participating in power related posts in the name of patriarchal norms. Among those who perceived the domination of male in principal positions in this lightwas Ms Kraai who pointed out that:

Appointment of female principals in Secondary Schools is not something that is easy to be supported by other females but will depend on the individual. Some females like to oppress others when they are in principal positions, doing what is known as the pulling the head down syndrome. They don't want to see us as women succeeding, but then again,it is more discouraging when female colleagues do not support other women as I thought they are the ones who will be influential to others to respect her.

Though few women expressed dislike of the management approaches that men practised such as being bossy as alludedto by Mrs Phuthini, they still perceived men's leadership as divinely ordained and as a natural phenomenon. In the same vein, Ngcobo (2010) argues that patriarchal views are based upon the belief that men are natural superior to women.

Feminist theories deconstruct and demystified the perceptions which regard men's superiority as a natural and normal way in which things are supposed to be(Hooks, 2000). The theory perceives the present order as a social construct, a product of an intentional patriarchal creation. Any social order that was constructed can be deconstructed (Hooks, 2000). Hence, the feminist theories advocate for the redefinition of the social order in whichall people are created equal and women should not be denied the equality of opportunities they deserve because of gender(Morojele, 2011). Male domination in principal positions is not supported by the feminist theory based on this statement. Furthermore,liberal feminist fight for equal opportunities and aim to improve the condition of females and aims at eliminating all the barriers to education that causesinequality between women as a disadvantaged gender from working towards their fullest potential(Hartmann, 2003).

4.2.4 Competence of female educators

When comparing the successes of female educators and the successes of their male counter-parts it was highlighted that females were more competent than their male counterparts. The participants viewed female educators asbeing more competent at work irrespective of other traditional chores which they were expected to perform at home. The findings revealed that the participants had confidence in women leadership. For instance, five participantsagreed that when women were appointed intoprincipal positions, they normally workedthree times more than expected in order to prove themselveswithin a patriarchal system. This hard work was a sign of yearning for recognition by women in a system which portrayed them as not good enough inprincipal positions. The trio which includedMrs Ntunjambili,the DeputyPrincipal of KwaNomoyi, Mrs Peters, the Deputy Principalof Qhamukile Secondary School and Mrs Phuthini, HOD from Isangqu Secondary School highlighted thatwomen performed their duties and tasksdelegated by their superiors with respect and without any resentment. They further pointed out that women did their work with passion, hardworking, and motherlylove, which made them to never give up. They also pointed out that women were able to multi-task. Moreover women have a listening ear and are mature enough to handle stressful situations.

In addition to the above mentioned qualities of women,Mrs Ntenza, HOD from Qhamukile Secondary School and Ms Kraai, HOD from KwaNomoyi Secondary School further indicated that the competencies of women which were evident in their unique ability to multi-task were drawn from their traditional duties as wives with numerous responsibilities at home.The above response shows that women were able to do multi-tasks with tact and diplomacy while performing their duties of teaching them also nurturing as a mother. They are hard workers compared to their male-counter-parts.Mrs Mjoro, Deputy Principal of Isangqu Secondary Schoolconcurred with the above five women by saying:

> *Female educators are seen as too caring, understanding, passionate, hardworking, sacrificing for the needy, competitive and don't want to give up. I have experience with males in leadership positions, I prefer women because they have a welcoming personality.*

However, Ms Radebe,HOD from Songimvelo Secondary School and Mrs Mtolo, Deputy Principal of Songimvelo Secondary School had a different version altogether of female educators and their competence. This is what she said:

> *I have no valid track record of this however I believe that their schools are functional in terms of results, discipline, extra-mural activities etc. This comes at a price for when they take unpopular decisions and enforce departmental rules and only those who are loyal including those who believe in doing right contribute to the success. They develop this low self—esteem when they are in principal positions, thus they need to be led and not to lead;Shooh!It is with understanding that women in principal positions do not have the ability to perform better, to grow and to maintain a strong leadership position, setting and developing acceptable standards*

As a principal of a primary school, what has been said by the five participants was that female educators had qualities of dedication and commitmentmay be true. Female teachers at my school seemed to be more devoted to their work compared to their male counterparts. Therefore,if teachers with those characteristics wereappointed for the position of the principal, they are more likely to make their schools functional. From the three women who did not agree about the competency of women, their argument did not seem to consider the bigger picture as to why women were incompetent in certain aspects. Seemingly, they were looking at specific environment in which the women operated. There is evidence from the five participants that women were, form their perspective, competence.Furthermore, the

above extracts indicated that the causes of under-representation of women in principal positions revolved around cultural factors which associated masculine attributes as a contributing factor to effective leadership. This also showed that society had low expectations for women to be good leaders as they were perceive to be mothers who were supposed to behave like traditional women and be submissive.

4.3 Oppressive and discouragingenvironment

When the participants were asked about how they viewed and interpretedthe sources of under-representation of women in principal positions, their responses clearly expressed that this under-representation was as a result of oppression caused by patriarchal domination. They further showed that the environment created by this situation was not a conducive ground of hope and was discouraging. This is substantiated by responses such as ―*the system looks down on us*" (Ms Kraai, HOD from KwaNomoyi Secondary School).Some felt hopelessness to anextent of accepting being submissive to the system. For instance, Mrs Ntenza, HOD from Qhamukile Secondary School had this to say:

> *We are condemned to inferiority. Because of we lack confidenceto even begin to challenge for these positions. This is due to the status quo which has been going for a long time.*

In fact the views of desperation and acceptance of the status quo and the fact that male domination has negatively affected them was evident in their comments. Some participants did not even want to try to apply for these positions. For instance, Mrs Phuthini, HOD from Isangqu Secondary School retorted:

> *It's just a waste of time to try and work hard because nothing will change. How can you even dare apply for promotion given the current environment?*

Inas much as they all explicitly expressed similar experiences and views of the excessively domineering attitude of the system, very few of them believed that there is still hope. This is what one of the participants had to say:

> *Male domination is everywhere. Despite all this, I will continue and apply for the principal positions; I will also further my studies so that I stand in a better position next time I apply (Mrs Mtolo, Deputy Principal of Songimvelo Secondary School).*

The negative views and experiences expressed by the participants indicated that female educators faced the challenge of not being recognised because of our culture which portrays male as superior above the women. What was said by these participants was also in line with what Anderson (2005) says. For instance, Anderson (2005) argues that socialisation which says that female cannot lead is mostly associated with domestic chores which include raising children. Thus society has low expectations for women to be good leaders if they are appointed in a principal position as a result women are under-represented in leadership positions.

The views expressed in the above extracts show that it is still going to take time to eliminate gender stereotypes in education irrespective of gender policies and the constitution of the country as female educators arefacing challenges of who they are.This is against what the liberal feministsfight for, that is the central values of liberty, equality and fairness for all to justify women's rights (Grogan, 1996).

4.3.1Resentment and bad experiences

When the participants were asked to share their views and experiences regarding under-representation of women and what their attitude towards it was, resentment and bad experiences dominated the discourse. They all emphasised their resentment of under-presentation of women. They also said that the way they experienced it was unpleasant.The participants felt that their under-representation was as a result of situations which made them feel inferior and lack confidence. This is what Mrs Mjoro, Deputy Principal of Isangqu Secondary School had to say in this regard:

> *It is destroying inside; it makes me feel that I'm not worthy of any senior position as there male colleagues who can do better job.*

Mrs Peters, Deputy Principal of Qhamukile Secondary School, with Mrs Phuthini, HOD of Isangqu Secondary School, and Miss Mtolo, Deputy Principal of Songimvelo Secondary School, had a similar view. Mrs Peters expressed the view that continuing with the study is ─waste of time" while Mrs Phuthini regarded it as ─useless". Mrs Mjoro conceived studying as ─notlinked with promotions", so it carried no benefits.

The other four participants were not vocal about it.

A general feeling of not beingrespected as competent was evident from the response of all other participants. Others even mentioned that this under-representation was due to unfair implementation of gender policies. It is important to mention that some participants were still confident that they had something to offer but they highlighted that the system did not give women sufficient room to do so. Generally the response showed that women resented under-representation and they also had bad experiences associated with the way the society marginalise them.

Employment Equity Act (1998) aims at promoting equal opportunities and prohibits unfair discrimination in the work place. A similar view of equal opportunities is echoed by Calas and Smircich (1996) when arguing that grounds that causes the division of labour is gender neutral. Gender prejudice is universal even though it assumes different contexts depending on the cultural, social and economic parameters that define gender relations. Even after twenty one years of democracy women are still experience discrimination when there are policies in place that should work in their favour. Women should be treated equally like males when it comes to the appointment of candidates in leadership and management positions of principals.Liberal feminists strive for equal opportunities and present affirmative action as a significant approach to develop the position of females(Hartmann, 2003).For so long women were deprivedof opportunities of getting to senior positions of principals in secondary schools, it is important to explore what is taking place in these schools that makes women educators to be under-represented in senior positions (principals) against what is recommended in this theory.

4.4Strategies that can be employed to promote fairness and justice in principal positions

There are two strategies that the participants suggested should be used in order to promote fairness and justice in the appointment of women educators to the senior positions in schools such as principals of schools. The two strategies were the utilisation of neutral bodies instead of the SGBs and also to pay special focus on capabilities of the candidates and merit for the positions for which they are applying. The detailed discussion of these strategies follows.

4.4.1 Neutral bodies

When the participants were asked about the strategies (if any) that can be employed to promote fairness and justice in principal positions, five out of eight participants called for a structural change by recommending that the School Government Bodies should not be part of the selection team for principalship. One participant argued that:

School Governing Bodies are themselves gender biased. The School Governing Bodies should be replaced by neutral bodies from the Department of Education(MsRadebe, HOD from Songimvelo Secondary School).

This is one of the strategies of promoting fairness and justice in appointing women into leadership positions that the participants advanced as a solution. They believed that such a strategy would enhance fairness and eradicate biasness where the best a suitable candidate will be appointed. These responses were reflected the views of the other participants.

4.4.2 Merit and capabilities

Another strategy that was highlighted by the participants was about the recognition of merit and capabilities in selecting the candidates. The participants believed that the selection to principalship should be understood beyond gender categories. Three participants highlighted the issue of structural requirements in relation to merits and capabilities. They pointed out that merits and capabilities should determine one's appointment to principalship and not his or her gender. One of the participants had this to say:

There were still people who are occupying senior positions of principals without relevant qualifications and experience.The SGBs are the ones that recommended the appointment of such people to the positions of school principals (Mrs Mtolo, Deputy Principal of Songimvelo Secondary School).

Based on all these responses of the participants, one may conclude that the participants were no longer in support of the School Governing Bodies with the powers to recommend candidates for the positions of principalship. They wantedthose powers to be removed from the School Governing Bodies and that the Employment Equity Act policy should be followed.

The above discussion shows that all participants felt that something needed to be done to promote fairness and justice in the appointment of candidates so as to eliminate unfairness in the appointment of candidates into the positions of principals. According to them, merit, capability, qualifications and experience should be taken into consideration when making appointments. Both these two werefocusing on structural level issues while the literature is talking about personal adjustment. It is looking at the barriers and then suggests strategies that can be employed to overcome those barriers.Poor-self-image (Ouston, 1993) argues that poor self-image is not something that women are born with but on the contrary, it is a social

construction that takes place in this world and are therefore defined by the society. Tsoka (1999, p. 104) recommends that ―training centres should be established that are specifically designed to empower women in management positions."

Another one is the lack of assertiveness (Ouston, 1993) argues that the lack of assertiveness is based on the lack of recognition that men and women bring out different contributions to school management in general. The strategy is to recognise that men and women contribute differently towards management. In the past, the masculine perspective of management used to be recognised more than feminine perspective of management(Connell, 1995). This strategy is meant to recognise both perspective of management is of paramount important in school government. There is another challenge; some women did not want to apply when the post of principalship wereadvertised because they have the feeling that they are for their male counter-parts. The strategy for this one is to have support programmes in the corporate world as the positive move to improve gender sensitivity. Such programmes should be designed specifically to empower women to access principal positions easily and more rapidly.

According to Tsoka (1999), this is a deliberate effort to develop promising women to progress to positions of leadership. The writer of the article also suggested another strategy in which there is a need to establish programmes geared towards changing men's attitude of seeing women as inferior to them(Tsoka, 1999). Telling men to perceive women as equal or to work under a woman is sometimes a radical cultural change(Tsoka, 1999). These programmes are designed to prepare men for this cultural shock. Such programmes can be established within the school where teachers are working or in teaching colleges where teachers are trained. These strategies are pioneered within the feminist theory that contends against sex stereotypes and sex discrimination and advocates for equal opportunities. In literature it is stated thatdiscrimination is one of the greatest barriers to women becoming school leaders and managers (Shakeshaft, 1993). The outcome of the interviews indicated clearly that the female candidate is discriminated in terms of their gender.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented a detailed discussion about the findings from semi-structured interviews and unstructured personal observations. Data was analysed and interpreted. The

in-depth interviews assisted in identifying the challenges faced by female educators into principal positions in secondary schools. All the participants responded with confidence.

The findings also revealed that although female teachers experienced some challenges when they were to be appointed intoprincipal positions in secondary schools, they were not discouraged. Instead, they continued to apply for principal positions; they continued to further their studies; they continue to support their male counterparts who were principals in the execution of their duties. The next chapter presents the conclusions reached and the recommendations made.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The pervious chapter presented a detailed discussion of findings that were drawn from the analysis of data generated through the use of semi-structured interviews with eight participants in Imbali Circuit. This chapter focuses on the conclusions and makes recommendations based on the conclusions made regarding the challenges faced by female educators into principal positions in secondary schools. Before the conclusions are made, the chapter begins with a summary of the entire study.

5.2 Summary of the study

The study is made up of five chapters. In the first chapter, I began by giving the background, the focus as well as the purpose of the study. The chapter also discusses the rationale and motivation of the study. Key research questions, significance of the study and the operational definitions of the terms used in the study were also presented. In Chapter Two, I reviewed both national and international scholarly literature which focused on the under-representation of women inprincipal positionsin secondary schools.Furthermore, the theoretical framework underpinning the study was discussed in this chapter. In chapter three, I discussed the research design and methodology, as well as the methods that were employed to carry out the study. Chapter Four focused on the analysis of data and the discussion of the findings and Chapter Five dealt with the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

5.3 Conclusions drawn from the findings

This study aimed at investigating the challenges faced by female educatorsregarding their appointment into principal positions within the Imbali Circuit. There was a strong visible under-representation of women principals in secondary schools despite the fact that there is large number of female educators that occupiedPost Level 1 positions. The conclusions reached in the study are discussed in the next section.

The first conclusion is that female educators did not experience any unfairness from the panellists at the point of applications, shortlisting and interviews. These experiences had negative effects in the way they viewed the appointment of candidates for the positions of principals. They viewed their under-representation as females in principal positions in a

negative sense that made them feel oppressed and to accept anything that happened to them in life. One of the participants even remarked that ―we accept it as it is.‖ The other negative implication of under-representation of females in leadership was that applicants lost trust in the appointment. They mentioned that there were policies in place that worked in favour of females like Employment Equity Act of 1998 but these policies were, from their perspective, not implemented.

The study also revealed that gender stereotypes, societal norms and cultural factors had a strong negative effect on the appointment of women in principal positions. Some of the stereotypes were that women were perceived to be incapable of leading. This position is in agreement with the argument presented by Pillay (2005) who argues that these stereotypes disadvantage women in a number of ways. Furthermore, there is a claim by Anderson (2006) that stereotypes disposition negate peoples' individuality and limits their potentials. The literature in Chapter Two concurred with the emerging data generated in secondary schools women were seen in large numbers in positions of HODs but when it comes to the positions of Deputy Principals and Principals, very few were seen (Bush & West-Burnham, 2003; Mohlala, 2010). My assumption is that negative perceptions about women in society; culture and history could be the main cause of under-representation of women in principal positions in secondary schools.

Again the study has revealed that female educators encountered challenges at the stage of application. One participant indicated that before she could even go for interview, stories about which male candidate would be given the post would emerge, and such storied were always proved to be correct when the appointee was announced. This association of management with masculinity is a factor which discouraged females from applying for principal positions. Despite such negativities, there were still some participants who were optimistic about the future. They even emphasised their commitment to applying for the positions of principalship in the future. Three participants indicated that although women were under-represented in principal position in secondary schools, they were still positive and always willing to comply and accept the situation as it is. These challenges hindered upward progression of women. Although some of the participants expressed positive views about the whole scenario but deep down, they were clear signs that they were heart broken. One can conclude that it is for these reasons that there were conflicts in schools whenever there was a vacant post for senior positions.

The second set of negative attitudesrelated to issues of self-esteem. The participants indicated that they had low self-esteem, inferiority complex and lack of self-confidenceand other females were discouraged to further their studies saying it is a waste of time because they believed that if the status quo persisted, they could never be promoted. These sentiments were also shared by scholars such as Lumby (2011) when they emphasised that no matter how hard female educators could try to improve their qualification, dedicate and commit themselves in their duties as Head of Departments and Deputy Principals, male domination could undermine all their efforts. They would always be regarded as not fit for the position of principal because of an old cultural stereotype that women could not lead in secondary schools. Literature reviewed in Chapter Two reveals that society and its stereotypical thinking shows that men are still viewed as better leaders than women (Growe & Montgomery, 2000).One participant raised the issue of nepotism and bribery as another contributing factor. He argued that higher ranking officials of the department sold senior position posts including those of principals.

On the issue of gender and traditional cultural stereotypes, it was revealed that the insight of gender in principal positions makes men as natural or born leaders, thus indicating that females as opposed to their male counter-parts are likely to struggle in order to become active leaders (Sharpe, 2000). The society expects females to perform domestic chores and to raise children. The above discussion is basedon their socialisation which associates females with menial and subservient chores. Concerning the issue of strategies that can be employed to promote fairness and justice in principal positions, it was established that five female educators in the study suggested that it can be highly appreciated if principal positions should be got on merit, capability and experience in the field of leadership and management. The other participant recommended that neutral structures or independent bodies should be used as these can avoid acting based on biases and influences that come from certain contexts.The above strategies show that all participants felt that there must be something that needs to be done in order to promote fairness and justice in the appointment of candidates so as to eliminate unfairness in the process of appointing candidates to position of principals.

Another issue that emerged was that of male domination. It is evident that there is still a lot to be done to correct this especially here in secondary school. Issues of gender equity are not being taken seriously by the officials of the Department of Education more especially in the

Imbali circuit where the study is conducted. It is evident that if these officials wanted to really correct the situation, they have the power to do so. Men are still dominating leadership positions in secondary schools;the government still needs to be more practical to redress the issue of equity. Implementation of policies needs to be monitored that all people are treated fairly during the process of promoting personnel to principal positions.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings presented in Chapter Four and conclusions made in Chapter Five, I have come up with the following recommendations:

Seemingly most female teachers in South Africa started their teaching careers during apartheid era in which they pursued their careers in an environment that was influenced by gender segregation. This negative perception towards them still persists in the post-apartheid South Africa. Therefore, there is a need to instil in them a positive mind set which is in line with democratic contemporary South Africa. This can be achieved through the intervention of the Department of Basic Education, specifically by ensuring that Gender Equity Act, the Employment of Educators Act, the Employment Equity Act, and the White Paper on Affirmative Action are adhered to when employing educators and doing promotions to positions of principalship.

Secondly, there is an urgent need to ensure that all stakeholders involved in the process of shortlisting and interviews are capacitated so that they have a clear understanding of their job description. One of the ways in which biases can be dealt with is to down grade the role played by the School Governing Bodies in the selection of the candidates for promotion positions. Studies have shown that the majority of the members of the School Governing Bodies are illiterate; whatever they do in relation to selection processes is likely to be based on favouritism, bribery and nepotism. That is why there is a need for the Department of Basic Education to deploy someone to assist in such cases so that there can be transparency and fairness to female candidates.

Thirdly, there is the issue of appointing people on the basis of merit, capability, experience in the field of leadership and management; this needs to be supported. The common practice currently is that of appointing a Post-Level 1 who in most instances is a male educator with three years' teaching experience to the position of principal. In the long run there is

mismanagement and poor performance in the school. Prior to 1994, the appointment of senior positions was done by the Department of Education by looking at individual capability, merit and experience.

5.5 Conclusion

This section brings the study to a close. Recommendations have been made which were drawn from the conclusions made. This study has provided some information and enlightenment around female teachers and the challenges they face inprincipal positions. One more issue to emphasise is that the study has actually not come up with anything new, especially when I compare the findings with findings from various studies cited in the literature. This study has also provided opportunities for further research into gender issues in education which is an under-researched area as evidenced in the literature reviewed for this study.

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UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

5 June 2015

Mrs Fikile Bongi Hope Ngcobo 952059545
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Ngcobo:

Protocol reference number: HSS/0221/015M
Project title: Challenges faced female educators into principal positions in the Imbali circuit.

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 11 March 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted FULL APPROVAL.

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.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

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

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

Cc Supervisor: Mr S Bayeni
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P Morojele
Cc School Administrator: Ms T Khumalo/Ms B Bhengu

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Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
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Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubane   Tel: 033 392 1004   Ref:2/2/8/385

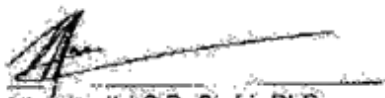Mrs FBH Ngcobo
16 Peckham Road
Fairmead
PIETERMARITZBURG
3201

Dear Mrs Ngcobo

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: "CHALLENGES FACED BY FEMALE EDUCATORS INTO PRINCIPAL POSITIONS IN THE IMBALI CIRCUIT", 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 01 April 2015 to 30 April 2016.
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 your wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below.
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.

Imbali Circuit

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 15 April 2015

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KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa
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CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363 Fax: 033 392 1203 WEBSITE: WWW.kzneducation.gov.za

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beyond the call of duty

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A letter to the school principal requesting permission to conduct research

16 Peckham Road

Fairmead

Pietermaritzburg 3201

20 April 2015

Attention: The Principal

Dear Madam

My name is Fikile Bongi Hope Ngcobo, a Masters student at the University of KwaZulu Natal (Edgewood Campus). I am required to conduct research as part of my degree fulfilment. I therefore kindly seek your permission to conduct research in your school. The title of my study is "Challenges faced by female educators into principal positions in the Imbali circuit."

This study aims at transforming gender relations by liberating all women who are oppressed on the basis of their gender. This proposed study is worth doing because it will establish the reason why women are under-represented in leadership and management positions of principalship especially in the Imbali circuit. This study will used semi-structured interviews and observations as data collection method. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 30minutes. Each interview will be audio-recorded. Responses will be treated with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used instead of real names.

For further information on this project, please feel free to contact my supervisor Mr S.D. Bayeni at 031   260 7026 or E-mail: bayenis@ukzn.ac.za. In addition for any queries, please contact me at the following details:

Cell number 082 294 8678 or E-mail fikilehope@vodamail.co.za

Yours Sincerely

Fikile Bongi Hope Ngcobo (Mrs)

SIGNED _FBHNgcobo_

21 APRIL 2008

Dear Participant

Dear Madam

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPANT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Fikile Ngcobo. I am a Med student at the University of KwaZulu Natal (Edgewood campus). As part of my research, I am doing a study on "CHALLENGES FACED BY FEMALE EDUCATORS INTO PRINCIPAL POSITIONS IN THE IMBALI CIRCUIT." I request your permission to participate in my study, semi-structured part of this research project.

The study aims at investigating why women are under-represented in leadership and management positions in high schools (PRINCIPALSHIP). The study will use semi – structured interviews to collect data. Participants in the study will be interviewed for about thirty minutes at a time that is convenient for them.

The name of the school and the teachers participating in the study will be kept anonymous and not be divulged in the final reports.

For further information regarding my study, you may contact me on

Cell phone   : 082 294 8678

Tel no   : 033-3272776

Email   : fikilehope@vodamail.co.za

Or my supervisor on 031 260 7026

Thank you

FB NGCOBO (MRS)

Re – Permission to conduct research at

The matter above refers

Mrs FBH Ngcobo the Principal of Henryville Primary School a permission to conduct her research at

our institution as communicated to the school by herself and by the HEAD OF EDUCATION in the

province of KWAZULU-NATAL, Dr N SISHI.

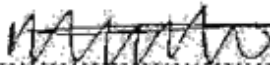We wish Mrs FBH Ngcobo all the best in her research.

Yours faithfully

DECLARATION

I ...... *ANONYMOUS* ...... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

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

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   DATE

[signature]   24 – 04 – 2015

Research Tools to be used

Interview guide for the school management team

1. What factors could have influenced the under-representation of women in leadership positions?

2. What are the successes of female principals compared to their male counter parts?

3. What is the kind of support (if any) rendered by the staff to female principals?

4. Do qualifications of female educators influence their employment into leadership positions?

5. How do females interpret male domination in leadership positions?

6. What do you think could be done to promote fairness and justice in the employment of women in leadership positions?

7. What are the experiences and the attitudes of females about being under-represented in leadership positions?

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CHALLENGES FACED BY FEMALE EDUCATORS INTO PRINCIPAL POSITIONS IN

Match Overview

8%